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# Qatar during the reign of Hamad Al Thani (1995-2013): from soft power to hard power

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INSTITUT  
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**Institut Català Internacional per la Pau**  
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## ABSTRACT

Qatar made a sudden appearance on the International stage. During the reign of Hamad Al Thani (1995-2013) the country went from a tiny state that few people could locate on a map to a regional power with economic and political interests in different parts of the world. Despite its small size, Qatar has established its very own international agenda that has left politicians and academics baffled and this has not been achieved through building a strong military army but instead through more subtle instruments such as diplomatic initiatives, economic aid and the Al Jazeera television network. This Working Paper examines the emergence of Qatari influence, which has brought about this change, utilizing the concepts of soft power and hard power, a theory pioneered by Joseph Nye. In order to do this, the paper analyses the resources included in each power and uses four of the so-called Arab revolutions in which Qatar, in one way or another, played a role—Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria—to examine how the varying powers were used.

**Key Words:** Qatar, soft power, hard power, Arab revolts, Hamad Al Thani.

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Món Sanromà és periodista i té un Màster en Relacions Internacionals, Seguretat i Desenvolupament per la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). Ha treballat com a tècnic especialista en premsa i comunicació a l'Institut Català Internacional per la Pau (ICIP) i ha exercit de periodista en diferents mitjans de comunicació de Catalunya. També ha fet d'editor i traductor de textos sobre pau i conflictes, i d'investigador en temes de món àrab. Entre els anys 2009 i 2011 va viure i treballar a Qatar, on va realitzar una estudi que va plasmar al llibre *Qatar, el país més ric del món* (Edicions 1984, 2013).

## RESUM

Qatar ha aparegut sobtadament a l'escena internacional. Durant el mandat de Hamad Al Thani (1995-2013) el país ha passat de ser un minúscul estat que poca gent sabia situar al mapa a una potència regional amb interessos econòmics i polítics a diferents parts del món. Tot i les seves petites dimensions, Qatar ha establert una agenda internacional pròpia que ha desconcertat a polítics i acadèmics, i no ho ha fet a través d'un exèrcit fort sinó amb altres instruments més subtils com la diplomàcia, l'ajuda econòmica o la televisió Al Jazeera. Aquest Working Paper observa com apareix la influència qatariana que ha propiciat aquest canvi d'estatus utilitzant els conceptes de soft power i de hard power que va idear Joseph Nye. Per fer-ho, analitza els recursos que engloba cada poder i utilitza quatre de les anomenades revoltes àrabs en les quals Qatar, d'alguna manera, hi va jugar un paper —Tunísia, Egipte, Líbia i Síria— per observar com va utilitzar els diferents poders.

**Paraules Clau:** Qatar, soft power, hard power, revoltes àrabs, Hamad Al Thani

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## RESUMEN

Catar ha aparecido súbitamente en la escena internacional. Durante el mandato de Hamad Al Thani (1995-2013) el país ha pasado de ser un minúsculo estado que poca gente sabía situar en el mapa a una potencia regional con intereses económicos y políticos en diferentes partes del mundo. A pesar de sus pequeñas dimensiones, Catar ha establecido una agenda internacional propia que ha desconcertado a políticos y académicos, y no lo ha hecho a través de un ejército fuerte sino con otros instrumentos más sutiles como la diplomacia, la ayuda económica o la televisión Al Jazeera. Este Working Paper observa como aparece la influencia catari que ha propiciado este cambio de estatus utilizando los conceptos de soft power y de hard power que ideó Joseph Nye. Para hacerlo, analiza los recursos que engloba cada poder y utiliza cuatro de las llamadas revueltas árabes en las que Catar, de alguna manera, jugó un papel —Túnez, Egipto, Libia y Siria— para observar como utilizó los diferentes poderes.

**Palabras clave:** Catar, soft power, hard power, revueltas árabes, Hamad Al Thani.



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Qatar's international profile gained importance under the rule of Hamad Al Thani: the country is set to host the 2022 Football World Cup, the Al Jazeera television network has changed the Arab media outlook and in certain conflicts, such as the Arab revolts<sup>1</sup>, Qatar has played an extremely important role. The tiny emirate has become a regional actor in just a few years, with the support of the profits coming from oil and gas exports but also thanks to its actions.

This international progression has been brought about due to several reasons and we will outline four of these in the lines below. In the first place, after coming to power, Hamad Al Thani initiated a campaign of political liberalization designed to improve his image in the eyes of the majority of Qataris and the international community, thereby consolidating his power faced with adversaries from within his very own family. In the second place, the invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf War 1990-91 demonstrated that Saudi Arabia, which assumed the protectionist role of the other countries in the Persian Gulf, in reality, was incapable of protecting them. In third place, Qatar had to ensure its independence faced with potential interference from neighbouring countries, such as Saudi Arabia or Iran. And, finally, in fourth place, with the Al Jazeera television network, the Qatari elite was not prepared to let the opportunity of being at the forefront of Arab public opinion and to defend the other Arabs from the dangers of disgraced dictators slip through its hands (an extremely valuable resource both nationally and internationally). (Kamrava 2009; Roberts 2011; Roberts 2012)

Even though the country has economic strength and diplomatic influence, Qatar remains a tiny country in an extremely volatile region. Western observers see it as an example of diplomatic influence with-

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1. The term «Arab revolts» is used to refer to the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests (both violent and non-violent), riots, revolts and civil wars which began in Tunisia on December 18, 2010 and quickly swept through other countries in the region.

out the hard power or soft power normally present and associated with implementing these kinds of international politics (Abraham 2008). In order to see whether Qatar really does possess the power it appears to wield, this Working Paper studies the operationalization of Qatari powers based on the following questions:

- What kind of powers did Qatar employ under the reign of Hamad Al Thani? (1995-2013)
- How were these powers used?

The following section will briefly discuss the different concepts of power before focusing on two useful dimensions to explain which kinds of power have been employed: hard power or soft power. The third section looks at soft power applied to Qatar, focusing on the players who have implemented this and the resources that generate greater international attraction in accordance with the framework laid out by Joseph Nye in 2004 when he coined the phrase «soft power»: separating these resources into the areas of culture, national and international policy and values. The fourth section analyses the country's economic and military resources, something generally associated with hard power. The fifth section studies the actions of Qatar in four Arab revolts: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, to look at how it has utilized both soft power and hard power. The sixth and final chapter presents the conclusions from this analysis.

## 2. CONCEPTS OF POWER

Power is a multidimensional and complex notion. Chris Brown (2001) presents a general framework for the idea and analyses three meanings of the term which are closely linked: power as an attribute, as a relation and as a structure.

The first meaning of the term, power as an attribute, refers to power as something which people, groups or states possess, have access to and can make use of. This refers to a traditional idea of power in international relations, to the point where many books provide us with lists of components of national power, in other words, characteristics which place a state in the ranking of countries in the world, from the strongest (superpowers) to the weakest. These attributes might include: size and quality of armed forces, natural resources, geographic position, productive base, infrastructures, etc. These characteristics can be permanent or variable and allow us to distinguish between current and potential, or latent powers. (Brown 2001)

There are several things that should be taken into account in this idea of power. On the one hand, the population or geographic extension only furnishes the state with greater powers if the infrastructures, administration, communications and transport allow this to happen. For example, the vast extent of Russia, prior to the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway, could hardly have been considered an asset. Therefore, a relatively small country with a productive economy might be more powerful than a larger country with a less productive economy. However, this is not always the case: If a country does not have a sufficiently large population base, like for example, Singapore, it cannot become a military power, regardless of how successful it is economically. The same can be said for Qatar, with a population of little more than two million, of which less than 300,000 hold Qatari passports. On the other hand, the attributes have to be measured according to a concept of relations: a country has a large or small population depending on whom it is compared with. (Brown 2001)

The second meaning of the term, power as a relation, refers to the ability which people, groups or states have to exercise influence over

others, in order to obtain what they desire in the world. For Robert Dahl (1970), power is the ability to get another actor to do what, otherwise, they would not have done (persuasion) or to convince them not to do what they, otherwise, would have done (deterrence). Therefore, power is not measured by the attributes of a state but by its actions: the effect that one country has over one another. This understanding takes into account the context in which power is exercised, as well as the asymmetry of the relations.

And the third meaning of the term, power as a structure, refers to the possibility of forming and determining the structure of the global political economy within which the other states, their political institutions, their companies, scientists and their professionals must operate. The power to determine the agenda or to design the rules and customs that international systems have to adhere to in economic relations is only an aspect of structural power, and not the full picture. Structural power consists of being able to decide how things have to be done, designing the frameworks within which states relate to one another, with people and with the companies. (Strange 1988)

Several authors have identified different power structures. According to Susan Strange (1988) there is the political structure (those who can control —threaten or preserve— the security of people, above all those who control violence), productivity (those who can decide and control the way in which products and services are produced), financial (those who can control the supply and distribution of credit) and knowledge (those with know-how that can limit, either partially or in whole, who has access to this knowledge). Michael Mann (1993), on the other hand, classifies these structures into ideological, economic, military and political.

Joseph Nye (2004), for his part, defines power in a similar way to that of Dahl which is situated around the idea of relations. For Nye, power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others in order to obtain the outcome you desire. However, there are several different ways to influence the behaviour of others and the author classifies these into three categories:

- 1) Coerce them using threats (sticks).
- 2) Induce them with payments (carrots).
- 3) Attract or co-opt them to want what you want.

The former two points belong to the category of hard power and are normally carried out by the economic and military bodies which depend on states. The third is soft power and, unlike the other two, can hardly be under the complete control of the governments. For example, the cinema industry of Hollywood is an important private source of soft power which is very difficult for the government of the United States to control.

In other words, command power —the ability to influence and change what others do— is based on behaviours of coercion and induction and can be found in the realms of hard power, while co-optive power —the ability to shape what other want— can rest on the attractiveness of one’s culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic, and can be found in the realms of soft power.

Joseph Nye (2004) operationalizes his idea of powers in the following table:

**Table 1:** Hard power & soft power according to Joseph Nye

	Behaviour	Instruments	Government policy
Military Power	Coercion Deterrence Protection	Threats Force	Corrective diplomacy War Alliance
Economic Power	Inducement Coercion	Payments Sanctions	Aid Bribes Sanctions
Soft Power	Attraction Agenda Setting	Values Culture Policies Institutions	Public diplomacy Bilateral & multilateral diplomacy

*Source:* (Nye 2004).

