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THE RISE OF QATAR AS A SOFT POWER
AND THE CHALLENGES

By
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The Rise of Qatar as a Soft Power and the Challenges

Mohamad Al-Thani

ABSTRACT

Qatar has risen to prominence as a soft-power nation state that have overcome a number of limitations in international relations. The prominence of the country relative to its size is of remarkable importance in the study of soft power and the outcomes of the campaigns aimed at acquiring influence without the use of the contemporary military-oriented strategies. In studying the rise of Qatar as a soft power and the challenges experienced by the country, this research aimed at investigating the process through Qatar achieved its soft power status. The study methodology, analytical eclecticism, is established around collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary sources. The analysis focused on identifying the continuous stream of evidence on the process through which the country has acquired soft power, and the challenges in the process. The analysis focused on six variables identified in the literature. The responses from 12 respondents are included in the study, with the analysis targeting identification of the key themes. The findings show that Qatar has implemented soft power campaigns across the six variables, which means that the country has targeted to exploit all the opportunities available. The country has diversified its soft power campaigns to exploit the advantages of relationships with countries that have hard power capabilities (the US and UK), in order to bank on their hard power in achieving Qatar’s soft power. The main challenge facing the country is the ability to appreciate the actual effects of the soft power campaigns, other than gaining regional and international prominence. This is why the country has faced significant challenges in solving the crisis due to sanctions from the Saudi-led Middle East countries. In order to avoid these challenges, it is recommended that Qatar should appreciate the relationship between power and IR, in order to ensure that its soft power campaigns do not have adverse effects on its soft power campaigns.

Keywords: Qatar, Middle Eastern Politics, Soft Power, International Relations, Power Politics.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
<td>China Central Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCMF</td>
<td>Doha Centre for Media Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QIA</td>
<td>Qatar Investment Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QMC</td>
<td>Qatar Media Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QNA</td>
<td>Qatar News Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QTV</td>
<td>Qatar TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAND</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The emergence of soft powers across the globe is a widely studied subject, specifically because it is one of the ways through which liberation of a nation and regional dominance is achieved. Nye (2005) indicated that soft power is also a trajectory for the emergence of superpowers, due to the ability to command respect from regional and global partners. However, Felsch (2016) indicated that the acquisition and application of soft power are dependent on the ability to effectively apply a number of strategies that entail mutuality of outcomes and empowerment of the partners. Figenschou (2013, 43), quoted Nye Jr, who termed soft power as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment”. The definition does not, however, focus on the costs that a country incurs in aligning itself to acquire this type of power. The paper by Nye, (2005) titled ‘The Rise of China’s Soft Power’, noted that China has established a system referred to as ‘Beijing Consensus’, which is a form of governance with power that can only be compared to the ‘Washington Consensus’ and is applied in most of the international relations processes (Kim (2016). The absence of coercive tendencies differentiates soft power from hard power, which is a combination of economic, military and political influence applied by countries such as Russia and the US. Based on the definition by Kamrava (2011), soft power is a highly dynamic construct that can be acquired and applied by most countries, since it seeks to align
the objectives and achieve convergent goals between the partner countries. 

Brannagan and Giulianotti (2015) argued that in spite of the approaches applied, soft power still involves the application of influence in shaping the destiny of a targeted country. As a result, the process of acquiring and applying soft power is a challenge, specifically due to the uncertainty in outcomes.

Kamrava (2011) and Bakarat (2012) indicated that Qatar rose to prominence as early as the mid-2000s, and has continued to act as an intra-national and regional mediator. The involvement of Qatar in a diversity of the conflicts in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region is noticeable, considering that it is one of the Middle Eastern countries with an impressive record in terms of peace and proactive political processes. Relative to its size, the country has achieved extensive success, Lirong (2013) noted that the geostrategic location has also played an important role in the stability of the region. Felsch (2016) linked the rise of Qatar to the Arab uprising, which changed the geopolitical balance in the region. However, credit is also given to the country, since there is a disparity in the prominence of the Middle Eastern, and specifically, the Arabic countries (Kamrava, 2013). According to Kamrava, (2013, 95), the rise of Qatar is “facilitated by broader changes to the structure of the international system”. The effects of globalisation and a shift in the power balance, within and outside the Middle East also influenced the emergence and prominence of Qatar as a soft power. However, as noted by Ulrichsen (2014), the successful transformation from a Middle Eastern country to a regionally recognisable super power can be attributed to the ability and motivations for Qatar to achieve its current status. Antwi-Boateng (2013), who studied the process and challenges experienced by Qatar in its rise to ‘soft powerdom’ concluded that the country employs carrot diplomacy through the media and information services
(specifically Al Jazeera), investment in social and sporting activities as well as extensive foreign aid to deserving nations. On the other hand, the fundamental challenges arise from the lack of democratic governance in the domestic systems and the exhaustible nature of the ‘carrot diplomacy’ approach, especially due to changing nature of global relations.

Consequently, the prominence of soft power, as a supplement or complement to hard power, is a constantly discussed subject, specifically due to its contribution to the international relations. However, soft power is a unique construct and phenomenon, since it allows countries that are not specifically dominant economically or militarily, to influence the global balance of power. As a result, it is important to understand how Qatar applies this form of power, in order to determine its viability within the country and elsewhere. The aim and objectives of the study are indicated hereunder.

1.2 Problem Statement

Soft power arises from the desirability of the political, cultural and policy-based characteristics of a country. Over the years, countries have used it as the basic or alternative approach to global dominance, whereas a supplementary or complementary power dimension. According to Nye (1991) and Nye (2004d), soft power is a dynamic construct which exists on the opposite of hard power under the power spectrum. In spite of the convergent and divergent nature in comparison with hard power, soft power is considered a stand-alone toolbox in international relations and has been applied in a diversity of situations, specifically to achieve control and influence over countries.
In order to understand the changes in the status of a country based on its acquisition and application of soft power, it is imperative to understand the motivations that drive the country (Xu, 2016), as well as the challenges that arise in the process (Sanguanbun, 2015). Similarly, the dynamic nature of soft power, coupled with the fact that it, and hard power, have complementary, supplementary and counter-active effects on one another results to disproportionate outcomes. On the other hand, the changes in international relations and the interests that drive countries to seek out and apply soft power change over time. As a result, in determining the rise of a country to soft-powerdom and in identifying the challenges, it is imperative to focus on the parties and stakeholders involved in the process, their agenda and issues employed in the campaigns, the processes and vehicles through which power campaigns are implemented and the domestic, regional and global impacts of the power campaigns.

Since soft power entails the ability of a country to influence other countries through persuasion as opposed to coercion, most countries seek to design and implement campaigns that are effective across time and space. This limits the costs and challenges involved while establishing the foundation for exponential growth and validity and above the processes which are involved in the acquisition of soft power. As indicated by Xu (2016), as a complement and supplement to hard power, soft power represent a fundamental constituent of international relations that has to be understood and applied in a strategic manner.
1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate the rise of Qatar as a soft power, by identifying the processes that the country used and determining the challenges faced. In order to achieve this aim, the research will focus on the following objectives.

• Determining what soft power is, and how a country can acquire and use in international relations, and the challenges involved in the process from existing literature.

• Use the findings from existing literature and survey results to determine how Qatar acquired and applied soft power.

• Identify the challenges that faced Qatar in relation to the use of soft power and how those challenges were solved.

• Provide suggestions on alternative approaches that the country can include in its international relations.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve these research aim and objective, the following research questions will be answered.

• What is soft power and how a country can acquire and use in international relations, and the challenges involved in the process from existing literature?

• From the existing literature and survey findings, how has Qatar acquired and applied soft power?
• What are the challenges that faced Qatar in relation to the use of soft power and how have those challenges been solved?

• What alternative can approaches be recommended or suggested for Qatar to include in its international relations in order to achieve similar or better outcomes under soft power?

1.5 Rationale of the Study

In 1947, Weber defined power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance (Korpi, 1985, 2).” Essentially, this leads to the emergence of literature on the intuitive notion, whereby power exists when Party A has the power over Party B to a degree where A can force B to act in a manner that B would not otherwise do. This behavioral tradition is however limited to the concrete and tangible decision-making processes that entail fundamental issues rather than routine actions and decisions. However, the validity of that power is influenced by the ability of Party B to foresee the intentions of Party A, or the existence of other parties to influence the two. Power was also defined as the ability that enables one individual to acquire a certain future apparent benefit or good. In order to delimit the concepts of power and differentiate it from the social causation processes, we assume that it is the characteristics that one party has to punish or reward other parties. However, as indicated by Sanguanbun (2015), a deeper concern lies on whether the parties who are rewarded or punished are receptive to these rewards or punishments, and whether they reciprocate the actions in a proportionate or disproportionate manner.
Flew (2016, 2) reiterated the assertions by Nye on soft power by stating that the “the soft power of a country rests on three pillars: culture (in places where it is attractive to others), political values (when these live up to them at home and abroad) and foreign policies (when others see these as legitimate and having moral authority)”. However, these assertions come with a disclaimer that the ability of a country to achieve the desired levels of soft power is dependent on whether the latent soft power resources can be converted to the behavioral factors that influence the targeted country or countries towards the desired outcomes. This highlights the fundamental positions under the theory of value in philosophy. According to Laszlo and Wilbur (2014), value theory explains most positions under moral, social and political philosophy, all which are relevant to power. The theory of value posits that most decisions and the consequent actions are dependent on whether the individual perceives the actions as either good or bad. In this sense, the research is founded on the premise that the decisions by Qatar to engage in soft power campaigns are based on the value, and that the country chooses the constituents of the soft power campaign based on their ‘goodness’ and leaves out what is considered to be bad. However, the interpretation of ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ is subjective in nature, and the study will focus on Qatar as a determinant of what is good. This is due to the effects of benefits on what is good. For instance, a soft power campaign by the country may be perceived a good to Qatar, but bad to another country, but will be classified as valuable, due to the object of reference.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research analyses the past literature on soft power across the globe, as well as provides an indication of the key theoretical paradigms that form the foundation for the literature. The study focuses on six soft power resources and culminates in the identification of the research gap.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The theories on soft power are convergent with international relations, specifically due to the fact that soft power campaigns and application of the soft power exists in relation to two countries. Normally, the outcomes of the application of power between two countries can be summarised as indicated hereunder.

Table 2.1: Outcome of Application of Power Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of power resource used by A</th>
<th>Type of Power Resource used by B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by Author
Due to the diversity in the four outcomes that are the interaction of reward and pressure in relation to two countries, the theoretical review will focus on the transition from realism to constructivist approaches to power.

Realism, which was termed as the industry standard for IR, focuses on acquisition and application of material power for coercive purposes (Murray, 2006). Galaroti (2010) indicated that the prioritization of coercive techniques is achieved through wielding of economic leverage and military hardware. As a result, in addition to the application of these tangible resources, realists employ a direct and more force-oriented approach to the manifestation of their power. Two paradigms under realism have been observed, especially in relation to the soft power campaigns by China and the US. The offensive realist approach focuses on maximizing power to achieve optimal security, based on the maxim of the best defense is a good offense. On the contrary, defensive realists are cognizant of the importance of the doctrine of the balance of power, and they only implement sufficient defenses to achieve the national security objectives. Wu (2012) argued that realists perceive soft power as either a tool for inflating or countering threats. It is thus correct to assert that realists advocate the use of soft power to position a country ahead of others or to defend itself from strategic attacks (Wu, 2012). However, it all depends on the amount of power that a country wants or seeks to achieve, relative to other nations, a scenario which gives soft power a binary perspective. Realists perceive the state as the fundamental unit of analysis, whereby power existing within the nation’s military capacity, both in absolute and relative terms. Similarly, by perceiving military power as a tool for coercions, realists classify countries across the globe into three categories, based on whether the country has more, equal or less military power.
Just like realism, liberalism focuses on the state as the fundamental unit for analysis but recognizes the imperativeness of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international law and organizations as variables that influence the state (Coyne and Blanco, 2016). Xu (2010) classified the variables influencing liberalism into four as indicated in Appendix 2. These variables or dimensions of liberalism define the opportunities and strategies that a country can employ in its search for power. However, Xu (2016) indicated that in spite of the difference in dimensions, the implications on power are convergent. Liberalist rejects the proposition that IR is a zero-sum game, devoid of synergistic and symbiotic outcomes.

The constructivist ideology theories that world politics, as defined by the sovereignty of states, national identity, political institutions, legitimacy and national ideologies originate from social processes (Xu, 2010 and Xu, 2016). Corkin, (2014) introduced the sociological inclination in politics and power due to the fact that it is developed based on the prevailing structures and frameworks. Since they are constructed, these systems can be challenged through reason and based on guidelines and frameworks which are agreed upon. Three constructs from the centrality of global politics from a constructivist perspective (Coyne and Blanco, 2016). First, the political idea, which can either be freedom, anarchy or a religious standpoint. Second, identities, such as foreigners, Westerners, or oriental, most of which indicate the domicile of the individual. Last, the norms, whether based on the social or cultural practices of the individual.

In spite of the differences between these philosophical inclinations in reference to power, the strong reliance on the cause and effect approach, specifically focusing on what is observable means that they are more convergent than divergent.
2.3 Acquisition of Soft Power

The instruments for acquisition and application of soft power have been widely discussed and tested empirically and practically. Wilson, (2008) perceives these instruments as the antecedents for successful implementation of diplomatic objectives and policies by countries that seek to employ soft power. Bilgin and Elis (2008) argued that in the absence of these instruments, countries have limited success in acquiring and maintaining soft power. In support, Nye (2004c) perceived these instruments as the antecedents to the processes that result in the acquisition of soft power. However, the author indicated that countries have to do more than possessing and employ these instruments in order to acquire and apply soft power as part or all of its diplomatic goals.

2.3.1 Progressive Higher Education System

The role of a progressive higher education system in generating the contents of the soft power toolbox lies in the fact that knowledge is an essential constituent in thought definition and pioneering processes for strategic thought (Xu, 2016). According to Atkinson (2010, 2), the outcomes of soft power campaigns from higher education exchange programs is dependent on “the depth and extent of social interactions that occur while abroad, the sharing of a sense of community or common identity between participants and their hosts, and the attainment of a politically influential position by the exchange participant when they return home”. The impact of education as a source of soft power relates to the liberal views that non-state actors and individuals are tools and resources in the soft power campaigns (King, 2013). This is why the countries which apply this approach tend to promote
democratic leadership (Ozdemirkiran, 2015), whereby students act as transnational challenges for ideologies and norms (Atkinson, 2010).

As a precursor of education systems, knowledge has historically defined power. The Egyptians as farmers, Greek as Philosophers, Romans as architects (Cribiole, 2004) and the West as the industrialists and technologists (Wojciuk, et al., 2015) have provided extensive evidence for this over time and space. However, in recent times, knowledge has metamorphosed into the foundation for human capital, which can be further deployed to develop a spectrum of behaviour and capabilities that generate soft power capabilities. In this accord, Wojciuk, et al, (2015), Jones (2010) and Sentuc and Molho, (2015) found compelling evidence that countries on the two ends of the academic excellence spectrum have equal motivations to engage in exchange programs for the achievement of soft power.