Therefore, soft power resides in the ability to shape the preference of others. It is the power that comes from attraction, so that as others want what the actor wants, without the need to use either «sticks» or «carrots». Through soft power, the actor obtains the desired outcome without forcing others to change their behaviour through threats or prizes.

Soft power resources are assets that produce attraction. These assets, as opposed to hard power, are usually intangible: a personality, a culture, attractive political values and instructions, policies that are seen as legitimate or moral authority, etc.

According to Nye (2004), there are three resources of soft power:

The first resource of power is culture, i.e., the set of values and practices that give meaning to society. Culture manifests itself in different ways and there is a general distinction between high culture that is aimed primarily at the elite (literature, art, education, etc.); and popular culture aimed at the masses (football, cricket, etc.). When a culture includes universal values and policies that promote values and interests shared by others, the probability of obtaining the desired results increases because of the relationships of attraction and duty it creates. Some ways of transmitting culture is through trade, personal contacts, visits and exchanges.

The second power resources are government policies, both domestic and international because these make governments popular or unpopular in the eyes of others. Policies in favour of human rights or promoting democracy, for example, improve the soft power of states. However, it is essential to lead by example: policies that are perceived as hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others or an approximation based on limited national interests can damage the soft power.

The third power resource Nye argues are the values used by government, either nationally (for example, democracy), in international institutions (e.g. demonstrating its ability to work with others) or in its foreign policy (for example by promoting peace and human rights). These values significantly affect the preferences of others.

In all the resources of power, however, the context must be taken

into account. Culture, for example, attracts people and produces soft power in situations where the culture of origin and destination are rather similar. If they are different, this might produce the opposite effect. For example, the American university established in Doha can improve the image of Qatar in the eyes of a westerner but worsens it in the eyes of a member of Al Qaeda.

With regard to hard power, its exercise has traditionally been associated with the behaviour of established and emerging great powers (unlike soft power, which is considered a more recent attribute of powers that can compensate for some shortcomings of hard power but not replace it completely). (Leiteritz 2012; Akaha 2011).

Military force seems to be the resource that defines hard power, but the same resource can also contribute to soft power because, for example, many people are attracted by a strong army and a successful military operation. In addition, command power can be used to establish institutions which at a later date take on an appearance of legitimacy. (Nye 2007a)

The same can be said for economic resources, which can produce both soft power and hard power behaviour given that both can be used for coercion as well as attraction.

On the one hand, economic resources can be transformed into soft power in three ways: Firstly, economic power may influence the desire of other states to cooperate and work with an actor to increase their own material prosperity. Secondly, economic success of a nation can influence how other countries see it as a model and seek to imitate it. And thirdly, economic resources may allow a state other activities of soft power, such as engaging in more international actions (Berger 2010). For example, Chinese economic success has been its main source of contemporary soft power. The fact that it has achieved an economic transformation of these characteristics while maintaining political stability and an authoritarian regime has attracted many governments of developing countries. Therefore, China's apparent ability to tackle the crisis in a better way than other advanced economies has become an attractive model abroad. (deLisle 2010)

On the other hand, economic resources can also be used for induc-

tion of hard power, either through payments or sanctions. Keohane and Nye (1977) argue that in economic exchange, there is an asymmetry between the dependence of the buyers and the sellers, and the more dependent party is more vulnerable to the disruption of the market relations, which can be used as a source of coercive power by the less dependent party. This is what Leiteritz (2012) calls the context of conditioned economic assistance.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish which part of the economic relationship is comprised of hard power and which is made up of soft power. For example, to what extent is Morocco's desire to enter the Gulf Cooperation Council due to the political attraction of this Council and how much can be attributed to the induction of a stronger market? To determine whether military force or economic resources are soft or hard power, we have to look at the context. (Nye 2007)

Nye also created, in 2003, the concept of smart power: the ability to combine hard power and soft power into a successful strategy. The idea is to adopt intelligent policies that combine in a harmonious and often subtle way, elements of hard power with initiatives that are typical of soft power, thereby obtaining better results. (Nye 2007c)

This idea values the importance of acting in an intelligent manner and determines the action to be taken based on specific needs, taking into account national and international context, cultural characteristics, the political system of the time and economic influences. This model includes a strategic dimension, since it leads to an action that involves everyone and brings about the creation of alliances at the different levels of intervention, bearing in mind the concept of global partnership and evaluating different kinds of participation. (Brito 2010)

In order to obtain smart power it is necessary to impeccably combine conceptual, institutional and political elements into a reform movement capable of sustaining innovations in foreign policy in the future, and implies knowing the strengths and weaknesses of all the instruments of governance, whether these are soft power or hard power. (Wilson 2008; Whitney and Shambaugh 2009)

Mehran Kamrava, in a conference at the University of Georgetown

on March 10, 2009, argued that states like Qatar not only change the power dynamics in the region but, above all, are instrumental for changing the conception of what constitutes power. The author concluded that Qatar does not display soft power or hard power, but rather it has «civilian power»: a combination of personal and national wealth, stability and intelligent use of these assets.

The concepts of hard power and soft power have given rise to several discussions among the academic community. Different authors (Nye, Baily Mattern, Grunstein, Parmar and Cox, Li and Hong...) have studied the terms and analysed different examples. While the concept was initially conceived with the United States in mind and its place in the world after the Cold War, as a prescription for international policy after September 11, and much of the academic discussion maintained this view, the terms have also been applied to other states and non-state actors. For example, many researchers (Nye, Kurlantzick, Chey, Gil, Ding, Starr...) have used them to analyse the Confucius Institutes in China. In addition, the concepts have crossed the academic sphere and have been used by other actors, such as journalists or political leaders of countries like the US and China.

This working paper applies the concepts of hard and soft power to Qatar to observe the power which Hamad Al Thani has utilized during his reign, because, according to Leiteritz (2012), these terms assist us in explaining the different strategies adopted by developing nations in international politics.

### 3. QATARI SOFT POWER

Hamad Al Thani made outstanding and progressive use of soft power in the years he ruled Qatar. In this model you can find two references. On the one hand, the country followed the strategy of the United Arab Emirates, especially in the city of Dubai, which applied significant economic investment to diversify an economy dependent on oil and gas. This strategy, however, does not seem sustainable in the long term. On the other hand, at an educational level, the soft power model of Qatar has followed that of China, this course is designed for the long-term, as Confucius said: «If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people». (Yang 2010)

Unlike what has taken place in other countries, Qatari soft power has the peculiarity that it was carried out by the government through the institutions it controls, i.e., there have been few private sources of soft power. Thus, the vast majority of players who have exercised soft power are companies, foundations, institutions and organizations funded by the government. This feature occurs because the state has penetrated the social domain effectively, leaving civil society in an irrelevant position: Qatar has created semi-governmental, semi-private, well-funded organizations which engage in cooperation and assistance operations and other international efforts and which, in turn, prevent the emergence of politically independent bodies of a similar orientation. These non-governmental organizations claim to be funded by the government but are staffed by prominent members of the Emir's family. (Kamrava 2009)

Many sectors have engaged in soft power during the reign of Hamad Al Thani, but the most prominent of these are the following:

- The State/Government of Hamad Al Thani: In which significant roles were played by the Emir, Hamad Al Thani<sup>2</sup>; the Foreign

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2. Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Minister and the Emir's second cousin, Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani<sup>3</sup>; the director of the Qatar Foundation and wife of the Emir, Sheikha Mozah<sup>4</sup>; and the Emir's son and heir, Tamim Al Thani<sup>5</sup>.

- Qatar Foundation: The organisation directed by Sheikha Mozah focusing on education, science and community development. This includes the Centre for Social Development, which looks after the less well-off families in Qatar; the programme Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), headed up by Sheikha Al Mayassa Al Thani<sup>6</sup> (daughter of Hamad Al Thani), primarily dedicated to humanitarian projects outside Qatar; and the Qatar National Research Fund, which focuses on investigation at different levels.
- Qatar Museums Authority: Organisation directed by Sheikha Al Mayassa Al Thani responsible for museums and works of art of Qatar.
- Qatar Investment Authority: The sovereign investment fund of Qatar. In 2012 the funds' assets were estimated at around 170 billion dollars, making it the ninth largest investment fund in the world in terms of assets. The fund is managed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani.
- Al Jazeera: Television network financed primarily by the Government of Qatar. Firstly under the direction of Palestinian Wadah Khanfar and, from 2011, by Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani<sup>7</sup>, member of the Emirs family.
- Qatar Petroleum, Qatar Gas and RasGas: Hydrocarbon companies controlled by the Government.
- Qatar Airways: The national airline financed above all by the Government and managed by Akbar Al Baker.
- Qatar Charity: A charity organisation based in Qatar, which although it does not have any members of the Emir's family on its

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3. Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber bin Muhammad Al Thani.

4. Mozah bin Nasser Al Missned.

5. Tamim bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

6. Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

7. Hamad bin Thamer bin Mohammed Al Thani.

management board, it does have many ties with different government bodies and cooperates with several government agencies. According to Kamrava (2009), over time, the programmes of the Qatar Charity have been developed in association with the state's political objectives.

- Qatar Red Crescent Society: The Qatari affiliate of the Red Cross and the International Red Crescent Society.

From the original idea, the concept of soft power has evolved to include a variety of dimensions, from media to military or economic. The first attempt to measure soft power in an index created and published jointly by the UK Institute for Government and the Monocle media group in 2007 combined a number of statistical calculations and subjective panels' results to measure soft power resources from 26 countries. The calculations were organized into a framework of five sub-indices: culture, diplomacy, education, business/innovation and government. In other editions, these sub-indices and concepts to be evaluated were extended as the components of soft power are still a matter of debate.

However, this chapter is not intended to measure the soft power of Qatar in an index or scale, nor does it use opinion polls to discover the degree of attraction of Qatar, but rather it explains how Hamad Al Thani has used soft power resources. To do so, it draws on three resources which Nye identified in his book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*: culture, national and international policy, and values.