Amirbek and Ydyrys (2014) and Yang (2010) viewed the exchange programs have constantly established an avenue and channel for sharing of cultures and social values, which is essential for IR. Corkin (2014) indicated that a clearer understanding of the global cultures and social norms is integral in the development of lasting relationships. Furthermore, it facilitates interactions at a deeper level, thereby resulting in the identification of ways through which diplomatic ties can be established, promoted and achieved. Progressive higher education systems have heuristic value in the modern world, specifically in the solution of diplomatic deadlocks, a process which results to possession of soft power (Sheng-Kai, 2015). The establishment of a progressive higher education system is essential in promoting the emergence and progress of innovative individuals who can use their skills and capabilities in acquiring resources for their country. In this accord, they are capable of driving the politico-economic agenda that elevates the position of countries.
(Wijayanahu, 2014; Hazelkorn, (2015). Cooper, et al., (2001) found that countries with a high level of higher education systems stand a better chance of owning resources that are scarce. On the other hand, Corkin, (2014) and Amirbek, and Ydyrys (2014) argued that those countries are highly sought after since they possess a comparative and absolute advantage in a number of crafts. Through the exchange programs, countries with advanced academic systems at the higher education level have the ability to command regional and international credence, especially at a time when innovation and creativity are perceived as the foundation of success. Countries such as the US, China, and European nations, have utilised higher education as a source of soft power by sponsoring academicians from other countries (Xu, 2010, Wang and Lu (2008), Xu (2016) and Valenca and Carvalho (2014). Sheng-Kai (2015) analysed the role of Erasmus Mundus scholarship program and the Singapore Scholarship as part of the strategies by the EU to utilise its higher education soft power resources in Singapore. The study was cognitive of the disparity in the foreign policy objectives between the two countries.

Korpi (1985) pointed out that human capital as a resource is dynamic even when described from a narrow scope. This is because it can be defined qualitatively and quantitatively. There are antithetical perceptions on whether human capital can be duplicated in order to avert the adverse outcomes linked to its acquisition, application and use as a soft power resource. As a result, countries with high populations but low higher education achievement can benefit from the exchange programs in as much as those with low populations but higher literacy levels. On one hand, Nye (2005) and Amirbek and Ydyrys (2014) linked the higher education systems to the dynamicity in sociocultural norms, sharing of success in the creation of knowledge, the establishment of a foundation for technological and economic
advancement and the ability to achieve diversified trajectories for cooperation. On the other hand, higher education systems can be used to preserve these norms and characteristics, by providing their applicability across time and space (Adriansen, et al 2015). This can explain the reason why replacement of cultures is dependent on the most prominent and widely advocated and practised norms, which is dependent on the educational level of the persons who profess that culture.

2.3.2 Socio-Cultural Artefacts

The role of culture and social elements was outlined by Wang and Lu (2008) to include the processes which homogenize the heterogeneous interests, expectations and beliefs of people from different backgrounds. Culturally disparate people have different interests and perceptions on key matters, which can creep into the process of establishing and exploiting international relations for mutual benefits (Su, 2014 and Kim, 2016). Kim (2016) argued that the harmonization of the antecedents and variables that influence culture makes it easy for two countries to cooperate in the murky and complex diplomatic processes without prejudicial conclusions. However, cultural convergence, as explained under sociological theory can actually determine the propensity for people to seek and apply power. First, the symbolic interactionist perspective, introduced by George Mead in 1863-1931 whereby it is possible to link the mundane aspects of life to a culture and then use these to map the intentions or objectives of the people (O’Bright (2016). The functionalism perspective explains that society operates on dependencies and the members contribute in differing ways (Korpi (1985). Although the total outcome, when in terms of power, development or
change is dependent on the contribution by each, it is possible for synergistic and symbiotic relationships to generate outcomes that are more than the literal total. Finally, the conflict perspective introduced under Marxism highlights the influence of suffering and struggles on the decision to change (Calhoun, 2012). As a result, the tendency of a government to change or engage in any socio-cultural events, some form of suffering has to be recorded. Although the change may not be commensurate to the event that caused it, but there is some level of similarity between the two.

McGiffert (2009) indicated that there are two perspectives on soft power, although the literature referenced China. First, the mainstream dimension, established by philosophers and sociologists, that culture is core to soft power. Wu (2012) termed it as an approach where national exceptionalism and uniqueness can be exploited for soft power gains. The process, commonly summed up as cultural imperialism, entails the steps and actions which seek to conquer and control the minds of audiences, in order to reverse or strength the ties between two countries (Sanguanbun, 2015 and Cummings (2003). A more direct definition of cultural imperialism was provided by Sanguanbun, (2015), who termed it as the “sum of processes through which strong or core states use their culture and media in a subtle way to dominate the weak or peripheral states, by systematically corroding indigenous values and cultures and imposing cultural values on them directly or indirectly”. As a result, in order for cultural imperialism to gain momentum, the relationship has to be between countries with inherent inequality, whether through underdeveloped-developed status, subordinate-dominant culture, weak-strong position globally. Such inequality makes one culture more attractive than the other (Su, 2014) or gives one country more power to impose its culture on the other (Kisha, 2012).
However, the positioning of a culture has to be implemented in an objective and strategic manner, lest competing countries create counter-offensive messages to discredit the message (Li and Worm, 2011). Although Westernization that occurred during the colonization process received limited resistance (based on limited records), there is apparent criticism and hostility towards the Confucius institutes as culture transference mechanisms in the modern world. Su, (2014) indicated that the criticism labels these institutes as ‘Chinese Trojan horses’ designed to implement a religious/ cultural invasion or conquest, established around propagandist strategies (Sanguanbun, 2015). The diversified sphere of influence under these institutes is also suspect, especially due to the espionage claims attached to this approach to cultural imperialism and the density of networks established over a short period.

In justifying the contribution of culture to the acquisition of soft power, Lee (2016) indicated that it is a powerful tool in fostering international relations. However, the definition by Sun (2015) goes beyond what Nye (2010) advocated for, but including the contribution of cultural industries and their value propositions in the establishment of the soft power of a country. Furthermore, cultural norms such as linguistic attraction, national attractions, moral and ethical elements (Hurn, 2016), spiritual and religious fervour (Flew, 2016), the robustness of public opinions (Arndt, 2005) and the aesthetic charm (Rostami, 2014) all form a fundamental force that can establish the foundation for reverence between nations.

A similar perception was raised by Kim (2016), who outlined the imperativeness of lack of symmetry between the nations in the acquisition of power. Essentially, this implies that a comparative and absolute advantage exists to one country, in terms of the power resources. The importance of culture in the acquisition of soft power comes from the fact that there is no single metric for quantifying the
prominence of one culture against the other (Bilgin and Elis, 2008). As a result, culture-oriented power can be positioned to exude parity and equity/equality with other countries. Although the ability to mobilise the cultural artefacts is an important process, it is less challenging to achieve when compared with other forms of power.

At the individual level, socio-cultural artefacts can be perceived as antecedents to deeper national ties, especially through the use of film, art, music, sports, scholarships and literature (Hurn, 2016). Bilgin and Elis (2008) found that countries which promoted their citizens to target the global art scene tended to have more influence over culture since these tools are the foundation for interaction and cooperation. Furthermore, musicians, novelists, academicians and athletes are part of the entertainers who can amplify the country’s soft power by attaining positive and key international success and reputation (Su, 2014).

In spite of the specificity and universal acceptability of the ideologies on Confucius, there is extensive contestation on what constitutes the core values of socialism (Meng, 2012). In 2012, Jintao indicated that the values of socialism in the Chinese perspective include democracy, harmony, civilization, prosperity, justice, equality, patriotism, faith, respect for work, rule of law and friendship (Hurn, 2016). Kisha (2012) indicated that these values influence the ability to build a nation, establish ideologies for the society and create a benchmark for the moral and ethical standards within a country.

However, the ability of a country to achieve cultural soft power is dependent on the attractiveness of its culture, and social norms (Flew, 2016), a factor which seems to favour the Western norms (Rostami, 2014). Essentially, the secretive approach and lack of openness to change or challenge adopted by the Orientals weakened the attractiveness of their culture to other individuals. However, the
oversimplification is not universally applicable, since the attractiveness of culture can also exist in the mystery and constancy over time.

2.3.3 Media and Information

The emergence of social media only expanded the channels that are available to countries seeking soft power, and effectively made it possible for more non-state actors to participate in the process (Kisha, 2012). Kalathil (2011) termed the use of media as an approach to shaping the patterns of discourse and determining the effectiveness and impact of information on the masses. In highlighting the impact of the media and information on soft power across the globe, Nye (2014) cites the impact of the 16th-century printing press at Gutenberg’s, which led to dramatic effects on how governance was practiced. Similarly, George, (2016) cited the invention of the radio in the 20th century, where interactive one-way communication facilitated the promotion of Fascist messages. However, in the modern world, the information revolution has taken a different and more diversified dimension, due to the nature of the diffusion. Regardless of the difference in the traditional and modern schemes, the normative media theory explains that the role of the media is convergent towards the society. According to the theory, mass media is designed to achieve the overall goals of society (Christians, et al, 2010). However, in modern society, the different sources of power, including state and non-state actors, implies that these roles may differ across time and space. As a result, the message may not necessarily be analogous at all times. Under the revolutionary effects of aspects such as social media and private media entities, Baran and Davis (2008) indicated that countries are sometimes faced with the need to ‘guide the narrative’, through use of highly effective information disbursement systems.
Lee (2016) found that China used US8.7 billion between 2009 and 2010 for international publicity activities implemented through China Central Television (CCTV), and this application of media and information services for improvement in the image and reputation of the country. In discussing the role of media and information in China’s soft power processes, Hayden (2012) indicated that the attitude towards communication is the fundamental limitation, in spite of the persuasive nature of the message. The absence of objectivity implies an unhealthy dose of subjectivity in the messages, especially when analyzed from the perspective of the notions of the audience and the propensity of the country to avoid openness in other governance processes. Nye (2014) argued that the media and information tend to have a disproportionate effect on the ability to achieve and maintain soft power. Normally, although information and communication may not generate sufficient positive effects in terms of power when effectively used, they always result in significant and momentous adverse effects when ineffectively applied.

Non-state actors can also facilitate the acquisition and wield of soft power, based on their position to disseminate information to people, as they implement their humanitarian policies and projects (Leight, et al., 2011). According to Li and Worm, (2011), the vigorous communication and lobbying used by these non-state actors as they position for finances, support and acceptance establishes credence and acceptability across nations. They also promote an ideology that can be built on a specific country’s soft power campaigns. For instance, entities established around the UN tend to promote western ideologies of peace and co-existence. According to Li and Worm (2011), the superiority and primacy of communication in the acquisition of power can be also observed from bipolarity during the cold war, where two countries with similar communication constraints and capabilities determined the
information dynamics at the time. Xu (2016) noted that the government-controlled information flow, which included the types of media channels used and the type of information disbursed influenced the outcomes of the cold war, thereby justifying the power of media in power. However, the end of the cold war introduced a new approach to the application of information, featuring a multipolar and multidimensional approach, whereby the ‘us versus them’ discourse was replaced through a highly diffused communication perspective, which later culminated into social media. Currently, social media and user-generated content

Strategic communication, including the conceptualization, production and dissemination of information is key since the soft power campaign has to focus on designing the most influential information and conveying the messages as effectively and efficiently as possible. This is because of the party with the most information, based on quantity and quality, dominates and frames the diplomatic and political debate, as well as discrediting or isolating the opponents. Similarly, as indicated by Flew (2016), such parties can achieve greater support and with limited resources.

2.3.4 Superior Diplomatic Skills

Wang and Lu (2008) reiterated the assertion by Nye that soft power can be attributed to superior diplomatic styles and skills. The combination of erudite public relations tactics and strategies provides a country with the necessary credibility among other countries, which improves the soft power of the country. The superior diplomatic skills facilitate the framing up of the arguments for soft power campaigns in order to optimise the outcomes (Wilson, 2008).
Zaharna (2007) indicated that the “conventional public diplomacy, the prevalent mode of communication is mass media-driven, one-way communication, supported by two-way communication such as cultural and educational exchanges.

The contours of diplomatic commitment can be characterized by the manner in which countries craft, sharpen and practice their diplomatic objectives (Brown, 2007). Valenca and Carvalho (2014) discussed Brazil’s approach as created around consensus building and persuasion, a process which is evidently mirrored on the Washington and Beijing consensus. However, as a beginner, Brazil has a steep climb to make, due to the fact that it is overshadowed by the US, which has already exhausted these strategies and established itself as the soft power house in the Americas, including the Caribbean (Valenca and Carvalho, 2014). However, the challenge facing Brazil, like many other countries, is the ability to differentiate its objectives in the manner in which China and Russia did, in reference to the West.

Superior diplomatic skills also seem to mirror the outcomes of soft power campaigns based on the assertions of Bachrach and Baratz (1962). As indicated by Goldsmith and Horiuchi (2008), most of the pre-Nye (1991) discourse on soft power was not definitive enough. However, Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 4), who perceived hard and soft power as the two faces of power, indicated that soft power entails “the practice of limiting the scope of actual decision-making to ‘safe’ issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths, and political institutions and procedures. To pass over this is to neglect one whole ‘face’ of power”. Essentially, this is convergent towards the combination of approaches that most soft power campaigns are implemented, especially by the US (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015 and Arndt, 2005), China (Corkin (2014 and Li and Worm, 2011), Brazil (Valenca and Carvalho, 2014) and India (Wijayanahu, 2014 and Purushothaman, 2010). As a
result, the type of diplomacy preferred by the country influences the ability to achieve the influence over other countries.

2.3.5 Democratic Governance Systems

The acquisition of a favorable reputation is perceived as an integral determinant of the adoption of a democratic governance system (Galaroti, 2010; and. Based on the three-level conceptualisation by Nye (2002), a democratic governance system enhances the positive attraction to countries with similar governance systems, enhances the agenda-setting capacity through the institutional framework, and enhances the ability of these institutions and frameworks to acquire identities through constitutive power. This is why neoliberal institutionalist argued that reputation at a national level entails the evaluation of the benchmarked standards from cooperation from other countries. In support, Keohane (2005, 116) stated that “to a government that values its ability to make future agreements, reputation is a crucial resource.” Nye (2004c) provides support that democratic governance systems are an integral element in the acquisition of soft power. This is because the democratic political values spur foreign policies that are aligned with universal beliefs of the West. Furthermore, there is evidence that the victorious outcomes under democracy in comparison with communism is proof that the governance system that entails attraction and persuasion is a more powerful and reliable approach (McGiffert, 2009).

There is a challenge to the viability of democratic governance in the acquisition of soft power because such systems are considered arrogant, hypocritical, and indifferent to the interests and opinions of other nations (Pouliot and Cornut,
Mearsheimer (2001) advocated for the role of political unity and competence to the acquisition of soft power, as indicated that this is one of the strategies applied by China in its challenge to super-powerdom. From a broader sense, McGiffert (2009) pointed out that political power, which is based on the ideologies by the political class, is core to soft power. Democratic governance also sets the foundation for the development of institutional frameworks that can promote the acquisition of soft power. Lee (2016) pointed out that China established institutional frameworks as early as 1993, a process which was supported by President Jintao in 2002, and extended by the Chinese Communist Part in 2007. The fundamental strategies employed include the diffusion and decentralization of decision making, which results in improvement in implementation and policy making (Amirbek and Ydyrys, 2014).

Lee (2016) pointed out that the existence of democratic governance is important as the perceptions of the existence of such a system. This is because most individuals make decisions based on the type of information they receive, which is a combination of observations and (what they hear). In reference to China, Xu (2016) argued that the effects of the political system may not differ significantly from those in the US, but the US is perceived as a more democratic country in comparison. This is because of the effectiveness in the rhetoric and information mills that are involved in creating the perception that democracy exists, as well as the application of democracy in the day to day governance processes.

Wang and Lu (2008) indicated that over and above a democratic governance, it is imperative for a country to display national unity and cohesiveness as a show of capability and uniformity in interests. This process has constantly been challenged, due to the fact that it is widely acknowledged that national consensus is a challenging
objective to achieve. Henderson, et al (2013) pointed out that such a scenario under
dynamic internal and external shocks can be viewed as a sign of authoritarianism,
whereby discord is shunned or banished. China and the US have intermittently
applied this strategy through the use of a national language, national spirit, and
national sentiment as a sign of strength and banding of power (Zhang and Jiang,
2010). However, in the absence of unchallenged legitimacy to the regime, a fact
which is lacking in China, it is impossible to gain the desired international status.

A number of questions are raised as to whether soft power campaigns can be
robust enough to warrant the measures necessary to ensure popular governance
systems. Nye (2010) defined a popular government as one that is elected by a
majority and supported across the board. However, due to the partisan nature of
political processes, democratic leadership rarely achieve achieves such populist
standards, as political opportunism breed discord, even when such discord is not
warranted.

2.3.6 Favorable Distribution of National Wealth

In reference to China’s rise to power, Mearsheimer (2001) and Keohane
(2005) indicated that the primary source of its success is the search of hegemony in
the region, through modernisation of its economy, a producer of cutting edge
technologies and acquisition of immense wealth. These three reasons highlight the
importance of capital resources to the acquisition of soft power for China, but they
only relate to one dimension of a multi-dimensional process, through which the
favourable distribution is sought. Economic theory hypothesizes that entities with
more resources have and can acquire power, which in this can either be soft or hard
power. Although Nye (2010) indicated that resources are commonly used for hard power, the acquisition of soft power also requires extensive resources. Economic theory on scarcity of resources indicates that some resources cannot be duplicated, which means that only countries with these resources can use them for the purposes they want to (Robbins, 2007). Economic theory also explains why equitable distribution of theory (Barbier, 2013).

Rapid growth in the economic prowess of a country is directly linked to the diversity of its power resources (Ohnesorge, 2014 and Korpi, 1985). In the discussion by Mustafa (2016) and Swielande and Vandamme (2015), economic power and wealth provide a country with the ability to solve a diversity of its domestic needs, thereby aligning the needs of the people with that of the political class. The prominence of the economic outlook on the political stability is evidenced by the stability observed in developed countries in comparison with the developing and under-developed countries (Keohane, 2005). The linearity in the relationship was attributed to the fact that wealthy countries can provide most of the basic needs that enable its citizens to perceive themselves as near-equals, in addition to the absence of poverty that can be exploited for political capital.

Wealthy countries also tend to have a favorable distribution of national wealth (Yang, 2012, Morgenthau, 1985 and Hayden, 2012.), which limits the perceptions of injustice, inequality and favoritism within the domestic bonds (Korpi, 1985 and Li and Worm, 2011). By so doing, a country is able to invest in basic needs and certain infrastructures that are integral for stability. The favorable distribution of wealth also limits the willingness of the non-state actors and institutions within the country to respond to power plays in adverse manners. According to Hirsch (2013), non-state actors have the tact and ability to drive the soft power campaigns at the
national level. As a result, Nye (2004a) indicated that when empowered economically, they have the ability to gain the resources necessary for other dimensions of soft power, such as morphing culturally, gaining education and knowledge, attaining favorable social status, access to information and the ability to interact on an international level.

One of the fundamental necessities for wealth distribution in improvement in the GDP, which is a key indicator of economic strength and outlook. According to Lee (2016), China’s gross domestic product (GDP), (US 10,000B), was second to that of the US (US$17,400B) but was expected to surpass that of the US due to the 9% growth rate since 2009. The revisionist approach, whereby countries implement economic policies aimed at improving their positions is expected to place China at a vantage point through pseudo-imperialist approaches. The revisionist approach by China is evidenced by the following first. First, most of the actions by the country deviate from the changes in interstate diplomatic agenda, regional security policies and international economic frameworks (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015). An example is the current investment of US1trillion in the ‘One Belt, One Road’, which seeks to position China as a key participant in the trade in Europe and Africa (Cai, 2017). Second, the state leaders have displayed dissatisfaction with the existing distribution of power, both regionally and globally. For instance, deLisle (2010) argued that China has undertaken measures to a position as a power house by claiming the South China Sea region, which is considered strategic for military and trade activities.

The argument against capitalism gained momentum after the 2008-09 credit crisis, where institutionalized capitalistic tendencies led to the collapse of the financial system. Nye (2010) pointed out that the collapse in the ‘Wall Street Model’ also weakened the reliability of the Washington Consensus and whatever economic
advantages are aligned with the Western soft power model. Wang and Lu (2008) indicated that both China and the US have introduced unique strategies for market economies, aimed at modeling the global influence. The objective of these strategies is to recruit and advocate for the adoption of their systems to economic liberation, in order to gain the momentum that originates from widespread adoption. The success of the models is hinged on quantitative and qualitative growth, which is why the developing world is currently the platform for expansion, as these two countries seek validation of the either the ‘Washington Consensus’ or the ‘Beijing Consensus’. The imposition of these systems is based on a deeper objective since they are mutually exclusive.

2.4 Challenges linked to acquisition and Application of Soft Power

Soft-power entities rely on a diversity of mechanisms to project power and achieve their objectives. However, based on the assertions by Nye (1991) and Nye (2010), it is clear that soft power has evolved in its qualities, dimensions, impacts, effectiveness and diversities. The tendency of theorists and researchers to create a value-distorted misrepresentation of soft power is by far the greatest challenges to acquisition and application of soft power. It can also be attributed to the dynamism of soft power over time and space as discussed by Xu (2016) and implied in the literature and definitions by Nye in 1990, 1991, 2004 and 2010. Conversely, it can also be argued that most of the challenges with soft power are linked to the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, whereby the US sought to put measures in place to ward off any influence from puppet monarchs or colonization.
The ability to maintain consistency in the soft power campaigns is still a challenge to most countries, with an example of the US which is accused of human rights abuses and retrogressive policies that are initially packaged as beneficial campaigns (Nye, 2002). It is important for a country to maintain specific standards in diplomacy (Wijayanahu, 2014), lest another will adopt a position of power in order to solve the challenges that face the weak nation. This is because political regimes and countries tend to act as intermediate variables between the prevailing global political scenario and the entities (both persons and corporations) in the domestic scenario. In the absence of a reliable political process, these non-state actors are bound to assimilate power from the world political systems. In support, Nye (2004, p80) stated that “if a state can establish international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change. If it can support institutions that make other states wish to channel or limit their activities in ways the dominant state prefers, it may be spared the costly exercise of coercive or had power”. It is important to note that the acquisition of soft must focus on at least two dimensions in order for the country to succeed. First, targeting the domestic audience, with the aim of aligning the interests of the domestic institutions and audiences with the national interests, as well as empowering the citizens through literacy, equity in wealth distribution, and general empowerment. Second, the international audiences, comprised of the stakeholders in the countries where it seeks to impart the soft power, as well as internationally. Melissen (2005) perceived a latent challenge in the acquisition of soft power, based on the parties who were directly involved in the process. They argued that the credibility of the parties, whether non-state actors (individuals or institutions) or governments are commonly judged from a multiplicity of dimensions, which may influence the actions of the countries.
2.5 Summary and Research Gap

The literature review has focused on the broader explanation of soft power, the cumulative insights on IR and controlled comparisons of theories on diplomatic objectives and global politics. In addition to the determination that the characteristics of soft power and the acquisition and application differ from one country to the other and across different periods, it is clear that soft power represents just one dimension of the international relations. The empirical generalization in the nature of soft power has been found to be incorrect, especially considering the differences in what is termed as the Washington consensus and Beijing Consensus, not to mention the emerging soft power campaigns by countries such as Brazil and India.

There is a conflict in the views as to whether soft power must always be equated with some specific or identifiable resources, a scenario termed as the vehicle fallacy. The vehicle fallacy tends to linearly establish the need for measurability or the power, as well as the existence of a concrete end to end description of what soft power entails. This is fundamentally implicated under realism, liberalism and constructivism, based on the perception that power must always be acquired or exercise at the backdrop of some resources. This raises questions on why countries that have more resources do not possess more power (soft and or hard). However, the number of variables and stakeholders involved in the acquisition and application of soft power makes it challenging for there to be a linearly discernible trajectory as expected of such an important construct.

The review provides a number of conclusions in relation to soft power. First, soft power is fundamentally operational on the international scene, even though the
campaigns have to be mobilized from the domestic arena. Second, the acquisition and application of soft power, like is the case for other forms of power, is dependent on a particular scale and scope. The domain specificity of soft power implies that the outcome of the campaigns is not absolute dominance within the domestic or international scenes, but the possession of a tool that can be applied for specific purposes and to a certain degree. Third, soft power seeks to serve national interests, within the specific scope and domains that are discussed under the second factor above. Countries invest in soft power campaigns specifically for objectives oriented towards the domestic interests and justifiably so since it is a tool for dominance. Last, non-state actors are key drivers of power campaigns. The tactical advantages from involving non-state actors originate from the fact that their missions, objectives and goals are fairly invariable when compared with those of the political institutions within the country. Similarly, the level of independence between and among countries present a different dimension of opportunities and challenges, especially considering that they have intrinsic interests, which create the foundation for conflict. As a result, by simplifying soft power to Country A (such as the case in this study where Country A is Qatar), it is important to understand the kind of soft power resources it possesses, its interests, past relations and how they influence the status quo, future expectations and the counteractions of other countries ( Classified under Country Bs) and the outcome of the interactions aimed at achieving the desired levels of control.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this section, the processes and approaches through which data will be collected shall be provided, specifically focusing on the types of data, the sources of the data and the manner in which the findings are analyzed. The methodology is systematic and structured in a manner to ensure that the five variables identified in the literature review are investigated sufficiently, from the various types of data and analysis methods. Finally, the ethical concerns are provided, in order to indicate the measures that the researcher performs the study within the boundaries set by the institution and for research projects.

3.2 Philosophy of the research

The research philosophy chosen for this study is the pragmatic paradigm. According to Biesta and Burbles (2004), the research philosophy indicates the underlying principles in the analysis of findings and the definition of the reality which acts as a standard or comparison. According to pragmatism, the reality is based on what can be proven, and what is supported by both the reality and evidence. As a result, pragmatism is a combination of the interpretive (interpretations of the observed reality) and positivism (the actual observation devoid of interpretations). The two divergent positions provide the explanations of reality that when merged are
termed as the pragmatic position. Based on the analogy by Goran (2012), the importance of the pragmatic position in this research is due to the fact that although the definition of soft power is not subject to interpretation, there are different approaches used by the countries that seek this form of regional dominance of prominence. Similarly, the determination of success and the range of challenges faced by Qatar are situational in nature. As a result, the researcher will focus on interpreting the results based on their practical applicability in international relations and the theories on diplomacy.

3.3 Research Design

The study will rely on an exploratory design, which is defined as an analysis strategy which focuses on an in-depth analysis of a subject in order to provide detailed information on the variables and factors that are identified in the literature review. According to Creswell (2013), the exploratory design focuses on a critical investigation with limited boundaries on what aspects can be reviewed. As a result, it is best suited for the qualitative data, which relies on the perceptions, experiences and views of the respondents. Similarly, since an unstructured or semi-structured data collection process can be used, the exploratory design will be selected instead of the confirmatory design.

3.4 Research approach and Methods

The research approach defines the type of data and analysis methods that the researcher applies in the study (Creswell, 2014). The research approach is pivotal in
the study since it shows what type of methods will be applied in collecting the data, as well as indicating what type of data shall be used in answering the research questions and fulfilling the research. Edmonds and Kennedy (2012) indicated that there are two key research approaches: the qualitative and quantitative. However when merged, the mixed methods approach is created, one that bears the advantages of the two, while nullifying most of the disadvantages of the two primary approaches. The qualitative approach entails collection of data from a small sample, which allows the researcher to perform an in-depth and open-ended investigation into the subject (Johnson and Christensen, 2010). According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative approach culminates in data that is textual in nature, and the researcher has to code the data in order to determine the patterns and themes which are related to the research topic. By so doing, it is possible to investigate a fairly new phenomenon, by targeting individuals who are well-informed on the subject. On the other hand, the quantitative approach entails an investigation into widely familiar phenomena, whereby the researcher seeks to determine the views of a large sample. According to Johnson and Christensen, (2010), the investigation is designed to determine whether the sample shares in the existing views, in a scenario where the expected outcomes can be predicted. As a result, the data is encoded for ease of analysis, which is performed through scientific models (Creswell, 2014). In the mixed methods approach, the qualitative and quantitative approaches are merged in a manner that suits the interests of the researcher. As indicated by Creswell (2013), the mixed methods approach draws its superiority from the fact that the researcher can merge the qualitative and quantitative approaches at any point in the research. As a result, it focuses on the exploratory and confirmatory dimensions of research. This will make it possible for the researcher to apply the knowledge on soft power from
other countries such as the US, China and Brazil in identifying the current and prospective challenges and opportunities under soft power for Qatar.

### 3.5 Types of Data

The process of collecting data will include both primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews of selected individuals who are involved in the governance of the country, and professionals who can provide insights into the diplomatic activities of the country. The interviews will target 15 members from the government, and 15 individuals from the private sector. The members of the private sector will be drawn from academic institutions where foreign policy and diplomacy teaching occurs since these individuals are well informed on the matters of international relations. The findings from the interviews will be analyzed through thematic analysis, which entails both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The analysis will identify the frequency

Secondary data, which shall be collected from existing publications and government repositories, shall be used to complement and supplement the findings from the interviews. Secondary data is however limited in the fact that it is generic in nature. As a result, the researcher will synthesize the information to fit the requirements for the study. The secondary data to be used will include both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative secondary data will be analyzed through content analysis. According to Bainley (2008), content analysis entails identification of the themes and patterns in the information found in publications. The themes will be selected based on their relevance to soft power, as discussed under the theory of realism. The analysis will also focus on the themes identified in the literature review
in order to ensure that the analysis focuses on the relevant themes. The findings will be presented qualitatively and quantitatively, with supporting evidence from the quotes from the interview.