### 3.1 CULTURE

Hamad Al Thani's government invested in high culture, in that they purchased works of art, as well as in the culture of masses, for example in its organization of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

In 2010, the Government together with Qatar Foundation, in collaboration with private companies, began construction on the Katara cultural village, defined on its website as «an exceptional project of

hope for human interaction through art and cultural exchange». This cultural foundation houses theatres, concert halls, art galleries, a large amphitheatre and other facilities, offering high quality and value cultural products (often coming from abroad) and gives visibility to the large number of corporate cultural initiatives, especially by the Qatar Foundation in recent years.

As far as the world of music is concerned, in 2008, the Qatar Foundation set up the Qatari Philharmonic Orchestra (the first symphonic orchestra in the entire Persian Gulf) composed of 101 musicians from over 30 different nationalities. Along with the orchestra, a musical academy was created for educational purposes. As far as the artistic realm goes, the Qatar Foundation and the Qatar Museums Authority have built huge museums around the country, such as the Arab Modern Art Museum and the Islamic Art Museum. The latter, inaugurated in 2008, was designed by the winner of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize, I.M. Pei and in 2013, the museum reached the one million visitor benchmark. The website of the Qatar Museums Authority explains that the «Emir of Qatar's, Hamad Al Thani, vision, is to transform Qatar into a cultural capital (...) which brings the world to Doha but at the same time connects Doha to the world». In addition, Qatar Museums Authority, or the Al Thani family directly, undertook an international campaign to purchase extremely valuable works of art. It is calculated that between 2005 and 2012, the emir's family spent a minimum of a billion dollars on paintings, sculptures and other pieces of art, including *The Card Players*, by Paul Cezanne, or other works by Francis Bacon, Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst («Qatar's Culture Queen» 2012). As for the film industry, Qatari leaders created the Doha Film Institute, through which it subsequently organised international film festivals. Between 2009 and 2012, the institute organized the Doha Tribeca Film Festival, which saw renowned actors such as Robert De Niro and Salma Hayek visiting the country. In literary circles, the Qatar Foundation has been commissioned to create a new National Library of Qatar and has associated with the British publisher Bloomsbury to publish books on a range of different topics.

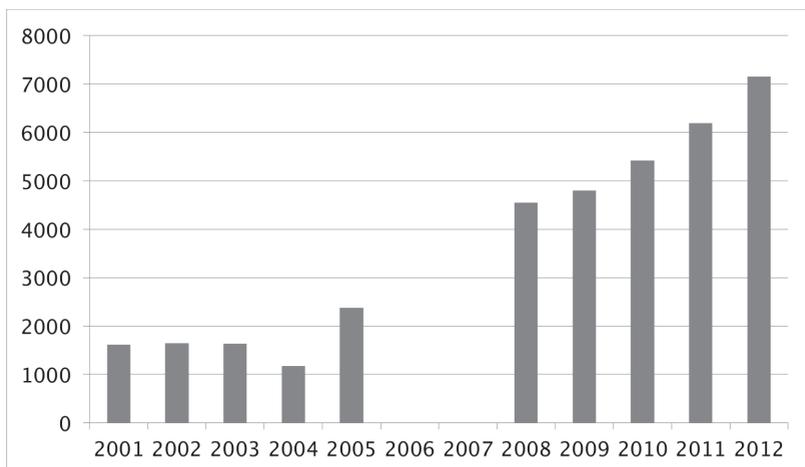
Another sector that has generated more international attraction,

especially regional, and has helped define the cultural outline of the country has been education. In the late 1990s, the Qatar Foundation began to build a new «Education City» which, as the foundation website says, «is bringing quality education and work experience opportunities in Qatar». Education City hosts several primary and secondary schools, which offer a wide range of international educational programs as well as faculties of prestigious Western universities. The Qatar Foundation chose universities to be established in the City in view of the sector in which each stood out in order to cover the maximum range of disciplines. The Education City is host to faculties from the Virginia Commonwealth University, Weill Cornell Medical College, Texas A&M University, Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown School of Foreign Service, Northwestern University, HEC Paris and University College London.

It is important to remember that international educational exchanges and visits are valuable tools in order to convey the culture of the country. As Colin Powell said: «I cannot think of a more valuable asset for our country than the friendship of future world leaders who have been educated here» (Nye 2004). China is the country that has been characterized for using international exchanges and cooperation in higher education as a soft power. The Asian giant's model of exchanges, as well as the expansion of Confucius Institutes, is unprecedented and goes well beyond the comfort zone of international theory (Yang 2010). As mentioned previously, Qatar seems to have noticed the importance that China has given the soft power of education and organized a system of grants to encourage Qatari national to study abroad. At the same time, the country has grown as a magnet for attracting international students. The following table shows the flow of international students moving to Qatar at university stage from 2001.

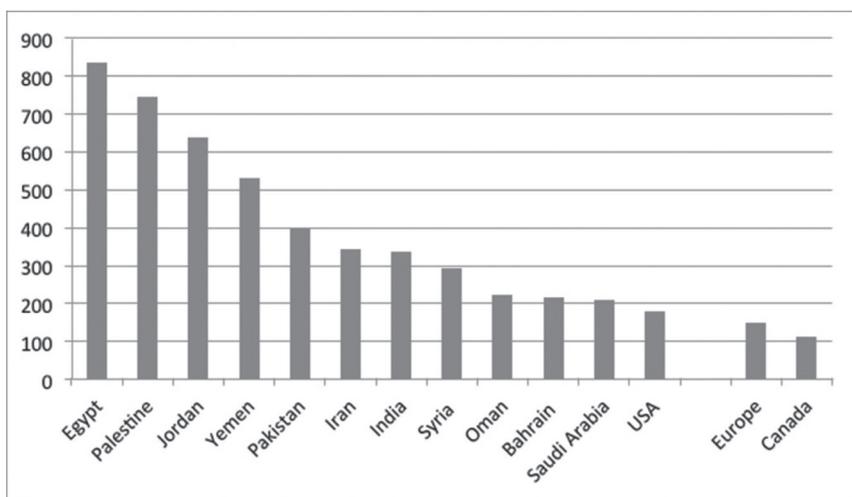
Qatari university education has generated significant regional attraction. The following graph shows where the mobile international students were from, whom in 2012, registered in Qatari universities.

**Table 2:** Number of mobile international students studying in Qatar at university level per year



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

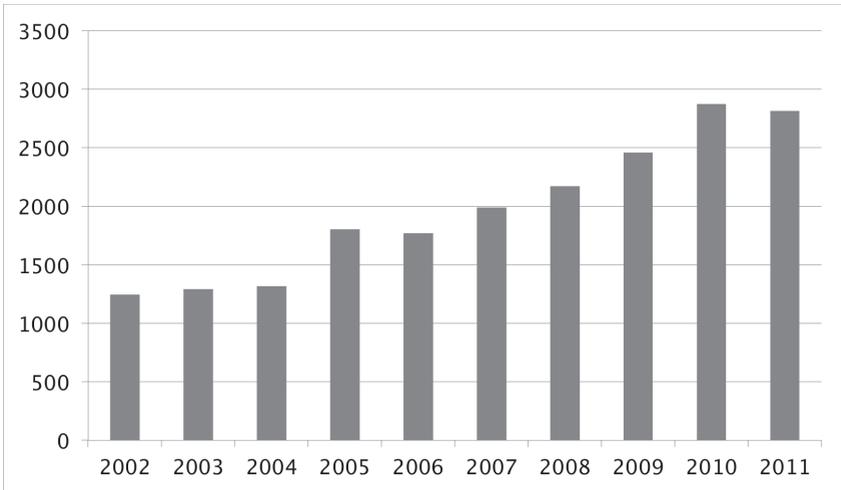
**Table 3:** Number of mobile international students studying in Qatar at university level per nationality in 2012



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

In a similar manner, the number of Qatari nationals studying abroad has also increased progressively, above all during the final years of the reign of Hamad Al Thani, as the following table shows:

**Table 4:** Number of Qatari nationals studying in third-level education abroad per year



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Apart from education, investigation is another area where Qatar has shown increased interest and which, at the same time has increased attraction. Since 2009, the country has invested 2.9% of its Gross Domestic Product in research («Qatar’s Economy Grows 6.9%; Research Spending up» 2012) through the vehicle of the Qatar Foundation which, in 2006, set up the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF). The QNRF organization runs a variety of research programs structured around four areas: energy and the environment, telecommunications and IT, medicine, and social sciences, arts and humanities. Along similar lines, the presence of think tanks in the country was another of Hamad Al Thani’s main objectives, who has led prestigious international research organizations like Brookings, RUSI or CIRS to open research centres in Qatar. The Rand Corporation, an-

other influential think tank, despite not having been officially established in the country, has been working closely with the Qatar Foundation and the Government since 2000.

Sports are also part of the culture of a country and have been one of the most internationally visible areas of Qatar's soft power strategy. The country will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, a sporting event that draws millions of fans and spectators from all over the world. This will be the first time ever that it will be held in an Arab country. During the closing weeks of the tournament, Qatar will be the information centre of all major media newsrooms worldwide.

In fact, the country has sought to consolidate its position as a major sporting events centre and has tried unsuccessfully to host the 2016 and 2020 Olympic Games. Qatar, however, has managed to organize the final of the 2011 Asian Cup, the 2006 Asian Games, is the host venue for the 2015 World Men's Handball Championship and regularly organizes the Qatar ExxonMobil Open men's tennis tournaments, the Qatar Total Open women's tennis tournament, the FIM Motocross World Championship, the Qatar Gran Prix, the Tour of Qatar cycling race, the Qatar International Regatta sailing event as well as many other sporting events. The Persian Gulf nation is not outstanding in the number of Olympic medal winners it boasts but in the 2012 London Games, the country beat its own record by picking up two bronze medals.

Qatar has also invested heavily in becoming an International conference centre at every level, thereby boosting visitor and tourist numbers. The Qatar Foundation set up the Qatar MICE Development Institute, a body that, according to its website, is designed to «promote the conference sector, meetings, conferences and exhibitions in Qatar.» It has hosted several international conferences on several issues, such as the 2001 World Trade Organisation Conference, the 2012 international conference on climate change, meetings to discuss the wars in Libya and Syria, meetings of the International Gas Union, and many other events.