3.6 Sampling

The purposive sampling approach will be employed in this study. According to Engel and Schutt (2009), purposive sampling is a randomized approach whereby the study participants are selected on account of their privity to the subject matter and the objectives of the study. Ray (2012) indicated that purposive sampling is integral in qualitative studies, where the selective, subjective and judgmental sampling approach ensures that the individual selected for the study are well-informed on the subject. Engel and Schutt (2009), argued that the approach does not introduce bias into the study unless the bias towards ensuring reliable and relevant information is taken into consideration. As a result, in this study, the purposive sampling shall establish the foundation for a collection of information from individuals who are well-informed in international relations in Qatar, and the efforts by the country to implement soft power campaigns. Based on the analogy by Tashakori and Teddie (2003), this approach will solve the challenges of non-probabilistic sampling, while allowing the researcher to target the desired sample size while ensuring sufficiency of the data collected from the survey.
3.7 Analysis techniques

The study will follow the analytical eclecticism methodology, which was developed by Katzenstein in 1990. According to Katzenstein and Sil (2009) and Xu (2010), analytical eclecticism is a problem oriented and driven approach which looks beyond structured approach to an investigation into a subject, without overlooking the importance of a frame-worked and objective approach to identifying the thematic content from qualitative and quantitative data. Analytical eclecticism is an effective tool in international relations study as asserted in the thesis by Xu (2010) and research by Sil and Katzenstein (2010) and Cornut (2014). According to Nicholls (2012), analytic eclecticism draws its utility by going beyond the limits set by the paradigm bound traditional and contemporary methodologies, which still grapple with the challenges of providing a continuous stream of reliable insights into the intricate workings of the international systems of relations and the related systems. Essentially, it provides a path towards simplification of the complex real world challenges that exceed the limits of the academic studies and the knowledge creation processes that are useful for policy development. Similarly, as indicated by Xu (2010), analytic eclecticism recognizes the importance of compartmentalization in research into international relations, which is not subject to most of the constraints set by the predetermined theories such as realism, liberalism and constructivism. The alternative approach to thinking will make it possible for the researcher to focus on an ‘out-of-the-box’ approach, without compromising the systematic strategies that are core to research. Similarly, Xu (2010) indicated that analytic eclecticism allows for development of explanatory sketches built around the pragmatic philosophies, whereby the mainstream paradigms are analyzed from a practical and intellectual perspective and integrated in order to ensure that the research draws on unique...
logics, methods, assumptions, concepts, causal and correllational mechanisms and assumptive interpretations.

In order to control the notion that analytic eclecticism advocates for ‘anything goes’ and to weed out the inconsequential and uninfluential variables, the researcher will focus on the five variables identified in the literature review, as well as identifying the challenges and characteristics of soft power in Qatar. As a result, the integration of an objective approach into the subjective realm of analytic eclecticism, as done by Xu (2010) and Cornut (2014) will make it possible for the researcher to target the fundamental themes of soft power in Qatar.

Analytical eclecticism is an effective approach since the fundamental and original theories on international relations and power under realism can be supplemented and supplanted with the insights from liberalism and constructivism researchers (Katzenstein and Okawara, 2002). As a result, in addition to providing an integrated format for analysis, the process can be applied for studies where both qualitative and quantitative data from secondary sources are utilised.

Xu (2010) theorized that since soft power is directly linked to the national interest, which further justifies why this model is an effective analytical tool in this study. By conceptualizing the national interests using the analytic eclecticism approach, it is possible to determine how soft power fits into the whole picture while providing evidence of the hypothetical and evidentiary relationship. This is why all the variables identified in Chapter 2 are linked to national interests of Qatar, based on the assumptions that soft power objectives are similar and convergent across the globe, in spite of the principle-based and methodological differences.
Analytical eclecticism will be merged with content analysis, which will be applied to the interview results, through a process that seeks to identify the themes and patterns in the responses. This is because the analysis accommodates the ideational and material constituents of soft power, and operationalizes them in relation to the opportunities and constraints in the environment. As a result, the analysis will look at what opportunities and challenges exist in the internal and external environment in relation to Qatar. Content analysis, which will be applied to the interview data, shall focus on the perceptions of the sampled individuals on the soft power campaigns and strategies in Qatar.

3.8 Ethical Concerns

The ethical concerns to adhere in research are determined by the need to ensure that the research findings and processes are reliable and specifically viable for the research objectives. The first concern is that the research should adhere to the research writing guidelines by the university, in terms of use of existing content and avoidance of plagiarism. Consequently, the research will provide evidence of the uniqueness of the content as per the university guidelines. Secondly, the research will observe anonymity standards when collecting primary data from the interviewees. The main areas of concern include the selection of a balanced sample which will give unbiased views on the subject. Similarly, the research will focus on collecting information that is relevant, without compromising the professional and personal status of the individuals. In order to reaffirm this concern, the researcher will ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided. As a result, the respondents will be identified as Interviewees, rather than by their names or
designations. The researcher will request for permission from the interviewees to tape the interview, since it may be challenging to transcribe the responses live. However, the captured information will only be used for transcription purposes and will not be part of the study. Eventually, only the themes identified and the explanations will be used during the findings, and not the responses from the interviewees. Finally, specific attention will be given to the selection of the individuals, especially in terms of ensuring that no harm befalls the participants. As a result, in addition to the informed consent forms, the interviewee will be given sufficient assurances on the steps taken to avoid harm to themselves.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this section, the results from the interviews and assessment of publications on the countries are presented. The responses are based on interviews with 12 individuals who are interviewed between September 1 and 28. The respondents are profiled as indicated hereunder.

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<th>Respondent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
<td>A professional working in the public sector, with two decades of experience in Qatar’s domestic policies, specifically in terms of governance, leadership and management of public resources. The respondent is involved in different aspects of government, which has given him exposure to a number of diplomatic activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
<td>With extensive experience in the educational reforms in the country, this respondent is attached to the educational ministry and has widespread experience in the culture of Qatar as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
<td>As part of the political class, Respondent 3 has worked for over ten years in promoting the image of Qatar domestically and internationally. The respondent is involved in Government and policy making, specifically aimed at coordinating activities in the ministry of culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4</td>
<td>Respondent 4 is a professor in the country, who has overseen educational reforms and integration of foreign aspects into the domestic learning systems, specifically in the sharing of knowledge and information about the country. With over 25 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
<td>Respondent 5 is involved in policy making in the ministry of Finance, but previously worked in ministry of administrative development among others. He is well informed about domestic economic policies as well as the efforts of the country in its rise to dominance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 6</td>
<td>The Respondent has worked in the ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Education and Higher education, during which he was involved in designing policies to promote education in the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 7</td>
<td>The respondent has consulted with the ministry of culture, arts and heritage, but is involved in the media and information industry, whereby he provides ideas on how to promote the image of Qatar across the globe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 8</td>
<td>Respondent 8 is a career diplomat involved in a number of diplomatic missions regionally and internationally. He is experienced in negotiations in conflicts as well as creation of treaties for international alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 9</td>
<td>Respondent 9 is an academician specialising in international relations. He has worked in a number of domestic and regional institutions of higher education and he has extensive knowledge and experience in diplomacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 10</td>
<td>Respondent has 15 years of experience in the ministry of culture, arts and heritage, having worked briefly in the ministry of Awqaf and Islamic affairs. He has extensive knowledge in the culture of the Middle East and is frequently consulted on matters relating to culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 11</td>
<td>Respondent 11 works in the ministry of Education and Higher education but has been involved in policy design for administrative development and development planning and statistics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by Author
4.2 Acquisition of Soft Power by Qatar

In this section, the findings on how Qatar has acquired its soft power are provided. The section focuses on the six key factors that were discussed in the literature review.

4.2.1 Progressive Higher Education

The number of international students has increased from 1170 in 2004 to 7154 in 2012 (Said, 2016). The top schools, which are globally recognised and attracting international students include Hamad bin Khalifa University and Qatar University. As indicated by Bollag (2016), Qatar has invested heavily in attracting international universities to open branches in the country, resulting to state-of-the-art campuses across the country, with at least 8 international universities (six from America, one from Britain and One from France). The country has established the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, a fund to sponsor all these students, with a guarantee of freedom in all academic endeavours, whereby students enjoy quality and equality in access. However, according to Respondent 2:

“The implementation of education reforms can be described as a dilemma between maintenance of social norms and academic standards, whereby the institutions are forced to balance the two in order to accommodate all prospective students”.

On the same note, Respondent 6 stated that
“The primary question is who and what should be taught and promoted in schools, and what requirements are necessary in order to accommodate the targeted demographics”,

This raises questions whether the fundamental philosophies are built on efficiency or inclusiveness. In order to achieve the objectives of efficiency and inclusiveness, operational independence is important for most of the institutions of higher learning (Nasser, 2016). However, Felsch (2016) observed that there is encroachment from the government ministries that seek to align the education system with the policies of the government, thus leading to a conflict of interest.

The country contracted RAND (Research and Development), which is a global policy consultancy entity, which provided a three-pronged proposition for improvement in the education. The propositions include the path for innovation, the design or institutional environment and implementation strategies, including propositions for the transition (Said, 2016). Respondent 4 indicated that “...indicated that Qatar’s higher education reforms can be termed as mutual adaptations, which are subject to continuous change, especially to reflect the needs of the international standards”.

Peter (2013) indicated that the enrolment in secondary schools grew from 69% to 91% between 1991 and 2011, although only 12% transition to post-secondary training. Similarly, Bollag, (2016) indicated that the higher education objectives of Qatar can be identified from the main principles of the overall education system, which include a close link between education and religion to ensure morality, designing an education system that promotes national pride and patriotism, integration of physical, mental, social and spiritual elements in the learning process,
increasing access to knowledge and science-oriented learning, encouraging self-learning and advancement, eradication of illiteracy through introduction of adult education and creating open-mindedness in the learning process in order to promote the cultural identities under Arab-Islamic norms. In addition to the Education Law established in 1954, the Ministerial Decree No 25 of 1980 (No 53 and 57 in 1994), Said (2016) indicated that the Cabinet policies contained in Decision No. 41 in 1981 and the Emiri Decree No 37 of 2006 (Restated in 2009) have established the foundation for consolidating a framework for empowerment in education, designed to ensure high standards of education across all levels and for all citizens.

In support for the international exchange, the Higher Education Institute has established a scholarship program that facilitates completion of domestic and international tests, which provide students with certificates of equivalency. Respondent 11 indicated that

“There are numerous domestic and international institutions of higher education, at least 12 within the country, with over 60 specialization, Specializations in law, sustainable environment, engineering and computer science, chemical engineering, biological and biomedical services, and biological and environmental studies”.

However, there is no evidence that these universities have established branches outside the country. Essentially, Qatar has focused on importing higher education elements rather than exporting in the past. When asked whether the education is of international standards, Respondent 8 stated that:

“The participants report that all promises have been kept, especially considering their ability to pursue teaching and research without limitations”.

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However, foreigners are commonly treated as guests rather than part of the system, considering that the country has a nationalist approach to distribution of resource (Bollag, 2016). As a result, some of the institutions such as Education City are designed to cater primarily for Qataris, or give priority to Qataris. In some instances, the courses that receive sponsorship are based on the interests of the country rather than the interests of the scholars.

4.2.2 Socio-Cultural Elements

The attractiveness of the culture in Qatar is arguably one of the fundamental sources of its soft power. According to Brannagan and Giulianotti (2015), Qatari’s follow a semi-secular culture, which is highly dynamic, although significantly established around the Islamic religion. Foley, et al (2012) argues that the Qataris are receptive of other cultures and cognisant of the theoretically identified weaknesses in the culture of the Middle East. In most instances, their culture has transitioned towards adopting complementary artefacts from the Western cultures in order to bridge these gaps and establish a modernized way of life, without losing their identity. Respondent 2 states that:

“… the emergence of a social class within the Middle Eastern countries marked by consumption of digital media is driven by ubiquitous used of the internet, coupled with the expansion of a diversity of other infrastructural elements”.

Most of the Qataris understand the importance of government censorship, and only 30% of the internet users are concerned about surveillance by the government on their use of the internet (Denis, et al, (2016). In the same report, 54% of the Qataris would like to express their free opinions on the internet and support free
speech online, while 80% of Qataris use Facebook and Whatsapp in Arabic, meaning that most of the content is shared with countries that speak the language. 36% of Qataris watch films, television and visit the cinema, mostly on Arabic contents (Denis, et al, (2016). The most popular content is in the comedy, documentaries drama and news genre. However, compared with the rest of the Middle East, Qataris consume less TV, film, movies, music and online media. They are also less likely to share online content on social media, with only 36% having shared content online. Most of Qataris prefer content from the US and the West, and a large proportion consumes content from in English. In the same report, 49% of the audio-visual content relates to the news with 46% relating to entertainment, meaning that they are more concerned with entertainment.

According to Branagan and Giulianotti (2014) “For Qatari authorities, successful engagement with, and leadership of, the global sport is one of the most effective mechanisms for promoting better understandings of Arab and Eastern cultures, and for demonstrating what ‘Oriental’ societies have to offer in socio-political terms”.

Felsch (2016) highlighted the role of Qatar foundation in the achievement of the goals of prominence in the sporting world, by proving its responsibility and professionalism in managing high calibre sporting activities. Respondent 3 stated that:

“… this is why everything will be state of the art, and an example is Al-Wakrah Stadium, whereby the country contracted Aecom to design a structure that symbolizes progress of the country”.

Similarly, world-renown designer of the Aspire Dome, Roger Talbert, was commissioned to create architectural grandiose to promote the symbolism of change in the country. Respondent 5 states that:
“Most of the events hosted by Qatar are aimed at dispelling the perception and stereotype that the Arabs are lazy, backwards, irrational and irresponsible and incapable of accommodating other cultures”.

In support, Respondent 1 said that:

“The country is keen on proving that it has the ability to challenge the west in terms of quality of services and ability to design activities in a unique and interesting manner”.

Qatar has positioned itself in the limelight of sports, specifically soccer, through the acquisition of leading football clubs in Europe. One such club, Paris St. Germain (PSG), owned by Qatari businessmen, activated the release clause of a top soccer player, leading to the most expensive transfer in the history of soccer (Slama, 2017). According to Slama (2017), the activation of the US$ 264 Million (€), doubled the previous transfer fees. Analysts perceive the activation of the transfer clause as a communication strategy piloted at the highest levels within Qatar aimed at overshadowing the discourse on Qatar’s involvement in terrorism sponsorship.

Although Qatar has successfully positioned itself in international sports by sponsoring Barcelona, which set the stage for the current circumvention strategy, there are concerns whether the culture of football, which is lacking in the country, will be significant enough to drive the viability of the newly developed sporting infrastructure. The concerns were raised by Rose and Spiegel, (2011), who cited the case of ‘white elephant’ project effects linked to most situations in the post-Olympic periods since the host countries are not able to generate sufficient interest in the sporting activities to keep the venues viable. In the case of Qatar, in addition to the lack of a sporting culture, both domestically and regionally, the country has a small
population compared to most countries across the globe. Qatar expects to use the World Cup 2022 event as an announcement that it has graduated or arrived at the global stage in terms of the capability of hosting an event of that magnitude (Amnesty International, 2013). It is also expected to showcase the creativity and modernity at a national level.

One of the unexpected double-edged effects of the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar is the increased scrutiny, and the importance of its response to the increased scrutiny (Samuel, et al, 2016 and Amnesty International, 2013). For instance, there is an increased focus on how characteristics of the country’s labour laws and the treatment of the 1.5 million foreign workforce, the country. However, Felsch (2016) argues that most of these workers are not attracted to the country by the culture, but rather by the promise of better-paying jobs and an opportunity for work. Sports is the most noticeable focal point for global engagement in Qatar. In the past, Qatar acquired a significant share of the 2012 Olympic village and followed that with the acquisition of a European soccer entity (PSG), as well as a multi-million sponsorship of Barcelona Football Club through a diversity of institutions. Other investments in sporting activities include the sponsorship for Handball in 2015, Asian Football cup in 2011 and creation of an Open Tennis and Golf Tournament. A number of failures reported in its strategies to venture into global sporting events include the failed bid for Olympics games for 2016 and 2020. These sporting activities have elevated Qatar’s ‘glocal’ consciousness, by giving the country the ability to perceive itself in the global context and to strategically position itself in a manner that influences global affairs.

The world cup is expected to showcase the state-of-the-art technological development and innovative modern culture within Qatar, which is expected to
reflect how far Qatar has gone in modernising the country. According to Respondent 3,

“…the stadiums are designed with carbon-friendly climate control mechanisms and high-tech structures to show the world that Qatar has come a long way”.

Respondent 10 also indicated that:

“…the country has a plan to use modular technology, whereby most of the stadiums and infrastructure for the World Cup can be dismantled and transferred to developing countries, such as Africa, where Qatar has already found inroads in countries such as Egypt and Sudan”.

The prominence of the capital into a symbol of ‘dubaification’ and ‘urbanism’ in the region, driven by the vast oil wealth, has provided a destination for global tourists. Exhibition of the supremacy of Qatar as a micro state, through the creation of a better understanding of Eastern and Arabic cultures from a socio-cultural and political perspective. As indicated by Samuel, et al, (2016) and Abuzayed (2013), the objectives of investing in these sporting activities is to dispel the prejudices and misconceptions about the differences between the West and the East, specifically the Middle East. It is also expected that the events will highlight the responsibility and professionalism by the micro state. Qatar has also established itself as a modern business-oriented country, capable of fulfilling the expectations of global clients, especially in the west.

“Essentially, the business-oriented strategies are designed to present the country as an international economy, capable of providing a constant supply of high quality and high demand products without facing most of the challenges that face emerging and developing countries” (Respondent 2).
Finally, in terms of religion, Qatar has sought to position itself as the hub for Wahhabism, through the construction of the Mosque at Doha, named Sheikh Mohammed Abdul Wahhab. The conservatism in Qatar is no different from other countries in the Middle East. However, Respondent 3 states that:

“Qatar has constantly sought to elevate itself and create an identity, without forgetting the relevance of the Islamic and Arabic culture in the modern world”.

4.2.3 Media and Information

The Doha Centre for Media Freedom (DCMF), established in 2007 by the Emir is designed to protect journalists from threats and ensure the free flow of information and news within the country and across the world (El-Chaaidmi, 2016). In the symposium of 2007, stakeholders decided to repeal the Press and Publications Law of 1979, which was designed to restrict the flow of information. However, the centre has been dormant since, with limited influence or contribution based on its objectives, and the fact that there is freedom of information. Respondent 7 states that:

“Most of the media is owned by the royal family, and three out of the seven daily print media is in English. The only form of censure entails control over the political, religious and sexual content that is objectionable.

Al-Jazeera, which is a satellite TV network, broadcasts in Arabic Language and covers a broad range of topics on the domestic and international news, which makes it a leading source and outlet of information for most Qataris (Figenschou, 2013). Al-Jazeera is considered an ideal of quality journalistic activities and freedom of the media, which has currently expanded to French and English broadcast in
addition to the Arabic networks. Other outlets include Qatar News Agency (QNA), Qatar Media Corporation (QMC), Qatar TV (QTV), and Al Rayyan TV (Samei, et al, 2016). By hosting a number of global leaders in various fields, Al Jazeera has improved the image of Qatar, by positioning it as a reliable source of information from the Middle East. However, there are still reports and evidence that Al Jazeera and the state-owned media houses are used by the government as part of the broader mechanisms to achieve partisan goals that are viewed as damaging to the country.

Azran and Pecht (2014) found that during the 2002-2007 crisis between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, there was an increase in the number of negative information from Al Jazeera on Saudi Arabia, both from the qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Based on the findings, Al Jazeera was found to provide significantly damaging information on Saudi Arabia in the crisis period in comparison with the pre- and post-crisis periods, in the hope of painting the country as an adversarial state and further the agenda setting processes, specifically in relation to human rights. In Support, Azran (2013, 3), argued that “Qatar invented a new model of public diplomacy by operating Al-Jazeera as a hybrid state-sponsored/private network, effectively transforming the network into a highly potent public diplomacy tool”.

ICT penetration through computers grew from 32% to 67% between 2008 and 2012 (Denis, et al, 2016). Based on the same report, over the same period, internet use increased from 38% to 68%, while mobile usage increased from 94% to 99.5%. In support, Respondent 4 outlined that:

“Online activities are censored, especially those linked to pornographic, political and religious content. A number of proxy servers that are monitored, ensure that activities on emails, websites and chatrooms meet the domestic standards”.
By using a government-owned internet services provider, the regulators have blocked *Ikhbareya*, which is a website that published content that is critical of governance activities in the country. Social media, mainly WhatsApp and Instagram, are the most commonly used forms of communication, due to the end-to-end encryption. 87% of Qataris and 97% of the population use these two, mostly for connecting with people, sharing messages and sharing information.

Qatari youth lead in generation and consumption of information, especially in relation to entertainment, whereas adults are more concerned with news and information.

**4.2.4 Diplomatic Activities**

Qatar has maintained proactivity in regional conflict resolution and diplomatic activities, which represents the foundation of its diplomatic activities. According to Kamrava (2013), Qatar attained global prominence through its ability to mediate in conflicts in the region. For instance, Qatar mediated in Yemen, Lebanon and a number of territories occupied by Palestine. In Yemen, Qatar oversaw the creation of a peace agreement between the Shia militant group and the government, starting with a cease-fire that eventually led to peace in the country. In addition, Qatar committed to assisting the country with US$500M for reconstruction of the districts damaged during the conflict (O’Bright, 2016). Although peace did not prevail, the efforts of the country were considered successful at the time.

In Lebanon, Qatar intervened by preventing the civil war precipitated by conflicts with Hezbollah. In 2008, the Emir invited the leaders of the warring groups and succeeded in finding a solution to the conflict, and the signing of the Doha
Agreement, which led to the creation of a unity government and development of new legal frameworks for election (Bakarat, 2012). In addition, Qatar pledged US$300M to Lebanon, which provided the country with significant stability since 2008 (El-Chaaidmi, 2016). Although the peace has not lasted due to the armament of Hezbollah and the fact that Qatar is limited in its ability to influence the sovereign state, the efforts by Qatar helped to avert a conflict in the country (Nuruzzaman, 2015). Finally, Qatar was actively involved in solving the conflict brewing between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine, especially due to its long-standing perceptions towards the right of existence of Palestine in relation to Israel. In addition to assistance through the humanitarian assistance and state-run charities in West Bank and Gaza, Qatar has continued to pressure the rest of GCC to support reconstruction in Gaza, with a US$31M grant to the fund. During a Doha Agreement in 2012, Qatar managed to establish a peace treaty between Hamas and Fatah. However, the poorly framed peace process failed, but it set the foundation for political leadership by Qatar and set the stage for future mediation and financial assistance.

However, according to Respondent 6,

“Qatar is limited in its ability to achieve its foreign policy objectives in mediation due to two reasons. First, long-term and progressive assistance in fluid and dynamic situation requires military assistance and the ability to take positions. Second, such strategies require access to professional diplomatic frameworks to implement and monitor the agreements”.

In such situations, Qatar has relied on assistance from the West and other regional partners as part of its militarism strategies. However, although the country has extensive wealth, Qatar has not implemented a domestic military program, there is evidence that it well protected. For instance, the countries involved in the current
crisis include France (AP (2017), Kuwait (Cafiero, 2017 and Irish, 2017) and Algeria (Henache, 2017), with the main challenge being the determination of a credible mediator.

In some instances, Qatar has adopted an active role in mediation (O’Bright, 2016). In order to facilitate this, Ulrichsen (2014) indicates that Qatar’s mediation activities are entrenched in the constitution, where Article 7 indicates that the country’s foreign policy shall be “based on the principle of strengthening international peace and security by means of encouraging the peaceful resolution of international disputes”. The three most high-profile instances of Qatari mediation took place in Yemen (2008–2010), Lebanon (2008), and Darfur (2008–2010), and Doha also worked to resolve disputes between Sudan and Chad (in 2009), and between Djibouti and Eritrea (in 2010) (Tirab, 2014 and Abdullah, 2017). According to Respondent 9,

“Qatar has adopted the role of an active participant rather than being the neutral broker in the conflicts in the Middle East”.

Essentially, Qatar is no longer interested in pleasing all the parties and is more concerned with positive outcomes. However, the prism of policies and strategies implicates the possibility of a complex eventuality in every crisis. Respondent 4 argues that:

“Qatar appears poised to support Islamic groups that challenge certain regimes in the region, a process which is viewed as a threat to the sovereignty and status of other countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria among others”.

Similarly, Qatar has an open-door policy in handling the mediation between conflicting sides, including Israel, Palestine, Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood. By so
doing, the country is viewed as a good neighbor and maintains favorable relationships with most of the countries in the Gulf.

According to Respondent 8,

“Qatar has changed its approach to an interventionist policy by altering the strategies under the foreign policy between since. Currently, Qatar is supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, which is perceived as being capable of facilitating future peace in the region”.

The Arab Spring, which caused the attempt for dethroning of the president of Syria, also failed, in spite of the fact that both Qatar and Saudi Arabia supplied the revolutionaries with weapons and support (Tirab, 2014). According to Steinberg (2012), “Qatar’s new foreign policy is perceived as risk”. Similarly, Ulrichsen (2014) is the view that Qatar lacked the resources at the grass-roots levels and administrative capability to manage its foreign policy, especially under the activities related to the Arab Spring. This is why the country has decided to adopt a more pragmatic approach to the foreign policy. One of the ways to achieve this is to align itself with the US since the West perceives it as a reliable and stable partner in the region. The US has established the largest airbase in the country in the Middle East, thereby providing the West and its allies a foothold that is viable for most of the soft and hard power campaigns for the US (Tirab, 2014). As indicated by Respondent 4,

“…by bandwagoning and piggybacking on the power and influence of the US and Saudi Arabia, Qatar has managed to position itself as a viable ally is a fundamental soft power play.”

The US$11B arms deal signed between the US and Qatar, specifically for the acquisition of a diversity of military equipment, air defence systems and Apache
helicopters. The close ties to the US and most of the West represent a change in the manner in which Middle Eastern countries implement foreign policies. As a Western-leaning camp, Qatar has challenged the norms in the region, by appearing to champion a peace process between Palestine and Israel, through a US$1B pledge that seeks to motivate the creation of peace in the region. This represents a case of Qatar using hard power constituents, some of which do not belong to the country, in the acquisition of its soft power campaigns. This is because essentially, Qatar has not implemented any hard power stances such as the use of aggressive military strategies to achieve influence.

Sergie (2017) indicates that Qatar has a US$335B empire across the globe, driven by the Qatar Investment Authority which was established in 2005 to appropriate the windfall gains from the petroleum revenues. The country has invested over US$100B domestically but has also used its influence in the global marketplace. For instance, QIA is the largest shareholders in Volkswagen AG (Germany) and holds double-digit stakes in a number of global entities. QIA has invested at least US$35B in the UK, US$11B in Russia, US$35B in the US and US$20B in Asia. According to Barakat (2012), in less than 20 years, Qatar has transformed itself into a contemporary peacemaker in the Gulf Peninsula, by combining its vision, willpower and wealth.

Qatar relies on three strategies in its diplomatic missions and activities, including economic and political liberalization, independence in its foreign policy objectives and branding its national image. Qatar has chosen a diplomatic approach to the blockade, by implementing a multiplicity of strategies aimed at achieving damage control and solving the most prevalent issues. According to Respondent 1,
“Qatar relies on a combination of direct and indirect negotiations approaches that involve back-channelling contact between parties who are hostile to one another, as a way of achieving unity between antagonistic sides”.

By finding mutual benefits for cooperation, the country has succeeded in a number of meditations without direct dialogue.

4.2.5 Political Governance and Democracy

Qatar is a constitutional monarchy, led by an Emir who has full executive power, and the Al Thani family has retained power since independence in 1971 (Babar, 2016). Although the current governance came to power through a bloodless coup in 1995, it has succeeded in maintaining the domestic stability that is required for peace and stability. Babar (2016) termed Qatar as an absolute monarchy, due to the fact that change in government is based on populist systems. Rather than inoculating itself from the wave of the drive for greater transparency, accountability and freedom that has gripped the MENA region, Qatar has sought to democratize its leadership and governance (Samei et al, 2016 and Antwi-Boateng, 2013). Kaifi (2015) argues the deviation from the norm, especially on the reliance on Saudi Arabia for defence is a challenge to the power balance in the Middle East.

Respondent 10 indicated:

“…that Qatar’s political stability is a remarkable achievement when the level of internal unsteadiness and regional conflict are taken into consideration”.

In support, Respondent 7 stated that:

“…the stability in the country to the absence of threats to domestic security and stability in the political systems. Considering that the ruling class has a history of
power struggles, with the past three transitions coming as a result of forced abdications, the ability to maintain social peace is remarkable”.

In support, Respondent 6 states that:

“Qatar’s political stability argues from the ability to control the various groups in society, each group individually and ensure that each group recognises the power of the state over them. Essentially, the political class in the country exerts pressure through a combination of ways for maintaining superiority, which is achieved through blood ties”.