Qatari culture is also being transported to several countries through their companies. The oil companies, Qatargas, RasGas and Qatar

Petroleum are engaged in business dealings with several companies and governments in different countries, presenting and promoting the country once again through visits and exchanges. Another Qatari company with a strong international presence is the national airline, Qatar Airways. Since it underwent restructuring in 1997, the company has embarked on a process of rapid expansion, and in 2014, the airline was flying to over 100 destinations. The company has been named «Airline of the Year» for 2011 and 2012 by the Skytrax airline rating agency and its slogan is «The world's five-star airline». The company is very focused on customer service and marketing, organizing campaigns in the mainstream media (we should highlight the sponsorship of the weather section of various international channels) and by having entered into a sponsorship deal in 2013 with Football Club Barcelona, one of the most famous teams in the world.

Another way to expand and disseminate Qatari culture, especially in the information age is through the media. In 1996, Hamad Al Thani founded the Al Jazeera television network, a channel that began life as an Arabic news channel and was only on air for a six-hour programming slot each day. Initially, the channel made a name for itself broadcasting talk show programs, a completely fresh idea and never seen before on screens in the Persian Gulf, often dealing with sensitive issues of religion and morality. Topics included polygamy or the different visions of Islam. Little by little, Al Jazeera grew and diversified: it created a sports channel, a children's channel, another international channel in English, special divisions for Egypt, Turkey and the Balkans, and in 2013, a specific channel for broadcasting in the United States. According to its website, Al Jazeera is broadcast to over 220 million homes in more than 100 countries. Already in 2004, the same Joseph Nye emphasized the effect of Al Jazeera, explaining that: «When other television networks go beyond the reach of the BBC or CNN, covering events and explaining different points of view, US soft power decreases». To illustrate this point, the researcher observed the difference between the headlines that CNN ran during the war in Iraq in 2003: «Coalition forces advance» and the header from Al Jazeera referring to the exact same news story, «Invading forces are advanc-

ing». Due to its regional implementation, Al Jazeera was able to cover conflicts such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, using correspondents located in the very countries being attacked and also did in-depth and controversial following of the Arab revolts (as explained in chapter 5). In 2011, Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, said that the Americans were losing the information war:

«Al Jazeera has been the leader in that they are literally changing people's minds and attitudes. And like it or hate it, it is really effective (...) In fact viewership of al Jazeera is going up in the United States because it's real news. You may not agree with it, but you feel like you're getting real news around the clock instead of a million commercials and, you know, arguments between talking heads and the kind of stuff that we do on our news which, you know, is not particularly informative to us, let alone foreigners» (Radia 2011)

However, using media influence as a power is not a new practice. The transformation of television has altered the ability of states to control the political agenda as satellites and internet have given governments the capacity to address people directly. In order to understand the role of Qatari television, we must take into account the so-called «CNN effect», which took place during the Gulf War of 1990, when political leaders information about what was happening in the region did not come through sources and staff on the ground, but instead via the American television network, CNN. (Price 2009)

At this point we should mention a study carried out by El-Nawawy and Powers (2009) which compares the cognitive, cultural and political provisions of the Al Jazeera English audience with the audience of CNN International and BBC World. The authors conclude that the more time spent by the audience watching Al Jazeera English makes them less dogmatic in their thinking and more prone to consider alternatives and opposing opinions.

But the conversion of media influence on political power is a complex process that, in the case of Al Jazeera and the Qatari diplomacy, is explained by a series of linguistic, cultural and political characteristics of the Arab world. The transnational or pan-Arab nature of the

television network challenges the logic of nation-states and the formula adopted by Al Jazeera is a game-changer in the area of Arab media, imposing new rules that guarantee its hegemony. Thus, to differentiate themselves from Saudi-Lebanese hegemony, Al Jazeera diversified the process used in the recruitment of journalists, incorporating Egyptian, Jordanian, Palestinian and North African journalists to its team, which has given rise to an identification phenomenon among its viewers, reinforcing the network's legitimacy. In addition, profound social changes linked to the processes of modernization among Arab societies that have taken place during the twentieth century have contributed to empowerment of Arab public opinion. The Qatari example, therefore, illustrates the possibilities and what skilful use of the media can offer, creating a true «media diplomacy» and linking the country's image to that of Al Jazeera. (El Oifi 2013)

On the other hand, Qatar media influence is not limited to Al Jazeera but has also aimed to influence other media networks. For example, in 2005 the Qatar Foundation began organizing a debating program broadcast by BBC World News television, as well as other international networks, known as *The Doha Debates*. According to their website, it reaches more than 400 million homes worldwide. The program deals with sensitive issues affecting the Arab world, for example, women's role in society, religious minorities or censorship.

### 3.2 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

As we have already explained in the section covering culture above, the majority of Qatari domestic policies, especially policy aimed at transforming the model of development through culture and knowledge, employed soft power resources. However, the country's international policy has generated just as much if not more than domestic soft power. Qatar has established itself as a diplomatic maverick actor, hybrid and fearless, with a mainly regional focus but also global. Despite its small size, 4,473 mi<sup>2</sup> (11,571 km<sup>2</sup>) a little smaller than the Falkland Islands, it is differentiated from other small states which engage in

diplomatic activity through the United Nations because it has not aligned itself diplomatically with another stronger, adversarial power, a practice known as «bandwagoning» in international relations. Nor has it adopted a balancing approach; making diplomatic decisions based on balancing power between two major powers. Instead, Qatar practises its own foreign policy (Cooper and Momani 2011) with controversial initiatives such as Hamad Al Thani and Shiekah Mozah's visit to Gaza in 2012, becoming the first Head of State to visit the Strip since Israel imposed an international boycott in 2006. Qatari diplomacy has been defined as «carrot diplomacy» given that the country uses its economic strength to mediate with promises of economic assistance, generally in the form of infrastructure construction after a peace agreement has been reached. At the same time, the country's diplomatic style has also been categorised as «niche diplomacy» given that it selects the resources from specific areas which can give the most profitable return. (Ungerer 2007; Antwi-Boateng 2013)

The International policies that have contributed more to increasing Qatari soft power are those associated with investment, aid and mediation.

As far as investment is concerned, the country's investment funds have undertaken very active transnational procurement policy. The Qatar Investment Authority, together with its subsidiaries, Qatari Diar, Qatar Holding, Qatar Sports Investments, Katara Hospitality, among others, have made million dollar investments in both developing and developed countries, and in many different sectors within these countries: financial, hydrocarbon, real estate, tourism, sports, food and beverages, entertainment, logistics, among others. The communication strategy adopted by the Qatar Investment Authority is open and investments are generally a public affair, although it is possible that it has made more investments that are not known about, due to the standard operation of confidentiality clauses and NDAs typical with these sorts of transactions (Balding and Shakeel 2013). During Hamad Al Thani's reign, Qatari investment funds invested in Germany (Volkswagen Group), Belgium (KAS Eupen), Brazil (Santander Brazil), Spain (Football Club Barcelona, Iberdrola), the USA (Fisker

Automotive, Miramax), France (Paris Saint-Germain, Lagardère Grup), Greece (six islands), Italy (Costa Esmeralda), Malaysia (petrochemical installations), the Netherlands (Royal Dutch Shell), the United Kingdom (Barclays, Harrods, Sainsbury's, Canary Wharf Group, the Shard building) and in Switzerland (Credit Suisse).

With regard to aid, in the 1990s, Qatar increased the level of international aid destined for conflict zones in places as diverse as Lebanon, Gaza, Sudan and Mali. In each of these places, the government established charities dedicated to construction programs and announced investment plans. Qatar also played a role in acting as an intermediary to channel aid from other countries, and in some cases, even acting a model for triangular cooperation North-South-South<sup>8</sup>. In Mali, for example, Qatar Red Crescent was very active in supporting refugees and coordinating humanitarian aid operations (Khatib 2013). As explained by the president of the Red Cross in Mali, Abdourahmane Cissé, in August 2012, northern based Islamists rejected intervention if this had been donated by the International Red Cross:

«It has been extremely difficult for us to access towns in the north, however we were able to do so better with intervention from Qatar Red Crescent.»  
(Doherty 2012)

Qatar also participated in humanitarian operations after natural disasters ravaged different parts of the world. For example, Qatar sent two vessels containing eighty tons of basic foodstuffs after a hurricane hit the Philippines in 2013, it sent aid to survivors of the earthquakes and tsunamis that hit Japan in 2011, victims of the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 as well as hurricane Katrina survivors in the United States in 2005, among others. (Kamrava 2013)

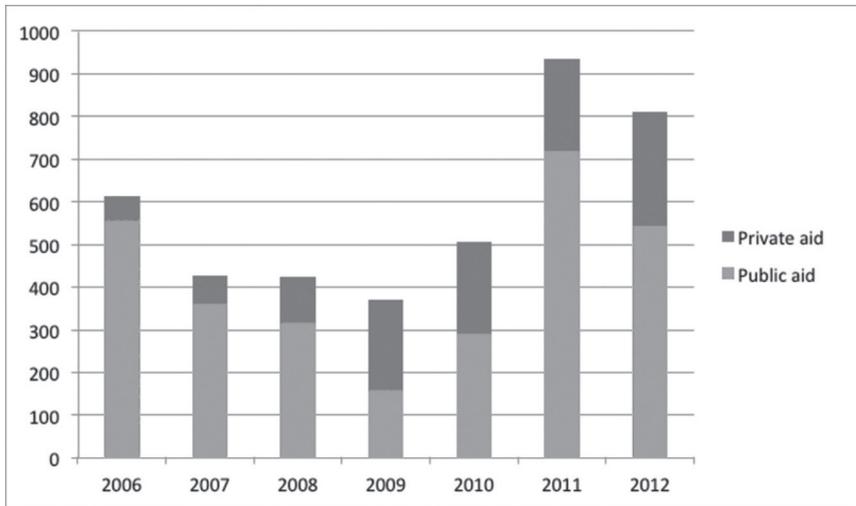
The following table shows Qatar's contribution to public and private international aid in millions of dollars during the latter years of

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8. Triangular cooperation and North-South-South occurs when a developed country (global North) uses a developing country as an intermediary (global South) to cooperate or get help in a third developing country (global South).

the reign of Hamad Al Thani. Private aid was channelled through the following organisations: Qatar Charitable Society, Sheikh Eid Charity Association, Qatar Red Crescent, Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah Foundation for Humanitarian Services (RAF), Munazzamat Al-Da’wa Al-Islamiia, Sheikh Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani Charitable Foundation, Silatech Foundation, Reach Out To Asia (which belongs to the Qatar Foundation), Al-Faisal without Borders Foundation and the Al As-makh Charity Foundation.