The ruling class achieves power through tribal allegiance and family ties at all levels, and by balancing between power at the national and tribal level (Azran, 2013). Respondent 11 indicated that:

“The political class has tamed the people through a contemporary structure that resulted in the creation of the nation, and the central concepts are based on religious and tribal institutions that legitimise power”.

Consequently, according to Ulrichsen (2014), the political stability in the country can be attributed to the visions by Emir Hamad and the Prime Minister Hassan Jassim, who was in power between 1995 and 2013, who focused on aggressive globalization that placed Qatar at an advantage over its regional counterparts. The ruler is perceived as the paramount Shaykh across all tribes, with his power created around possession of tangible and intangible resources within the country. The Al Thani family’s power and state-building processes are inseparable, with extensive loyalty, especially due to the robust frameworks for the dissemination of power across all families and tribes that support the political Shaykh.
Felsch (2016) described it as a ‘late rentier state’, which has implemented strategies and policies to reinvest the wealth from the oil industry in other income generating ventures, as well as positioning itself in order to ensure a constant flow of revenues even when the revenues from the oil industry fluctuate. By so doing, the country has maintained political and social stability and is perceived to have achieved sustainable growth and development capabilities. Respondent 2 indicates that:

“The constitutions provides a number of freedoms, including of peaceful association, peaceful association, freedom of religion, freedom of movement through protection of refugees, stateless persons, and internally displaced people.”

However, there are only three NGOs and human rights institutions operating within the country, without any resident international human rights institutions. The country is governed under a modern constitutional framework, which reflects the ideals of Sharia law (Samei et al, 2016). Most of the laws are either approved or rejected by the Emir based on the outcome of consultations with an advisory committee that also services as a cabinet. Political parties are forbidden, as well as elections for national political positions. However, citizens can elect members to the municipal council, which is comprised of 29 members (Babar, 2016).

There is freedom of speech entrenched in the constitution, but there are limits to these freedoms overseen by the government, whereby publishers and journalists have to self-censor in order to avoid economic and political pressures (Kamrava, 2013). In support, Respondent 2 indicated that:
“Most of the pressures are established arounds upholding the prominence of Islam as a religion, respect to the ruling class and to avoid international incidences with regional countries”.

4.2.6 Equity and Equality in Distribution of Wealth

The respondents concur that the government has implemented programs to ensure that all Qataris have access to basic needs. Qatar is the 3rd largest producer of natural gas. The expansion of the oil trade has led to an increase of the GDP from US$7.06 in 1980 to US$156B in 2016, with a peak of US$206B in 2014, before the collapse of the oil prices (Al-Thani, 2016). According to Abdullah (2017), one of the most important reasons for the prominence of Qatar is the fact that it supplies gas to the UK, US and China, which contributes to a high level of interdependencies. Due to the scarcity of this resource as indicated under economic theory by The close ties to the both emerging and industrialized economies influence foreign relations due to the mutuality in benefits and the possibility of creating analogous goals in political and economic circles. However, Respondent 2 indicated that:

“Qataris are drowning in personal debt as they seek to satisfy their impulsive needs, most of them driven by the perceptions that the country is wealthy and that the numerous social welfare programs designed to enable the nationals can sustain the country into the future”.

A report by Qatar National Development Strategy indicated that at least 75% of the households live in debt, owning close to $68,700. Although in the past such loans were a non-issue, the government has implemented cutbacks in expenditure
established around efficiency and effectiveness based on productivity. Respondent 3 decries that:

“The country suffers from a welfare syndrome, whereby the paternalistic political system and family ties are relied upon to clear financial commitments”.

In 2016, the country allocated QR87B to transportation infrastructure, QR45B to other infrastructure, mostly for housing, QR4B for sports activities, QR30B to social amenities including water and electricity, QR17B for education and QR7B for healthcare (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2016). The variations in the budgetary allocations from 2012 to 2013 can be attributed to the prioritization between education, healthcare and infrastructure (Al-Thani, 2016). Similarly, the drop in oil prices has resulted in budgetary deficits and a reduction in the allocation of finances to key expenditures. However, as indicated by Respondent 9,

“Qatar is assured of at least maintaining the current level of expenditure as a way of dispelling any views that the government is struggling. It is expected that the oil prices will return to normal, and if not, the government will find alternatives”.

Qatar is termed as a nation of contradictions, since in spite of the high GDP per capita (US$106,110), which is more than double that of the US (US$54,609), 80% of its population is comprised of foreign workforce, who supply 94% of the labour (Al-Nabit, 2015). Respondent 5 argued that:

“…the country can support the citizens through the oil revenues and rely on the input of the labour from the foreigners”.

The workforce system does not necessarily permit abuse of workers but has created the foundation for exploitation of employees, specifically due to the
inadequate enforcement of the guidelines introduced to protect foreign workers (Amnesty International, 2013). As indicated in Appendix 5 and 6, the country has experienced significant growth in key economic indicators. These economic indicators show that Qatar has implemented policies to solve the economic challenges that face a number of Middle East countries. The stability in economic conditions reduces the vulnerability of the households to exploitative politics such as those observed in the developing world, whereby citizens are swayed by promises on improvement in their socio-economic conditions. The stability in inflation, expenditure on healthcare, and education (Appendix 5) implies that most households have stable socio-economic status. Similarly, the drop in unemployment, coupled with the increase in the GDP per capita (Appendix 6). The country spends extensively on education and health, and the unemployment rate has decreased significantly since 2000. The Qatariization system is designed to assure nationals of employment in the face of stiff competition from the foreign workers (Kaifi, 2015). However, Respondent 8 observed that:

“…the policy has led to some adverse outcomes that compromise the future of the country due to lack of competitiveness in the job market. … It has led to low literacy levels and the motivation to pursue education for most of the individuals”.

One of the ways through equity and equality in the distribution of wealth is done through the creation of legislation that levels the access to both nationals and foreigners. According to Shahine and Syeed (2017) and Brinded (2017) foreigners will be granted permanent resident status, access to public utilities and right to own property. Similarly, they will have access to the benefits available to nationals, especially the generous state-run welfare systems, including healthcare and education opportunities.
Kovessy (2015) indicated that the level of affluence in Qatar has increased since 2009, after recovering from the economic crisis. However, there is an uneven distribution of the wealth, due to a small number of ultra-rich individuals, a large number of middle-class nationals, and an even larger number of foreigners who rank lowest in socio-economic class. Although the per capita GDP is high (US$106,110), the median wealth is only US$60,846, and has grown by 1.57% since 2012 (Kovessy (2015). According to Al-Nabit (2015), 84% of Qataris were satisfied with the standards of living, 88% indicated satisfaction with their careers, and 92% expressed satisfaction with safety, 90% satisfied with the standards of healthcare with 67% satisfied with overall quality of governance. The country is ranked 19th out of 75 in terms of overall satisfaction with life, and 31st out of 76 in Human Development Reports.

4.3 Disempowerment of Qatar

According to Brannagan and Giulianotti (2015), soft disempowerment “refer to those occasions in which you may upset, offend or alienate others, leading to a loss of attractiveness or influence”. This leads to loss of soft power status, or stagnation in the growth of soft power, even though soft power campaigns and strategies are still in place. The concept highlights the need for countries to appreciate the extent to which its soft power campaigns that result in positive outcomes may, in turn, generate negative effects on the country. Most of the soft power campaign strategies and activities are inevitably risky in terms of reputation, especially since most of the actions and outcomes receive extensive and critical scrutiny from human rights institutions, global media, domestic opposition institutions and those countries who
had similar ideas and policies. Tirab (2014) and noted that the mutual exclusiveness of these opportunities causes high levels of competition, leading to rivalries because it is a ‘winner takes all’ situation. In most cases, countries that have similar goals may invest extensively in the processes, leading to significant losses.

The disempowerment of Qatar can be attributed to four scenarios precipitated by the actions of neighboring countries (Blake 2012). For instance, a solution to the current crisis arising from the sanctions created by the Saudi-led front, is still far from sight, which means that most of the soft power campaigns and activities that provide Qatar with the ability to achieve prominence have either stagnated or are progressing at a snail pace (MacDonald, 2017, Irish, 2017 and Fahim, 2017). Some of the effects have long term effects. For instance, the stock market lost 8.2% of its value in 3 days following the Saudi-led sanctions, with more losses reported since June 2017. Second, according to Slama (2017), a number of Middle East countries terminated diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5th, 2017, and provided 13-point criteria that represented the non-negotiable list of demands before the countries restored the diplomatic ties. The set of 13 non-negotiable demands (Appendix 4) by Saudi-led block presents a number of challenges to Qatar as a soft power. First, Saudi Arabia has close ties to the West and is highly regarded as the most prominent nation in the Middle East and GCC. In addition to the huge oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has extensive investments in the US, estimated at US$1.4Trillion, as well as having interests in other GCC countries. Second, the list of demands is justified by terrorist claims which are fundamental concerns by the West and the rest of the globe. The fight against terrorism has occupied a significant part of the international relations for the past 30 years, led to numerous wars that have cost the globe close to US$4.79 trillion in direct costs post 9/11, and an immeasurable amount when all the indirect
and future costs are factored in (Belasco, 2014). Goepner (2016) attributed the ineffectiveness and costliness of the war to the existence of state-sponsored terrorist groups, which is part of the claims against Qatar. As a result, the US and most of the West, who are the key supporters of Qatar’s soft power strategies, have their hands tied, until evidence to prove or disprove the claims is found. However, based on the assertions by Felsch (2016), Foley, et al (2012) and Xu (2016). Essentially, the blockade has weakened the ability of Qatar to continue its soft power campaigns, and the West has limited options in intervening, at least in the short-term, due to the consequences that may arise from any diplomatic impasses with Saudi Arabia. As a result, the blockade has effectively curtailed Qatar’s soft power campaigns, while creating circumstances under which the effectiveness of some of the sources of its soft power are neutralized. On the other hand, from the conflict perspective of sociology, the blockade may eventually galvanize the country to seek more soft power in order to avoid falling into similar circumstances.

4.4 Discussion

The findings from the primary and secondary data show that Qatar has had significant success in its soft power campaigns in most of the six variables identified in the literature review, as well as a range of challenges. Based on the descriptions of soft power by Nye (2004a), Nye (2014d) and Nye (2004e) and Xu (2016), Qatar has focused on the acquisition of power through the constructivist approach, whereby the contribution of both the state and non-state actors is The constructivist ideologies on soft power focus on three key processes, including the political norms, the social identifies to which the soft power campaigns are targeted and finally, the norms
which influence choices, social norms and personal values (Coyne and Blanco, 2016) and Cummings (2003). Consequently, it is possible to define Qatar’s soft power and the challenges associated with the soft power campaigns to the historical and social norms. This is because most of the achievements by Qatar in terms of soft power are the results of deliberate actions and strategies designed to position the countries in a favorable position with specific countries, mostly the West. Although countries such as China, Brazil and Russia also present, or have presented opportunities for cooperation with other developing countries as indicated by Xu, 2010 and Xu, 2016; Valenca and Carvalho (2014) and Huseynov (2016) respectively, Qatar’s soft power campaigns are directed to Western countries. The preference for the West can be attributed to a number of reasons, including military and economic prowess, which is a model through which a number of countries have established their soft and hard-power bases. The constructivist ideology is however not universally applicable to all the strategies applied by Qatar as represented in the variables in this study. This is due to the fact that some activities such as the progressive higher education system, favourable distribution of national wealth and the democratic governance systems serve broader purposes in the country, other than being soft power campaigns. On the contrary, activities such as the media and information activities implemented under Al Jazeera, the extensive financial assistance to solve the conflicts in the region, investment in sporting mega sporting and social events and the extensive diplomatic activities are directly linked to acquisition and retention of soft power by Qatar.

As shown in the analysis, the ability to balance between the contribution of the state and non-state actors is critical in maintaining the soft power status of Qatar. The relationship is amplified by the fact that the actions of foreign state and non-state
actors present multifaceted impacts on these soft power campaigns. However, as indicated by Yune (2015), Hall (2010) and Foley et al (2012), the combined effects of international politics and international relations are highly volatile and largely unpredictable. As a result, even though the theoretical link between the soft power campaigns and soft power status of Qatar may be identifiable in these findings, the actual outcomes are subject to interpretation. The definitions of soft power adopted in this study are drawn from the original explanation by Nye (2004e) and explained by Xu (2016), whereby the actions of a country can be contextualized based on the specific objectives.

Qatar has implemented soft power campaigns across the strategies that are outlined in past literature as the go-to processes. The findings point towards significant improvements in the higher education based on the efficiency and inclusiveness (Atkinson, 2010). Based on the argument by Hartman, (2014) and that higher education influences modernisation and change through empowerment across all socio-economic circles, the increased investment in higher education can be attributed to the diversity of changes in the country. Hazelkorn (2015) indicated that the limitations of this kind, specifically since the specialisations are designed to supply sufficient professionals for the domestic industries, may eventually limit the freedom that is necessary for academic freedom in the country. For instance, the lack of support for specialization in arts and humanities means that Qatar will rely on foreigners to occupy these professional positions, which can be considered a weakness in the soft power strategies due to lack of diversity in the professional capabilities of its citizens. The progressive higher education has led to improvement in the professionalism within the country, with the educated Qataris occupying top positions in the country. The academic qualifications provides a unique ability to
understand the world from a different and progressive perspective, which is part of the reason why most of the decisions by the country differ from the tendencies of other Middle Eastern Countries. For instance, the country has refrained from a combative approach to dealing with the blockade by Qatar, thereby setting an example of how other Middle East countries should react when pushed to the wall. However, the changes in higher education are one-sided, which challenges the reliability of the improvements as argued by Ohnesorge (2014). This is because although Qatar has increased its literacy rates to above 90% in basic education, the higher education status of the country still lags. Nasser (2016) and Powell (2014) observed that Qatar relies mostly on the importation of higher education rather than exportation, which limits the ability of Qatar to influence the rest of the world.