**Table 5:** Qatar public and private international aid in millions of dollars per year



Source: Foreign aid report 2012 (Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

As for mediation, Qatar mostly shines because of its unique diplomatic role as a mediator, as well as acting as a peace broker in various conflicts in the Middle East according to Cooper and Momani (2011). In fact, as pointed out by Gulbrandsen (2010), the Constitution of Qatar is one of the few that directly mentions peaceful resolution of conflict: «The foreign policy of the state is based on the principle of strengthening peace and international security, giving support to the peaceful resolution of international disputes...» (Constitution of Qatar,

article 7). Qatar has acted as an independent actor and has mediated and intervened in conflicts with no apparent national interests or clear benefits to be obtained, and with little chance of success. Its efforts have been very visible in three of these: (1) Lebanon (2) Darfur (3) Yemen:

1. Qatar has tried to mediate in Lebanon several times. After the armed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, Qatar used its seat on the United Nations Security Council to criticize Israeli action and offered to provide 300 soldiers to the peacekeeping mission of the United Nations in the country. Hamad Al Thani said:

It is most saddening that this Council stands idly by, crippled and unable to stop the bloodbath,” he said, adding later in his speech that “what is happening will sow the seeds of hatred and extremism in the area and provide a pretext for those who feel that the international community is taking sides. («Security Council Has Been Idle during Lebanese “bloodbath”» 2006)

However, the defining moment for Qatari diplomacy took place in May 2008 when, after several clashes in Beirut, Qatar acted as a mediator between, on the one hand, the pro-western March 14, and on the other side, the March 8 movement, led by Hezbollah and supported by Syria and Iran. Finally, the Doha Agreement was signed, which formed a unity government and Qatar gave \$300 million to rebuild the country. It is interesting to note that, while not necessarily representative of what the population thinks, after the agreement was signed, advertising banners could be seen proclaiming the slogan «Thank you, Qatar» along with Qatari flags around the region. («A Bouncy Bantam» 2006; Worth 2008)

2. Darfur rebel groups and the central government of Sudan have been engaged in open conflict since 2003. Qatar’s involvement in Sudan began in 2008, when the Persian Gulf country established conversations with a variety of actors, among which were

the United States, France, Libya, China, the United Nations, the African Union and the Arab League. Qatari officials were on site to collect information so that they might win over the trust of the parties, getting very involved in the roots of the conflict and, throughout the process, showing great patience and determination that the talks would go ahead. In July 2011, a peace agreement was signed between the government and rebel groups –The Doha Agreement– with which Qatar pledged \$500 million to rebuild Darfur. The Prime Minister of Qatar, Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, announced that peace time had begun in Darfur and that it was a peace that should be protected by development, not by force. («Qatar Pledges \$500m for Darfur Reconstruction» 2013; Kamrava 2011)

3. The Yemeni government and Zaydi Shia rebels have fought in intermittent wars since 2004. Qatar became involved in the conflict in Yemen in May 2007 and during the negotiations, Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani said that if the parties agreed to call a halt to the war, Qatar would donate economic aid for the reconstruction of the country. On February 2, 2008, the government and the rebels signed a peace treaty in Doha with which Qatar provided between 300 and 500 million dollars for the reconstruction of the country and offered exile to several rebel leaders. Nevertheless, fighting continued and the war did not stop. Even though further attempts at mediation were made, in the words of Kamrava (2011), «Qatar did not manage to bring peace to the region».

Qatar has mediated in other conflicts, such as in East Sahara, Indonesia, on the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea in 2010 or in the relations between Sudan and Chad in 2009. The country has also tried to mediate between the Palestinian Hamas and Fatah factions; between the United States and Iran; between Israel and the Arab countries; and between the Government of Afghanistan, the Taliban and the United States. Regarding this latter point, Qatar allowed the Taliban to open an office in Doha, a controversial decision clearly demonstrating Qatari will to play a central role in a wide variety of diplomatic

affairs. As far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned, Qatar's mediation strategy was different from that of other countries, like for example the United States, given that during specific periods, Hamad Al Thani enjoyed the trust of the different parties involved in the conflict and he was willing to sit down and talk with all the players, from Syria to Israel, through Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah. (Cooper and Momani 2011; Fromhertz 2012; Collins 2013; Abraham 2008; Roberts 2013)

The relative success of Qatar, however, has come in conflict mediation, and not in conflict transformation which corrects the structural causes of the conflict in question. Conflict transformation requires a profound and sustained level of commitment, especially in terms of time and resources, not to mention in-depth knowledge of and persistent influence in the region. A matter-of-course example of this lack of real conflict transformation is the case of Lebanon, where in 2010, the conflict broke out once again but the Qatari mediators, who had worked so hard during the previous two years, were no longer on the ground: Qatar had managed to reduce tensions in the region but had not been successful in transforming or resolving the conflict. (Kamrava 2011)

### 3.3 VALUES

Qatar has expressed its values through its policies, many of which have been identified with positive values, like for example, those related to culture, education, research and sport (on a national level) or related to development aid and humanitarian interventions (internationally), which are generally based on solidarity and have been implemented in a multilateral manner through coalitions.

In their public appearances, Qatari leaders have repeatedly mirrored the country with values that generate attraction and soft power, such as peace, freedom, human rights and democracy (Cooper and Momani 2011; Nye 2004). In a television interview with Charlie Rose broadcast on PBS on 2 February 2012, Qatar's foreign minister, Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, spoke of the value of legitimacy in the following terms: «power has to come from the people» and «monarchies should serve their people». He said that Qatar did not get involved in

military operations but in peace missions and its international policy was based on establishing dialogue with all parties to achieve «comprehensive» peace. Internally, he ensured that the Persian Gulf country enjoyed freedom of speech and that they wanted to be «a place where there was a free flow of ideas». He added that even though few people knew of Qatar before then, it was finally on the map.

However, countries express their values by what they say as well as through what they do: political values such as human rights and democracy can be powerful forces of attraction, but just proclaiming these is not enough, you also need to practise them. Nye (2004) explains that the cases of Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, where the values practised contradict values being proclaimed, make the hypocrisy of US policy patent, and thereby greatly reduces its soft power.

In Qatar there have been some contradictions between the policies implemented and the values that have been proclaimed, which can reduce the country's soft power. The following section highlights four such examples.

In the first place, the Constitution defines Qatar's political system as being a «democracy» (Qatari Constitution, Article 1). In addition, the abdication of Hamad Al Thani, at 61 years of age, proved to be a rare example of political renewal in both Qatar and the rest of the Persian Gulf, where many cases of the transfer of power were brought about through military coups. However, this image of democracy contradicts with the fact that Freedom House classified Qatar as being a not free country (2013), giving it a 5.5 on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 = free, 7 = not free; civil liberties scored a 5 (1 = Best 7 = Worst); political rights were given a score of 6, only one point off the worst score of 7. In the same vein, the 2012 Democracy Index, prepared by The Economist Intelligence Unit, ranks Qatar in 138th place out of a total of 167 countries, calling it therefore, an authoritarian regime.

Secondly, the real motives behind some of Qatar's humanitarian actions have been called into question as it is suspected that there could be other interests behind them. For example, humanitarian aid to Mali gave rise to rumours allegedly spread by Algeria, that Qatari humanitarian missions were being used as an excuse to send weapons

to guerrilla groups in northern Mali, to the point that the Qatar Red Crescent Society was forced to make a statement denying the allegations. («Qatar Aid Workers Deny Backing Mali Rebels» 2013)

Thirdly, despite the country's apparent commitment to human rights hosting monitoring organizations such as the National Human Rights Committee, or organizing events like the International Conference on Security and Human Rights in the Arab Region, held in November 2014, the increase of soft power has placed it on the map and has resulted in the fact that international NGOs, such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch, trade unions, media like The Guardian and other similar actors, have criticized the violation of human rights in Qatar and especially the plight of migrant workers residing in the country, representing more than 80% of the total population. Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International, on 18 November, 2013 said in the presentation of the report *The Dark Side of Migration: Spotlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup*:

«It is simply inexcusable in one of the richest countries in the world that so many migrant workers are being ruthlessly exploited, deprived of their pay and left struggling to survive (...) Construction companies and the Qatari authorities alike are failing migrant workers. Employers in Qatar have displayed an appalling disregard for the basic human rights of migrant workers. Many are taking advantage of a permissive environment and lax enforcement of labour protections to exploit construction workers (...) The world's focus will continue to be placed on Qatar in the build up to the FIFA 2022 World Cup, which will provide the government with a unique opportunity to demonstrate the country's commitment to human rights to the entire world and they can act as a model for the rest of the region.»

And fourthly, Qatar's commitment with freedom and religious tolerance expressed by their leaders in many public statements has been called into question due to the connections between the ruling class and Sheikh Yusuf Al Qaradawi, who lives in Qatar and who has played a major role during the reign of Hamad Al Thani. The influential religious Sheikh, who generally explains his views through Al Jazeera, has

been accused by some sectors of the Western press of exporting a conservative vision of Islam and one which is incompatible with certain human rights. Indeed, Qatar has been characterized for its readiness to accommodate a wide range of actors, some of whom are far from popular with the West, as is the case of Hamas, classified as a terrorist group by many countries, or the Afghan Taliban.

Precisely because Qatar's domestic situation contradicts some of the values the country preaches internationally, Qatari media efforts (as well as the attempt to attract global attention to bringing the best universities in the world and organizing the World Cup) have a specific reason associated with the creation of a brand. The country's leaders have shown that they care about the image of Qatar at different points in time. One such case is when Qatar was engaging in international mediation efforts in broad daylight, granting interviews to the media to publicize the positive image of Qatar, against the opinion of certain diplomats who demanded discretion (Kamrava 2011). Another example could be when, in November 2011, the Emir announced democratic elections to choose members of the Advisory Council for 2013 and the announcement was made by the media worldwide. However, the news of the very same elections *sine die* postponement, signed by Hamad Al Thani before abdicating, was not broadcast in the same way, and for much of the media went unnoticed.

The image of a nation is reflected in the process of national and international activities, and represents, to a greater or lesser degree, the status of the country in the world, helping to make citizens and the international community recognize state power, culture and the sense of value. Soft power is a useful element for modulating it because, if the level of soft power is high, this increases the country's attraction and implementing domestic policy, while maintaining national interests, will be easier. (Lin and Xiaonan 2012)

To create this image, Hamad Al Thani has tried to merge Arab and Islamic values with Western elements and thereby create an original and cosmopolitan society with influence and playing a key role in the international community. Qatar has created a brand through adaptability and has sought a diplomatic space between the discourses of the

East and West. To do this, Qatari leaders have sought to define the country as an ally of the West in different ways: hosting US military bases, allowing Israel to establish what until 2009 was its only trade office in the Persian Gulf, transforming Al Jazeera (especially the English channel) into a symbol of freedom and liberalism, etc. At this point we should mention that Qatar's strategy of soft power to instil confidence in it with the West, may have been influenced by Taiwan that, in an increasingly globalized economy, emphasizes its importance as a valuable partner and in whom the West can trust (Abraham 2008; Khatib 2013; Bloomfield 2011; deLisle 2010). Meanwhile, the high media profile of Sheikha Mozah, unusual among the first ladies of the Persian Gulf, who can be seen accompanying her husband to official acts, managing the Qatar Foundation, appearing in glossy magazines or enjoying her very own international diplomatic profile, has also contributed to the creation of the country's image. (Khatib 2013)

As mentioned in chapter 5, Qatar played a decisive role in many of the Arab revolts. In most of these cases, the country positioned itself in favour of the protesters demanding regime change and at times even acted contrary to some of the values the country had proclaimed, such as multilateralism, which affected both the country's brand and international perception of its values, and as such, its soft power. But the revolts directed their efforts against dictatorships granting renewed social recognition for democratic movements and the aspirations of millions of citizens seeking political freedom (*hurriyha*), social justice (*adala ijtimaiyya*) and dignity (*karama*). Therefore, according to Roberts (2012), very often Qatar did what had to be «morally» done, a fact that represented an excellent public relations campaign, situating it as a key player with influence and making it an attractive option. (Hashemi 2012)

## 4. QATARI HARD POWER

The concept of hard power has been widely debated in academic circles and used by researchers, politicians and journalists. Some authors or different schools of thought situate tangible resources, such as population, land or natural resources in this area, but as is the case with soft power, there is much disagreement about what resources can be considered part of hard power and which cannot. Therefore, this chapter will limit its analysis to two resources which, according to the book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, usually constitute hard power: military resources and financial resources.

It is worth remembering that these same resources, depending on the context, may also be within the range of soft power. Qatar's financial resources have enabled it to avoid the global economic crisis thanks to a sovereign investment fund that has protected the country's finances, an economic success that has generated soft power and attraction. But we must add that the characteristics of Qatar's development are not exportable to many countries around the world, and in the other Persian Gulf conservative Arab monarchies where Qatar could serve as a model, in the words of Khalaf (2013): «the country is perceived more as an annoying sibling rather than as a model».

Qatar's financial resources are closely related to oil and gas, while other sectors such as finance, logistics and tourism are also important. Hydrocarbons are Qatar's main source of income, representing 62% of Gross Domestic Product (Ministry of Business and Trade) and, in 2012, this sector produced revenues of 55 billion dollars. Qatar is one of the leading extractors and exporters of oil in the world, but what really boosts the country's revenues is gas, given that the country is sitting on approximately 13.3% of the world's total gas reserves. Only Iran (with which it shares much of its gas) and Russia have greater reserves:

**Table 6:** Three leading countries in natural gas reserves in 2014

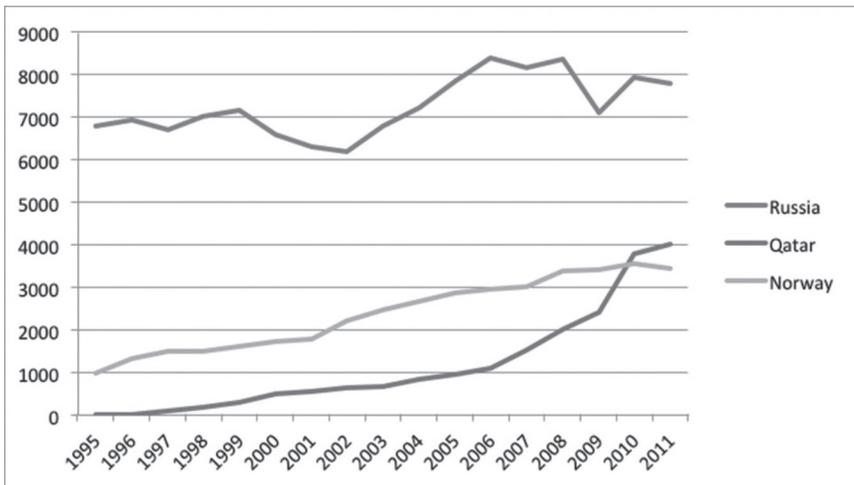
Country	Trillion cubic feet
Russia	1,688
Iran	1,193
Qatar	885

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Energy Statistics, Oil & Gas Journal.

If they continue with the current high rates of extraction, Qatar has 57 years of oil and gas for 160 years.

During the reign of Hamad Al Thani figures gas exports, especially of liquefied natural gas soared to situate the country as the world’s second largest exporter, behind Russia. Qatar exports to many countries, especially in Asia and Europe, and has become almost essential for certain markets such as the UK, where for example, in 2012, approximately half of the natural gas consumed came from Qatar. (US Energy Information Administration)

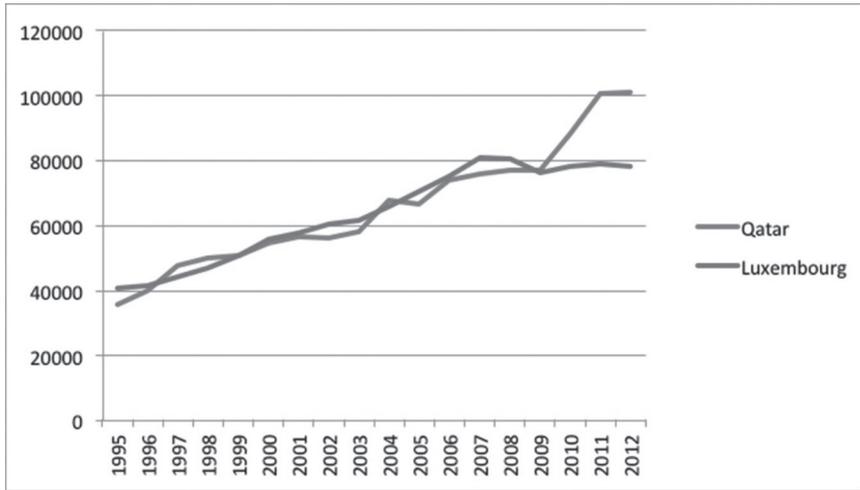
**Table 7:** Gas exports by Russia, Qatar and Norway in billion cubic feet per year



Source: Energy Information Administration, International Energy Statistics.

Income from oil exports has increased the wealth of the country in a very short space of time. Thus, Qatar’s GDP, according to the World Bank, is 171.5 billion (2011), while the gross domestic product per capita, due to the small population of Qatar, was the highest in the world in 2012.

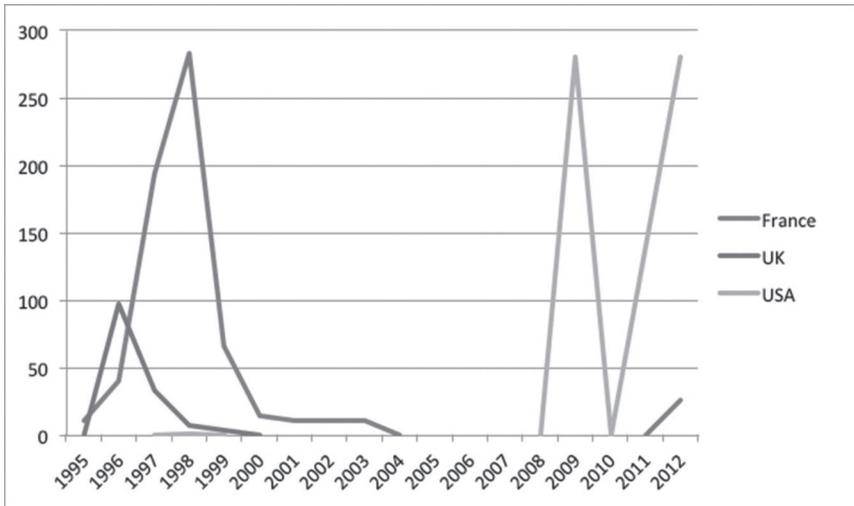
**Table 8:** Gross domestic product per capita for Qatar and Luxembourg in dollars per year



Source: World Economic Outlook Database-October 2013, International Monetary Fund.

Qatar does not lead the ranking in military resources (Armed Forces are made up of 11,800 soldiers) but its capabilities have increased steadily during the reign of Hamad Al Thani. Qatar made two major arms purchases during his tenure, on the one hand in 1997, shortly after coming to power, the government acquired weapons coming mainly from France and, to a lesser extent, from the UK. On the other hand, in 2009, just before the Arab uprisings, Qatar once again acquired weapons coming mainly from the United States. The following table shows the trends in arms purchases by Qatar during the reign of Hamad Al Thani:

**Table 9:** Transfer of arms to Qatar from France, the United Kingdom and the United States per annum



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Despite not having accurate data after 2011, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) highlights that Qatar is investing heavily in arms (Pieter D. Wezeman, telephone interview 11/02/2014). These investments are in line with Qatari Law 5 of 2014 requiring all Qatari males between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age to do three months military service, if they are studying, or four months if they are not.

Other significant military resources include the two major US military bases the Persian Gulf state hosts in its territory. At this point we should once again point out that hosting military bases of the world’s most powerful country could be considered a resource of soft power or hard power, depending on the context and time.