The socio-cultural norms in Qatar have morphed into a highly dynamic form, comprised of elements drawn from Arabic (Middle Eastern) and Western values. According to Kaifi, (2015) and, Cummings (2003), dynamic social and cultural norms are highly versatile in establishing soft power, especially in a world where the social and cultural norms are considered integral to the decision making process. Similarly, by remaining adaptive and open to change, Qataris have the ability to establish links with cultures from other locations (Foley, et al 2012, and Samuel, et al., 2016) as well as abandon cultures that are perceived as intolerable or offensive to other cultures (Antwi-Boateng, 2013). Based on the findings, Qatar is actively involved in the process of adopting socio-cultural norms, such as sporting activities, events and social forums that position it in line with the expectations of the Western countries. This has increased the attractiveness of the country to the West and countries that are aligned with the west, in a manner that increases the prominence of the country.
The investment in activities that are based on Western value, including sporting activities such as soccer and golf makes Qatar a viable destination for such events, in a manner that facilitates increased contact with the West, and increases the perceptions that Qatar is a unique destination in comparison with the other Middle Eastern countries. It also provides credence that Qatar understands the needs and expectations of Western countries, which is a way through which soft power countries position themselves for future benefits and relations. The justification are found in symbolic interactionist sociological theory, which indicates that people from same or different societies can grow closer based on the similarity in the activities they are involved in. For instance, since Qatar is poised to host the world cup, it will be classified among countries that have commonalities with other countries that have close ties to the West, thereby highlighting the comparative uniqueness of Qatar in relation to the rest of the Middle East. Brannagan and Giulianotti (2015) argued that it does not represent an abandonment of its fundamental culture, but basically an approach towards accommodating change and differences in order to achieve additional benefits of association with the West. Based on the description by Hurn (2016) and Anderssen (2016), this approach is an intricate soft power campaign, which is designed to eliminate the intrinsic and intangible differences between the Qataris and the rest of the world, without alienating the rest of the Arabic world. Of importance is the fact that the rest of the world will view Qatar as being similar, since it support social and cultural norms such as sporting activities as explained under social interactionism. The sporting and social mega-events that have been planned within the country also provide access to country, which increases the reputation of the country. However, since the country has missed out on a number of events, a strategy which was successfully used by
China in the 2008 Olympics games (Xu (2010 and Xu (2016), it can be argued that the success is not monumental and unique. However, as the portfolio of events successfully implemented by the country grows, there is evidence that this soft power strategy has worked as predicted by Nye (2004d) and Kamrava (2011).

The extensive adoption of social media trends in the country without specific limitations by the government represents an advantage to the country in terms of media and information. This further extends the objectives of the country as part of the normative process, whereby the media is used for agenda setting and to frame specific narratives that extend the effectiveness of the soft power campaigns. According to Chitty, et al, (2016) and Duffy (2012) access to information and the ability to generate news without state control is an important constituent of freedom and attractiveness of a country. Felsch (2016) noted that Qatar has an intricate information gathering and distribution mechanism. The fact that no other media house in the Middle East has similar as much following globally is ratification that the world perceives Qatar as being a reliable partner in the region. Similarly, since Qatar uses the media house to promote its position as a reliable source of information and a champion of specific values, normally peace and justice, it has managed to acquire significant soft power in comparison with its neighbors. At a time when information is currency, Qatar has positioned itself as a regional powerhouse through the programming and messages spread through Al Jazeera, thus creating the reality and perception that it is a representative of the region and a source of information about Middle Eastern events. This gives Qatar an upper hand in controlling the narrative, as well as providing access to the region, and the ability to shape the message coming out of the Middle East. This is part of the broader mass communication objectives under the normative theory, with which Qatar can extend
the philosophical ‘value’ of its actions and objectives in its soft media campaigns. Just like most countries to use the media house to pass its message, in as much as Qatar uses the media house to broadcast its agenda and position on any pertinent occurrence in the region. However, its top media and information institutions have strong ties to the government, which has two key effects. First, there is a perception that the media and information are state-controlled and designed to further the goals of the political class. On the other hand, the leading institution, Al Jazeera, has access to extensive resources in gathering and distribution of information, which makes it a key player in the Middle East (Figenschou, 2013). With the English service and foreign stations, Al Jazeera plays an important role in informing the world about what is happening in the Middle East, and cultivating relationships and ties across the globe. As indicated by Azran and Pecht (2014), the media house has cultivated significant credibility domestically and internationally and has led to the creation of a domestic and international audience that support Qatar, its policies, positions and status across the globe. As indicated by Antwi-Boateng, (2013), Deng and Yao (2013) and Xu (2016), such extensive validation makes it challenging for the world to ignore, which is why the current sanctions have received extensive coverage, even though there are other countries that were subject to worse sanctions in the past. These discussions relate to the position by George (2016) and Kisha (2012) that media influence has certain limitations in its applicability to acquire soft power. Just like any other soft power strategies applied in China (Deng and Yao, 2013).

Qatar’s diplomatic activities are closely mirrored on the need to resolve regional and global crises through a carrot and stick approach. It also implicates the prominence of internationalism in Qatar’s diplomatic strategies, as it seeks to extent
its influence across the region and the globe. As indicated by Nye (2004c), Kaifi (2015) and Antwi-Boateng, (2013), Qatar has adopted a pseudo-leadership approach in diplomatic activities in the MENA region, by actively seeking involvement in every conflict. By creating links with other global countries, Qatar has expanded its internationalist strategies, which makes it a strong partner to the West, mostly on matters relating to the Middle East. Similarly, its willingness to resolve conflicts can be attributed to the assertions by Nye (2004) and Xu (2010 and Xu (2016), that countries can use soft power to gain traction in a region if it comes to the aid of its allies or enemies at a time of need. Kaifi (2015) and Kamrava (2011) argued that Qatar’s action go beyond the negotiation table, and they reflect a carefully calculated move to achieve dominance through the provision of material assistance, and as a conduit for the soft power strategies of some Western Countries. The basis of the assistance is discussed by Cooper and Momani (2011), Felsch (2016) and Purushothaman (2010), who perceive it as a way of acquiring allegiance or acceptance, and an investment that can be used for future influence. In some instances, the diplomatic activities by Qatar are detailed through extensive financial assistance for the Middle Eastern countries, some of which require the financial assistance (Foley, et al, 2012 and Kamrava, 2011), and a credible partner to resolve the impasses (Brannagan and Giulianotti, 2015). However, unlike other soft power campaigns, Qatar stands to benefit as much as other parties from the successful implementation of the soft power campaigns under the diplomatic activities. First, the peace and stability, which was expected from the mediation in Libya, Lebanon and Yemen were expected to ensure the safety of the country from direct and indirect threats from its neighbours (Brannagan and Giulianotti, 2014 and O’Brien, 2016). In this accord, a number of the countries in the Middle East have cooperated with Qatar.
The political stability in the country can be linked to the existence of an efficiently run constitutional monarchy (Kaifi, 2015 and Kamrava, 2011). In spite of lack of outright democracy, the country has maintained a fairly commendable human rights history, and cognition of the rule of law. Qatar has closely tied its economic success to the political outcomes in the country, especially considering that the Al Thani’s control most of the prominent industries. Based on the observations by Antwi-Boateng, (2013), Brannagan and Giulianotti (2015) and Kamrava (2013), this represents a double-edged sword scenario for the country. On one hand, the political class can drive the economy to success through the international connections, by mortgaging the success of the country to international relations. On the other hand, as indicated by Kamrava (2013) and Samuel, et al (2016), the strategy can stagnate the country through the alienation of potential partners or create tensions with other countries. Qatar faces both scenarios, which can be translated as the acquisition of soft power while facing disempowerment.

The disempowerment of Qatar further reaffirms the assertion by Cooper, et al (2001), and Galarotı, (2010), who posit that it is not possible for a country to achieve a progressive and perpetual increase in its soft power capabilities. Hayden (2012) and Malley, et al (2012) projected that changes at the national, regional and global level have direct and indirect effects on the soft power status of a country, even in instances where such outcomes are not intended. Mearsheimer (2001) who termed it as the tragedy of great power politics, gave a description that fits the current disempowerment of Qatar, by indicating that the shift in power balance places a country in a precarious position from the counteractions of the countries who perceive it as a threat. As observed under the decline of America’s soft power by
Nye (2004a), which subsequently led to the implementation of hard power campaigns as supplementary and complementary strategies.

Qatar has numerous interests in the mediation activities that it is involved in, especially considering that both neutrality and active participation in the peace provides stability and security to the country. According to Antwi-Boateng (2013) and Tirab (2014), the increased number of civil and regional conflicts in the region has adverse effects on the socio-economic stability of the region. As a result, in order to protect itself from the vulnerability that faces small states that lack anonymity, Qatar has sought to position itself as a key player in the regional policies. By so doing, as indicated by Wang and Lu (2008) and Steiner (2004), the country is perceived as an important constituent of peace, stability and development in the region, and a beacon of modernization that has to be protected from any external aggression. As a result, it provides countries such as the US and UK with sufficient reasons to perceive it as an ally and protect it in case of any aggression (Bakarat, 2012 and Nuruzzaman, 2015). Similarly, by brokering peace among the most insecure nations, Qatar reduces the number of potential threats to its security. As a result, with a lesser number of potential threats and a diversified number of active allies, Qatar has managed to create a foundation for security through preventive and preparative strategies, which reduce the possibility that the conflicts will spread close hole and increase preparedness in case there is a spill over. This represents a novel dimension to soft power, over and above what Nye (2001) and Antwi-Boateng, (2013) discussed in their research. However, the actions by Qatar are seen as a direct challenge that undercuts the dominance of Saudi Arabia in the region. Saudi Arabia has traditionally been the de facto leader in the region and has in the past championed peace in Lebanon among other locations.
Kamrava (2013) indicated that Qatar relies on subtle power, which deviates from the realist principles. Through subtle power, Qatar has managed to market itself through national branding and creation of attractions and services to back the branding up. As a less blunt tool for influence, subtle power costs slightly less than hard power and has provided Qatar with access to a diversity of commercial and economic resources. Based on the ‘carrots’ analogy as a description for soft power campaigns by Antwi-Boateng (2013), Qatar has transitioned from a purely ‘carrots’ approach to a more proactive and diversified soft power campaigns approach. The transition includes the indirect flexing and application of its hard power tools to achieve influence, as well as the amassment of hard power capabilities by aligning itself with countries that have significant hard power tools. Although there is no evidence that Qatar is positioning itself for hard power campaigns as a complement or supplement to its soft power campaigns, it is important to appreciate the fact that soft power is exhaustible and applicable for a finite duration, after which the company has to introduce new strategies, or transition to hard or smart power (Xu, 2016, Nye 2004e, Wang and Lu, 2008 and Zhang and Jiang, 2010).
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this section, a conclusion of the study is provided, based on the manner in which the research objectives are fulfilled. The aim of the study is to investigate the rise of Qatar as a soft power, by identifying the processes that the country used and determining the challenges faced. In order to achieve this aim, the research will focus on the following objectives.

• Determining what soft power is, and how a country can acquire and use in international relations, and the challenges involved in the process from existing literature

• Use the findings from existing literature and survey results to determine how Qatar acquired and applied soft power

• Identify the challenges that faced Qatar in relation to the use of soft power and how those challenges were solved

• Provide suggestions on alternative approaches that the country can include in its international relations

A broad and in-depth data search were performed during the study, including publications on the most recent events in Qatar and the Middle East, as well as publications about the country. The objective was to achieve the objectives under
analytical eclecticism, whereby both qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources were used. Similarly, the recommendation is provided, as outlined in the last objective, and in addition, recommendations will be provided for future research on the subject.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings from the study reveal that Qatar has achieved significant and tangible success in its soft power campaigns, in spite of the challenges, most of which can be classified as domestic and international. Nye conceptualises power, not in terms of manpower, territory or resources, but based on the ability to achieve the desired outcomes in terms of influence. In the case of soft power, Qatar has implemented a combination of strategies in achieving their status as a regional soft power nation. Qatar is motivated by Orientalism through a process whereby it seeks to dispel the perceptions that Arab countries and the Middle East lack in certain elements that are required in the success of a country. Essentially, the state-driven soft power system is designed in a manner that assures automatic success when the country is stable across a multiplicity of variables but also is also exposed to failure if one of the key foundations of stability in the country falters. This indicates the functionalism in the soft power campaigns, whereby each five variables, whereby each variable contributes uniqueness to the acquisition of soft power. Based on the nature of soft power in Qatar, its ability to control the domestic systems has remained in pristine conditions, but there are challenges in predicting and controlling outcomes associated with the regional states and other countries across the globe. The theoretical application and implementation of soft power by Qatar are poised for
success, but when the effects of the soft and hard power campaigns of other countries are taken into consideration, the outcomes become disproportionate, leaning towards the undesirable periphery.

A multidisciplinary assessment of the findings shows that Qatar’s soft power can be explained by a variety of theories, other than the international relations theory of constructivism. First, based on economic theories on scarcity of resources, Qatar has a unique appeal to the west, due to its geographical positioning in the Middle East, and huge wealth of natural gas. Economic theory also explains why Qatar has succeeded in domestic stability, due to the equitable distribution of resources. Second, the symbolic interactionist perspective theory explains the reason why some actions by Qatar make it a viable partner by the West, as well as it being a strategic partner in diplomacy in the Middle East, considering that the country has extensive credibility. The usage of media and information to further its agenda is explained by the normative media theory whereby the role of the mass media institutions is to further the objectives of the society. Similarly, Qatar has used the media for agenda setting and framing its message in a manner that increases appeal to the targeted countries. However, although there are no models to explain the extensive investments in higher education, it is widely acknowledged that it adds value to the country.

The findings show that Qatar has adopted the constructivist ideology to soft power, by combining the realist and liberalist approach in a dynamic manner. Xu (2010) and Xu (2016) argued that the constructivist ideology hypothesizes that soft power originates from the sovereignty of the state, its identity, domestic political institutions and the legitimacy and robustness of the ideologies at the national level. Essentially, this means that the source of Qatar’s soft power is diverse, with a
multiplicity of causative factors. Normally, this would solidify the position of the country as a soft power state, an outcome which is evidenced by the findings. However, it can also create a challenge for the country based on the effects of adopting a multiplicity of ways and diversification of the approaches. Although there are numerous adverse outcomes that may be associated with constructivism, including the inability to achieve progressive positive change in the soft power status, constructivism still remains a preferable approach to the acquisition of soft power. Although Qatar has faced a number of challenges on multiple fronts, most of them affecting the various soft power strategies at different times, it has still maintained its status due to the robustness of the constructivist ideology.

Qatar soft power is driven by ‘global consciousnesses’, which focuses on increasing the relevance of the country to the prevailing global situation while positioning the country as a tenable party capable of contributing positively and constructively to global peace and stability. The country has succeeded in this accord, through the implementation of a complex media and information system which highlights any and all achievements by the country, as well as providing an intricate analysis of the situation in the Middle East. Evidence shows that Qatar’s culture is attractive to foreigners based on a number of factors. First, the increase in the number of international students who prefer the country over other locations indicates that the country is a favorable destination. Even though there are other ulterior reasons for the increase in number, there is evidence that the culture is favourable, otherwise, these foreigners would have selected other destinations for academic tourism.

Based on the assessment of the acquisition and application of soft power by Qatar, there is incontrovertible evidence that in the context of Qatar, the soft power
campaigns are misleading and unsuitable for the purpose in which they are designed. In addition to being a fairly intangible concept, it is clear that the actions by Qatar do not accurately and fully describe the characteristics of the regional and international influence by the country. This is due to the conclusion that the attractiveness of Qatar does not solely revolve on the attractiveness of its culture, higher education, involvement in sporting activities, success in its foreign policy, equality and equity in the distribution of wealth, democratic governance and media and information dissemination.

However, there is evidence that its influence originates from the sufficiency of its wealth and earning capacity, which amplifies the ability to influence outcomes and set courses of actions that can subvert the will of other countries. The extensive success, most of which can be linked to its favorable economic position and future prospects is fundamentally an extension of hard power. The willingness of Qatar to achieve its objectives regardless of the cost and implications explains its success but also implicates the possibility that the country has employed hard and soft power tactics intermittently, in order to achieve its current success and status.

The fact that the country’s political systems are established around a constitutional monarchy with autocratic tendencies has not been nullified by its successes in governance. Comparatively, the country has achieved significant success in governance, an outcome which eludes a number of democracies across the globe. Although the absence of consensus-building through widespread consultation and involvement of citizens has not affected the progress of the country, theoretically, the country can benefit from a democratic rule that is based on fair governance systems. From the evidence provided in relation to the actions, choices and strategies of the Emirs, Qatar is in a superiority competition with the rest of the
Middle East, specifically designed to flex its muscles and achieve prominence in the region. These objectives have set the country on a trajectory whereby most of the decisions are too ambitious to achieve, or based on an emotive foundation that is subject to change and failure. When the potential threats and vulnerabilities to the neighboring countries are taken into consideration, it is possible to deductively state that Qatar’s soft power is established on quicksand and a narrow-minded foundation that can only succeed through the continuity of the current political system.

The application of political pragmatism provides the country with an arsenal of alternatives when dealing with its neighbors and allies. Political pragmatism, which is based on the use of practical and evidence-based approaches to the solution of the existing challenges is comprised of the use of socio-economic packages, specifically aimed at solving a multiplicity of underlying challenges that result in conflict. As a result, even though it might be possible to solve all the causative scenarios, Qatar has been able to create friends and avoid enmities by appealing to multiple sides at the same time.

There is evidence that the soft power campaigns by Qatar have transitioned from exchange due to reliance on ‘reward for reward’, and sometimes rewards for nothing, to exploitation, whereby Qatar applies pressure to countries who offer rewards. Based on the current status, Qatar might find it necessary to use pressure where pressure exists, thereby resulting in conflict. A number of strategies are available including the following. First, the findings indicate that Qatar relies extensively on the diplomatic activities to achieve its soft power objectives while relying on the other variables to facilitate its diplomatic activities. Essentially, the country has implemented a progressive higher education that imports the mechanisms and strategies for acquisition of skills, as well as to solve the current
education-related limitations. However, the education system is also designed to appeal to the west by positioning itself as a unique nation-state in the Middle East. The strategy closely mirrors what Qatar has done in terms of socio-economic activities, including the unintentional overreliance on the immigrant labour to the employment of Western architectural, scientific and mechanical technologies in developing infrastructure in the country. The ease with which decisions on sporting activities are made, most of which do not involve the citizens but are designed to appeal to the participants from other countries further exemplifies the situation. It is also apparent that the philosophies of freedom and openness advocated by Al Jazeera, and the openness to information generation and distribution in a country where similar outcomes can be achieved through control implicates the willingness of Qatar to choose the less-followed path towards acquiring power. Although the majority of the population (immigrants) are not expressly involved in this process, it is arguable that its citizens are well-represented in the media and information distribution mechanisms, which facilitate widespread support for the ideologies that the government has targeted.

Second, it is no secret that the economic prowess of the country is the driving force behind most of the soft power campaigns and the underlying objectives. There is evidence that Qatar rose to prominence after the discovery of the extensive natural gas reserves, and the fact that it was willing to trade with the Western world through a modernized contractual approach. The revenues from the trade are also destined for a small number of nationals, who enjoy a well-funded welfare scheme with world-class social amenities that amplify their support for the government. Similarly, the interventions through mediation and the chequebook diplomacy have only been successful due to the ability of the country to afford the significant bailouts and
financial assistance for the conflicting parties. One of the rarely discussed aspects of the economic prowess is the stability in the domestic political scene, whereby the constitutional monarchy is still able to evenly distribute wealth to all citizens, thereby reducing the possibility of dissent among the citizens. As a result, as long as the country implements favourable economic policies that satisfy the expectations of the citizens, then the domestic governance systems can be considered as irrelevant determinants of the soft power strategies in the country. The equality and equity seem to insulate the governance system from criticism from the citizens, thus allowing the political class to focus on the broader governance and diplomatic objectives.

The fundamental concern on Qatar soft power is the disempowerment of the country, due to the apparent inability to understand the comprehensive effects of its soft power campaigns and strategies in their entirety. There is evidence that the country has either overlooked some of the effects or failed to focus on a cause and effect relationship, especially in the medium and long-term, of some of the soft power campaigns. The conclusion is based on the fact that the soft power campaigns are still in their infancy, and built on a sub-developed foundation comprised of economic prowess and close ties to the West. Similarly, Qatar’s soft power grew significantly at a time when the counteractions of the Middle Eastern countries. Essentially, Qatar relies on the stability in the Middle East for its soft power as much as it relies on its economic prowess for soft power. In the absence of the two, the country faces a bleak future in obscurity, and unable to command the influence that is necessary for regional prominence and domestic stability. The key tests to its soft power, including the fluctuations in oil prices, and the sanctions by Middle East countries has shown that Qatar’s soft power is built on a foundation that can be
shaken through the change of a number of variables (Abdullah, 2017 and El-Etreby, 2014). Due to the inability of the country to control these variables, it is clear that disempowerment of Qatar is a real possibility. This represents the most fundamental challenge to its soft power campaigns, which can be considered as costly, while some have underlying adverse effects in the long-run.

A glaring question on how Qatar has acquired its soft power and the challenges associated with the process and outcomes relates to the determination of the fundamental reason why Qatar actually requires soft power, and whether it is a viable or necessary for the country to implement the soft power campaigns. Based on the cost-benefit analysis, whereby costs and the benefits are estimated based on the direct and indirect dimensions.

5.3 Recommendations

The findings of the study indicate that Qatar has achieved significant success in its soft power campaigns, and gained the targeted prominence in the region and globally. Currently, the country is still in the process of implementing a number of diverse soft power campaigns aimed at maintaining and expanding its power base.

5.3.1 Recommendations to Qatar

Sanguanbun (2015) argues that in most cases, practical evidence shows that soft power is in itself a means to an end and not an end in itself, due to lack of longevity. Similarly, Shaffer and Pollack (2011) and Zaharna (2007) and argued that soft power is not linearly perpetual in nature, meaning that no country can, or has succeeded in continuously amass soft power without experiencing the adverse effects of the actions. As a result, the process of acquiring soft power is easier and more
predictable that the actions required to maintain the status as a soft power nation. In the case of Qatar, the following suggestions are provided.

First, the country should establish a robust economy and trade strategy that is not subject to the fluctuations in the global prices and pressure from changes in the macroeconomic variables. The process is less challenging to Qatar, which has extensive financial resources but calls for a reduction in the budgetary allocations in order to allow for investment in alternative revenue generation activities in addition to oil and petroleum products. By so doing, Qatar can be assured of domestic stability in its socio-economic structure, which is a key constituent of its political stability. The measures may include extensive diplomatic processes to strengthen the ties with neighbouring countries and to avoid spates like the eventualities in challenges accessing basic needs during the recent crisis (Reuters, 2017). However, it is a necessary step towards solidifying its position as a soft power.

Second, Qatar should establish robust links with regional partners, mostly the Middle East countries aligned with Saudi Arabia, in order to gain their confidence and trust, as it looks outside the Middle East for support and allegiance. Essentially, this may limit its ability to excel as a soft power, but whatever steps it will achieve under the soft power campaigns will be more robust and long-term relationships and effects, based on mutual interests. Essentially, these campaigns would have less direct costs thus reserving the ‘carrots’ for soft power campaigns elsewhere, since most of the countries have significant oil wealth. In addition, it will reduce the possibilities of soft disempowerment, since these countries will have a concerted front in the eyes of the world, thus reducing the possibility that different countries will target conflicting objectives under soft power. Although this strategy will reduce the ability of any single country to achieve dominance, while introducing extensive
bureaucracies and bottlenecks in the soft power campaigns, it will reduce the possibility that the actions of one country will counter the strategies of others.

Last, Qatar should focus on creating a firm foundation for a small number of soft power strategies in order to increase the chances of success. Based on the analysis, Qatar is still facing some challenges in domestic governance, higher education and media and information. In spite of the success in the distribution of income and wealth, diplomatic ties and having a dynamic culture, Qatar still lags in the overall success in influence through soft power.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on the objectives of Qatar’s soft power policies, focusing on the rationales that drove the country to implement the existing soft power campaigns. The study will provide an in-depth assessment of the reasons for adoption of a soft power stance by the country, as well as justifying the choices of the approaches that the country has employed in the past. The study can also bring into focus what the country specifically seeks to achieve, and identify what alternative is there to achieve the objectives of the soft power campaigns.
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Rostami, N., (2014). Public Diplomacy; Tools Of Power In Foreign Policy; (Case Study: Application Of Public Diplomacy In Foreign Policy Of United States


### APPENDICIES

**Appendix 1: Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>Means the extent to which members of culture expect and accept that power is unequally distributed in the society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism/collectivism</td>
<td>Concerns about any relationship happening in society, to which they are individual or to what they are embedded to a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity/femininity</td>
<td>Concerns about an importance of work goals (Earning, advancement, promotion, achievement) compared with personal goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>This dimension is made to measures on which people in certain cultural environment deal with an uncertainty. To what extent do they feel threatened by ambiguous risky situation or to what extent do they prefer predictability in their lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term versus long term orientation,</td>
<td>This dimension concerns about fostering virtues related to the past and present or virtues related to the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>Means the extent to which members of culture expect and accept that power is unequally distributed in the society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix 2: Dimensions of Liberalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideational liberalism</td>
<td>The domestic collective identities and values are the fundamental determinants of the preferences of the country. The country designs its foreign policy in order to realise these identified and values that have succeeded domestically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican/demo</td>
<td>It is based on the theory of democratic peace, which indicates that liberal countries do not initiate conflicts with each other, but may engage in such conflicts with other non-liberal countries. In order to achieve such an outcome, the countries rely on the peaceful resolution of conflicts through compromise and negotiation, effective constraint through the institutional framework and its grip on the executive authority, and the interdependence between the various interest groups. On the other hand, the attractiveness of the liberalism to the non-liberal entities results to peace, even when democratic rule is not universally accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial and sociological</td>
<td>The economic actors within a free market economy drive the peaceful and liberal international order, which tends towards economic independence. In addition, the privatisation of institutions as well as free trade and investments has a positive effect on the transnational civil institutions, networks, coalitions and communications, all designed to take advantage of the opportunities in the peace and cooperation that arises from absence of control in the economic and sociological norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory/institutional</td>
<td>Also referred to as neo-liberal institutionalism, this category accentuates the noteworthy role of the international regimes and institutions in averting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by Author
Appendix 3: Questionnaire

Dear Sir/ Madam

My Name is Mohamed Althani. I am in the process of completing a course on International Relations and I am currently carrying out a study on The Rise of Qatar as a Soft Power and the Challenges the country faces. As part of the study, I request you to participate in an interview, in which your views will provide key information on the soft power campaigns by the country. Your participation is integral in the successful completion of the study.

• What do you know about soft power in international relations? Are you aware of the objectives of Qatar’s soft power campaigns?

• What do you think is the primary source of Qatar’s soft power, between the material and tangible resources, institutions and organisations or norms and values by the Qataris?

• How would you categorise the higher education system in the country as a source of influence and control in the region? Has Qatar done enough to attract learners from the regions? Have these learners promoted the prominence of Qatar in the region?

• Are the media channels in the country used by the government to promote the prominence of the country in the region and globally? In what ways is this achieved? Has the government exploited all opportunities under media and information services to promote the influence of Qatar in the region?

• How does the culture of Qatar compare with that of the other countries in the region? Has the country used its culture to achieve influence on other countries? In what ways has culture been used by the Qatar government?

• What strategies and methods has Qatar used in its diplomatic missions to ensure success and continuity? What challenges does the country face in achieving these objectives?

• Do you consider Qatar a diplomacy? How has the country succeeded in its democratic agenda? What benefits arise from the change to democratic rule in the country? What other governance approach do you consider to be a perfect replacement for democracy in achievement of the soft power campaigns?

• What measures have the government (and non-governmental institutions) implemented to ensure equality and equity in distribution of wealth? In your view, have these measures been effective? What can you attribute the effectiveness or ineffectiveness to?
• How would you judge Qatar’s soft power campaigns based on the objectives of influence and control in the region? Has the country achieved its objectives? What challenges have influenced the ability to achieve the targeted goals? What can you suggest to those involved in the campaigns, especially in line with the passive and active approaches?

Thank you in advance.

In case of any questions or additional comments, kindly contact me through the following address.

Mohamed Althani.
Appendix 4: List of Demands by Saudi-Led Bloc

- Scale down diplomatic ties with Iran and close the Iranian diplomatic missions in Qatar, expel members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard and cut off military and intelligence cooperation with Iran. Trade and commerce with Iran must comply with US and international sanctions in a manner that does not jeopardise the security of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

- Immediately shut down the Turkish military base, which is currently under construction, and halt military cooperation with Turkey inside of Qatar.

- Sever ties to all "terrorist, sectarian and ideological organisations," specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIL, Al Qaeda, Fateh al-Sham (formerly known as the Nusra Front) and Lebanon's Hezbollah. Formally declare these entities as terror groups as per the list announced by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE and Egypt, and concur with all future updates of this list.

- Stop all means of funding for individuals, groups or organisations that have been designated as terrorists by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Bahrain, US and other countries.

- Hand over "terrorist figures", fugitives and wanted individuals from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain to their countries of origin. Freeze their assets, and provide any desired information about their residency, movements and finances.

- Shut down Al Jazeera and its affiliate stations.

- End interference in sovereign countries' internal affairs. Stop granting citizenship to wanted nationals from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. Revoke Qatari citizenship for nationals where such citizenship violates those countries' laws.

- Pay reparations and compensation for loss of life and other financial losses caused by Qatar's policies in recent years. The sum will be determined in coordination with Qatar.

- Align Qatar's military, political, social and economic policies with the other Gulf and Arab countries, as well as on economic matters, as per the 2014 agreement reached with Saudi Arabia.

- Cease contact with the political opposition in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. Hand over files detailing Qatar's prior contact with and support for opposition groups, and submit details of their personal information and the support Qatar has provided them.
• Shut down all news outlets funded directly and indirectly by Qatar, including Arabi21, Rassd, Al Araby Al Jadeed, Mekameleen and Middle East Eye, etc.

• Agree to all the demands within 10 days of list being submitted to Qatar, or the list will become invalid.

• Consent to monthly compliance audits in the first year after agreeing to the demands, followed by quarterly audits in the second year, and annual audits in the following 10 years.

Appendix 5: Inflation and Expenditures

Source: Developed by Author
Appendix 6: GDP Per capital and Unemployment Rate

Source: Developed by Author