On the one hand, Qatar hosts the Al Udeid Air Base. Located south of Doha, the base was built during the 1990s, after the bilateral defence agreement signed between the United States and Qatar in 1991. During the war in Afghanistan (after 2001) the base accommodated up to 4,000 US troops. In March 2002, a large part of the IT and com-

munications equipment from the Saudi Prince Sultan base was relocated to the Qatari base to establish a command centre for the wars in the region, including that of Iraq (after 2003). Between 2002 and 2003, the installations were expanded to accommodate up to 120 aircraft and 10,000 troops and the longest runway in the Persian Gulf was built here. (Bases 2014)

On the other hand, Qatar is also the headquarters of the As Sayliyah military camp, in use since August 2000 and which can accommodate up to 11,000 soldiers. The camp was also used during the Iraq war and is considered the world's largest military distribution hub of the US armed forces. (Security 2013)

## 5. USE OF HARD AND SOFT POWER BY QATAR IN THE ARAB REVOLTS

Several Qatari actors played a prominent role during the Arab uprisings. This chapter examines the actions carried out by Qatari actors during the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, to examine the operationalization of hard power and soft power implemented during the reign of Qatar's Hamad Al Thani. These four conflicts have been specifically chosen because Qatar demonstrated —a priori or a posteriori, and by way of words or deeds—, their position in favour of regime change and because their intervention is relatively well-documented. In two of these revolts, Tunisia and Egypt, the Persian Gulf nation intervened with soft power and hard power in the form of financial resources. In contrast, in the remaining two, Libya and Syria, Qatar intervened with soft power and hard power in the form of military and economic resources. Due to the socioeconomic differences between Qatar and the four countries studied, as well as the context of the conflict, it is understood that most of the aid and economic investment Qatar offered was provided in the context that Leiteritz would call conditioned economic assistance. In addition, Qatar directed its aid to certain actors in the region and not others; the aim therefore of this financial support was hardly to generate attraction but rather to probably be used as a source of coercive power, which would place it closer to the realm of hard power rather than soft power.

The use of soft power follows the same patterns in all four revolts dealt with. Although Qatar has several soft power resources (as discussed in Chapter 3) and probably all of them have been influential, to a greater or lesser degree, the fact is that during the revolts, two actors have played a special role because they acted in a complementary manner and contributed to the modulation of Arab public opinion in favour of certain positions.

On the one hand, there was Al Jazeera, an instrument of propagation of soft power that was consolidated as an influential actor in the

conflicts. In fact, without this pan-Arab television network, the revolts would not have spread from country to country so easily. In the words of Marc Lynch, professor of Middle Eastern studies at George Washington University:

«The notion that there is a common struggle across the Arab world is something Al Jazeera helped create (...) They did not cause these events, but it's almost impossible to imagine all this happening without Al Jazeera.»  
(Worth and Kirkpatrick 2011)

On the other hand, Islamic scholar Yusuf al Qaradawi, a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and in 2008 considered the third most influential intellectual in the world by Prospect Magazine. Al Qaradawi established his base in Qatar in 1961, and enjoys excellent relations with the Emir's family. Via Al Jazeera, he gave encouragement to the resistance of these four countries in the name of religion. While his statements were always in the same direction as Qatar's actions, the editorial line of Al Jazeera, in January 2014 the country's authorities denied that Al Qaradawi's statements reflected the country's foreign policy. («Qaradawi's Views Don't Reflect Qatar's Policy: FM» 2014)

The use of hard power by the Government of Qatar or by actors which are very close to it (such as the National Bank of Qatar), as mentioned above, does not follow the same pattern in all four revolts. However, the hard power implemented, could have been counterproductive to Hamad Al Thani's initial soft power strategy because it contradicts some values that had previously been preached. For example, sometimes Qatar acted unilaterally despite having proclaimed the value of multilateralism; the image of the country deteriorated after reports emerged of atrocities carried out by some Islamist actors, allegedly funded by Qatar; its position in some conflicts is no longer perceived as that of neutral mediator; or the fact that Al Jazeera has taken sides has damaged its credibility. (Al Qassemi 2012; Roberts 2012; Antwi-Boateng 2013)

Therefore, the following analysis examines the actions of soft power of (1) Al Jazeera and (2) Al Qaradawi and soft power and hard power

er actions of (3) the state and other actors close to the state in four Arab revolts.

## 5.1 TUNISIA

(1) Al Jazeera played a role in the Tunisian revolt through their reports to the point that the Tunisian government banned the network's journalists from entering the country. Nevertheless, the channel was able to bypass this obstacle and covered the conflict using staff working secretly (such as Lotfi Hajji, who acted at the request of journalist Mohammed Krichen). During the democratic transition, after Ben Ali left power, Al Jazeera journalists returned to work in the country and opened an office there. At least on one occasion, one of its journalists was assaulted. (Worth and Kirkpatrick 2011)

(2) Islamic scholar Yusuf Al Qaradawi said the Tunisian revolt was against «injustice» and that it had been an «example» for other Arab peoples. Al Qaradawi also stated that he could name three or four other Arab countries where people starved and leaders stole public wealth. After the revolt, he visited Tunisia.

(3) The Qatar National Bank, which in part is composed of Qatari sovereign investment funds, extended a loan to Tunisia of \$500 million once Ennahda formed the Government of Tunisia, in other words, after the revolution and elections. It was a loan to be paid back in five years with an interest rate of between 2.5% and 3% in contrast with the fact that the African Development Bank had turned down a similar and earlier request due to the political instability. In addition, the Tunisian government was subject to pressure from other agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to implement reform in order to reduce debt and end the political crisis. («Qatar Bank Grants Tunisia \$500 Mln to Support Currency Reserve» 2013)

Also in the economic sphere, Qatar bought 75% (some reports say 90%) of the Tunisian telephone operator for 1.2 billion dollars during the transition. It also acquired 49.96% of the Tunisian Qatari Bank, thus obtaining 99.96% of the company, and financed development

and infrastructure projects including a refinery in Skhirat, a phosphate extraction mine and a tourist village in Tozeur.

On the diplomatic level there were two public movements to support the new Tunisian government. On the one hand, the Emir of Qatar was the highest authority present at the celebrations of the first anniversary of the revolution. On the other hand, Qatari lawyer Ali Ben Fetais Al Marri played a very important role in the efforts of the United Nations to recover 28.8 million of former President Ben Ali hidden in various funds.

However, Qatar alleged interference in Tunisia generated criticism from some Tunisian citizens and political parties. In addition, some secular parties voiced concern about the Wahhabi Islam current propagated by Qatar. The criticism reached such a point that the interim president of Tunisia, Moncef Marzouki, publicly called for an end to insults against Qatar. This request only increased criticism appearing on social networks and a Facebook page titled 'Campaign to insult Qatar' appeared and reached 23,000 followers in two days. (Kilkelly 2013)

## 5.2 EGYPT

(1) In Egypt Al Jazeera had what some have described as a «love affair» with the Muslim Brotherhood. A few days after Hosni Mubarak left power, the network set up the Al Jazeera Mubasher Misr channel created especially for Egypt, with guests who hardly ever criticized the organization and journalists that avoided asking delicate questions. The channel showed a clear preference for the Muslim Brotherhood, thus damaging the television's image of neutrality. In fact, according to Al Qassemi (2012), the editorial line of the channel described President Mohamed Morsi as an «Egyptian warrior». After the military coup in the summer of 2013, broadcasts of the channel were banned and its journalists persecuted.

(2) Yusuf Al Qaradwi during the early days of the Egyptian revolt, referred to Hosni Mubarak as being blind, deaf and dumb and in the name of Egyptian Islamic intellectuals and the rest of the world asked

him to abandon power. When he eventually did leave power, Al Qaradawi returned to Egypt and led Friday prayers from Tahrir Square, broadcast live on state television with an audience estimated at around two million Egyptians. After the coup against Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, the cleric did not support the new military government but said that Islam had ordered them to obey former president Morsi. («Qaradawi Says Islam ‘Orders Us To Obey’ President Morsi» 2013)

(3) Qatar gave significant financial support to Egypt after the uprising and during the reign of the Muslim Brotherhood. Firstly in 2011, when Mubarak left power, Qatar gave Egypt a loan of \$500 million and promised a further 10 billion to support the economy after the revolution. Later, in August 2012, when the Muslim Brotherhood were already in power and Egypt was trying to close a loan with the International Monetary Fund, Qatar promised a further two billion dollars to the Central Bank of Egypt. A month later, Qatar announced that it would inject eighteen million dollars in investments in Egypt during the following five years, eight of which would be allocated to electricity and natural gas projects and another ten million for tourism projects. («Qatar to Invest \$ 18bn in Egypt over next 5 Years» 2012). Qatar’s financial support of Egypt continued and, according to the BBC, 10 April 2013, Qatar offered three billion dollars in low-interest loans and the foreign minister, Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, stated that Qatar would supply Egypt with all the natural gas it required.

Qatar investment in the country did not please certain sectors of Egyptian society. There were rumours which President Mohamed Morsi had to publicly deny ensuring that Egypt would sell the Suez Canal to the Persian Gulf country. In the words of Hamdeen Sabahi, a leader of the secular opposition National Salvation Front, a political party that finished third in the 2012 elections:

«Egyptians aren’t stupid—they know this isn’t money given because Qatar is grateful of our historical contributions to the region, but because [Qatar] is mysterious and wants something. Egyptians feel that Qatar is not supporting them as a whole but [rather] the Muslim Brotherhood.» (Abi-Habib and Abdellatif 2013)

Also Simon Henderson, program director of the Persian Gulf and Energy Policy Program at the Washington Institute, doubts Qatari intentions in Egypt:

«It's not the way the U.S. system operates, and it's a disadvantage,» Henderson says. «The U.S. appears slow-witted on this, and the Qataris appear quick and nimble. The Qataris are buying influence,» he adds. «The big question is, what do they want in return?» (Giglio 2013)

Financial support by Qatar to Egypt came to an abrupt halt when, after the military coup, the Muslim Brotherhood were driven from power and the new government received a promise of loans of up to twelve billion dollars from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait. Changing alliances became even more obvious at the time, according to several Reuters reports, Egypt returned two billion dollars that Qatar had provided to the Central Bank of Egypt and the \$500 million that had been facilitated just after the revolution. In addition, the Egyptian government declined Qatar Airways' proposal to increase the number of flights between the two states.

**Table 10:** Elements of soft power and hard power used by Qatar in Tunisian and Egyptian revolts.

	Behaviour	Instruments	Government policy
Military Power	Coercion Deterrence Protection	Threats Force	Corrective diplomacy War Alliances
<b>Economic Power</b>	<b>Inducement</b> Coercion	<b>Payments</b> Sanctions	<b>Aid</b> Bribes Sanctions
<b>Soft Power</b>	<b>Attraction</b> <b>Agenda setting</b>	<b>Values</b> <b>Culture</b> <b>Policies</b> <b>Institutions</b>	<b>Public diplomacy</b> <b>Bilateral &amp; multilateral diplomacy</b>

### 5.3 LIBYA

(1) Al Jazeera also positioned for change in Libya, and only a week after the revolt started, the network was using the tricolour flag of the rebels, instead of the official Libyan green flag to report on the conflict. Even during the war, when Muammar Gaddafi's forces pursued its journalists, Qatar decided to increase media pressure and created a new television channel to counteract information coming from the official television network. This new channel, with its headquarters in Doha, called Libya TV, adopted the slogan, «The new channel for all Free Libyans» and rapidly, using Facebook, set about hiring twenty journalists. (Burke 2011)

(2) Al Qaradawi strongly opposed to Gaddafi during the war, said the following fatwa against him:

«To the officers and the soldiers who are able to kill Muammar Gaddafi, to whoever among them is able to shoot him with a bullet and to free the country and [God's] servants from him, I issue this fatwa: Do it! That man wants to exterminate the people. As for me, I protect the people and I issue this fatwa: Whoever among them is able to shoot him with a bullet and to free us from his evil, to free Libya and its great people from the evil of this man and from the danger of him, let him do so! It is not permissible to any officer, be he an officer pilot, or a ground forces officer, or an air forces officer, or any other, it is not permissible to obey this man [Gaddafi] within disobedience [to God], in evil, in injustice, in oppression of [His] servants.» (MEMRI 2011)

Another important role was played by Libyan religious leader, Ali Al Salabat, also in exile in Qatar and with connections to Al Qaradawi, who it is believed during the war tried to force a ceasefire and, after the death of Gaddafi, set up a moderate Islamist political party inspired by the Tunisian Ennahda party and the Turkish Justice and Development. On the other hand, his brother, Ismail Al Salabat, led a faction of Libyan rebels that received military support from Qatar. (Roberts 2011)

(3) On a diplomatic level, Qatar became the first Arab country to recognize the rebel government: the Transitional National Council. It offered exile to regime figures, like for example Moussa Koussa, who was Libyan foreign minister from 2009 to well into the war and who had played a leading role in the government of Gaddafi.

In economic terms, the Persian Gulf country sold Libyan oil for the rebels, exchanging it for gasoline, diesel, food, medicines, and a donation of \$400 million to avoid international sanctions. According to Al Monitor («Qatar Sends Billions, Hoping For an Islamic Regime in Libya» 2012) the head of the National Transitional Council, Mustafa Abdul Jalil, said the Qatari government had spent more than two billion dollars on the Libya revolution.

In military terms, Qatar also made a significant contribution by sending six Mirage attack fighters for the joint NATO operation to create a no-fly zone over Libya. This was the first time that the Persian Gulf country openly supported a party in any conflict with such an active intervention. Qatar also sent cargo planes filled with weapons, including Milan anti-tank missiles made in France and Belgian-made FN assault rifles for the rebels. In addition, Qatari Special Forces provided military training for rebel troops in the Nafusa Mountains in eastern Libya. The involvement came to the point that Qatari special forces on the front lines of the fight and some Libyan rebels even travelled to the Persian Gulf country to receive military training exercises. After Gaddafi's death, Qatar publicly admitted having sent hundreds of troops to Libya. (Roberts 2011; Black 2011)

During the war itself, Gaddafi threatened to kill the Emir of Qatar and his family, who were forced to heighten their personal security measures. However, Qatari flags and photos of Hamad Al Thani were seen in different locations around Libya and the name of the central Plaza was changed from Algeria to Plaza Qatar, in gratitude for the intervention and military support. Nevertheless, once the war ended, Qatar's assistance was once again called into question by many Libyans who accused the Persian Gulf country of choosing a small faction of Islamists to implement their particular agenda. (Sotloff 2012; Black 2011)

## 5.4 SYRIA

(1) Al Jazeera dragged its feet on Syria and waited for the Qatari government to definitively withdraw its support for Bashar Al Assad before focusing on the conflict. Once they did, the network began to cover the war in-depth and positioned itself in favour of the Syrian National Council, dominated mainly by the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, the network avoided any criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood or pointing out their failures and asked journalists to adopt a line specifically highlighting the regime defectors, a fact which was to damage the network's credibility. Meanwhile, Assad continued to persecute the network's journalists. (Al Qassemi 2012)

(2) Al Qaradawi took a stance in favour of regime change and said, «Today the train of revolution has reached a station that it had to reach: The Syria station.» He labelled the country an «oppressive regime that committed atrocities», complained that someone had sabotaged his aspirations to mediate negotiations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Syrian regime and urged the United Nations to intervene in the conflict. Later, he called for a holy war (*jihad*) to be fought against Al Assad and Hezbollah: «Every Muslim who knows how to, and can fight, must volunteer.» («Top cleric Qaradawi calls for Jihad against Hezbollah, Assad in Syria» 2013)

(3) From the outset Qatar tried several different avenues to find a diplomatic exit for Al Assad, who maintained good relations with Hamad Al Thani. One of the most unique ways, uncovered by The Guardian on 15 March 2012, was through emails in which Sheika Al Mayassa Al Thani, Hamad Al Thani's daughter, asked Asma Al Assad, Bashar Assad's wife, to convince her husband to abdicate. But finally, Qatar withdrew its support and became a very active diplomatic actor against Al Assad. Firstly, by bringing its influence to bear to bestow legitimacy on Syrian rebels, organizing meetings between regime opponents in Doha, and pushing for Syria's seat in the Arab League to be occupied by the rebels instead of Al Assad's government. Secondly, Qatar opened an embassy for the Syrian opposition in Doha, while keeping the former Syrian embassy closed, as Al Jazeera reported on 28 March

2013. And, thirdly, Qatar offered shelter to diplomatic and economic defectors from Al Assad's government; it is believed that the country offered a \$50,000 per year stipend for deserters and their families.

In economic terms, it is calculated that between 2011 and 2013, Qatar spent as much as three billion dollars aiding the Syrian opposition, an amount that included both humanitarian aid as well as weapons for the rebels. (Khalaf and Smith 2013)

As far as military aid is concerned, the 2013 SIPRI report, *Arms Transfers to Syria* documented in detail the transfer of weapons in the Syrian civil war and explains that, in early 2012, government representatives from Libya, Qatar and Saudi Arabia formulated a proposal to supply the rebels with weapons. This information coincides with Hamad Al Thani's public statements made in January 2012, in which he suggested sending Arab troops to Syria. Later, in mid-April, the Qatari foreign minister said the country was not arming the rebels (no other government admitted it was), but the SIPRI document said reports had surfaced claiming that some states were supplying the rebels with weapons directly or had given them money to buy them on the black market. In fact, the head of the Syrian National Council acknowledged in March 2012 that they had received money from Arab and foreign countries to buy weapons. Besides this, according to a report from RT television on 27 July 2012, Qatar and Saudi Arabia had funded a military base in Turkey to help the Syrian rebels.

Although the pieces of the information regarding arms shipments to Syria from Qatar were never confirmed, there were reports and suspicions that arms transfers were taking place. As Pieter D. Wezeman, SIPRI researcher, explained (11/02/2014 telephone interview), a study monitoring aircraft movements detected an unusual aerial activity at military airports in Turkey, where allegedly as many as seventy Qatari aircraft with military equipment destined for Syrian rebels had landed. In addition, weapons were found in Syria that could be almost certainly demonstrated had come from Qatar, for example a Chinese made FN-6 anti-aircraft missile, which Qatar had bought from Sudan and had sent to Syrian rebels via Turkey.

**Table 11:** Elements of soft power and hard power used by Qatar in Libyan and Syrian revolts

	Behaviour	Instruments	Government policy
<b>Military Power</b>	<b>Coercion Deterrence Protection</b>	<b>Threats Force</b>	<b>Corrective diplomacy War Alliances</b>
<b>Economic Power</b>	<b>Inducement Coercion</b>	<b>Payments Sanctions</b>	<b>Aid Bribes Sanctions</b>
<b>Soft Power</b>	<b>Attraction Agenda setting</b>	<b>Values Culture Policies Institutions</b>	<b>Public diplomacy Bilateral &amp; multilateral diplomacy</b>

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The concepts of soft power and hard power are useful to operationalize the use that Qatar has made of power. If these concepts are applied to Hamad Al Thani's actions, it can be observed that the country has increased both the use of hard power and soft power during his tenure.

Qatar's strategy of soft power has its own special characteristics, and is still an attractive option and has placed the country on the map. However, in light of the increasing international criticism levelled against Qatar in the wake of it being awarded the 2022 World Cup, largely concerning the precarious situation of foreign nationals working in the country, it might be said that Qatar being the centre of attention is not as beneficial as it might appear. Just like Chinese soft power is focused simultaneously on developed and developing nations (Suzuki 2009), Qatari efforts target the Arab and Muslim world (its main focus of international mediation, influence of Al Jazeera Arabic, Doha as a regional hub in cultural or educational terms, etc.), but also take into account the rest of the world (economic investment in developed countries, influence of Al Jazeera English, Doha as a hub for global energy, sports, logistics, etc.).

International relations theories reduce the role of soft power to supplement or replace that of hard power, in a context in which countries are situated according to either the balance of powers or are driven by larger powers (deLisle 2010). However, the case of Qatar is different. On the one hand, soft power is not limited to supplement or replace hard power but has grown and has been used at the same time. On the other hand, Qatari foreign policy under the reign of Hamad Al Thani, did not follow the precepts of balance of powers, nor was it guided by a greater power, but acted freely and independently.

Analysis of Qatar's actions in the revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria shows us that Hamad Al Thani went from a strategy of soft power to one of hard power and soft power. The study also shows that the use of hard power has damaged the country's image and harmed

the initial soft power strategy because, among other reasons, some of the country's policies were seen as contradictory and hypocritical and the fact that the country took sides, makes it difficult for Qatar to continue implementing a similar type of foreign policy as it had done prior to the revolts.

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