

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SOFT POWER SHAPING THE FOREIGN POLICY OF SMALL STATES: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN QATAR AND SINGAPORE

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Soft Power Shaping the Foreign Policy of Small States: A Comparative Study between Qatar and Singapore

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Using soft power by a superpower is often a second option where some countries realized its importance after failed experiences of maximizing hard power. This thesis argues that using soft power by small states represents a first option to convince the world of their foreign policy behavior through the comparison of two small states that have cultivated their international standing throughout the years. This research study aims to illustrate the potential of soft power in crafting an international status for small states as a strategy that compensates for their conventional limitations enforced by international relations doctrine. By comparing small states such as Qatar and Singapore that share similar demographical and geographical characteristics, the thesis lays out the opportunities for Qatar to enhance its soft power ranking by detecting gaps, deriving lessons from Singapore that ranks higher in soft power.

This research study uses qualitative research that includes a combination of semi-structured interviews, observation and literature search. For the interviews, participants from academic and diplomatic background were interviewed one on one. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. The thesis reaffirms the growing positive correlation between soft power and small states. It demonstrates how maximizing soft power strategies enhanced Qatar's image as a recognized small power and a trusted international partner. Although Qatar has a long list of soft power tools when compared to Singapore, the latter is more focused and efficient with its available resources. After a comprehensive study and examination of Singapore's foreign policy development

over a period of past seven decades, important gaps in Qatar's foreign policy were identified and presented. Further, this thesis concludes with a non-exhaustive list of lessons for Qatar that can guide policy makers toward a foreign policy characterized with a softer approach to international relations.

DEDICATION

This humble piece is dedicated to my beloved father, whose rich and extensive academic knowledge in the Gulf region has always been a source of inspiration and admiration.

Special gratitude goes to my professional supervisor and cherished friend who believed in my potential; Ahoud who was the driving force behind pursuing my Master's degree in Gulf studies specifically that I found enjoyable, this endeavor would not have been possible without her enduring support

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest”

Benjamin Franklin

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICC	International Criminal Court
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LKYSPP	Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy University
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MENA	Middle East and North African
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PAP	People's Action Party
PISA	Programs for International Student Assessment
QIA	Qatar Investment Authority
SWF	Sovereign Wealth Fund
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The debate over power has remained at the forefront of the international relations discourse with academic attempts to define its scope and its effect on state performance. Hard power has been a dominant framework by the realist school of thought that views the relations between state actors as conflictual, with a constant search for security. While the quest of hard power was the dominant concept of explaining the interaction between states, the dynamics of world's politics forced a different conceptualization of power that is not restricted to the dominance of a military might or the size of land and human force. According to these determinants, the terminologies of super, middle and small powers are set to classify states. In response, this has provoked some scholars arguing that "failure to develop alternative conceptualization of power limits the ability of international relations scholars to understand how global outcomes are produced and how actors are differently enabled and constrained to determine their fates" (Karki & Dhungana, 2020, p. 163). Subsequently, a flood of scholarly publications followed to negate the traditional idea of power that allows more room for rationalizing the interactions between states behavior and their foreign policy tools.

The process of globalization has led to evolution of new political models in competition for global influence. This has given birth to some small nations rising to power and establishing political presence in a multipolar system that seems to offer them a space to convince the international community of their effectiveness. Some of these small states serve as geopolitical gateways, buffer states, or resource-rich peripheries. This means that the developments in relation to the conduct of international relations witnessed in the twenty first century show that global influence is not solely restricted to the possession of hard power, where size of the military, land and populations define

the ability of a country's influence over the other. Indeed, this contemporary world suggests that a key way of impact on other states other than possession of nuclear weapons and military power, are the tools which later termed by Joseph Nye as soft power (Nye, 1990, 1991).

The concept of soft power has been first introduced and pioneered by Joseph Nye, an American political scientist, after the Vietnam war in an attempt to assess America's reputation after the wars (Nye, 1990, 1991). This was even more internationally recognized after the war on Iraq where he developed the concept in a book (Nye, 2004). In Southeast Asia, Singapore has emerged as an "Asian heavyweight" that despite its geographical and demographical limitations has been consistently ranked among the top five most competitive and globalized states in the world, according to the indices published regularly by the World Economic Forum (Chong, 2010, p. 395). Under the leadership of its founding father in 1959, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore has been placed on the global map, where it disturbed the official narrative on power. Between the seventies and eighties, the island has impressed the international community by appearing as a first-class economic hub. Though it lacks natural resources, the small republic has cleverly utilized its strategic location as a trade hub, moving the country away from a poor nation to one used as a benchmark by many countries for its economic competitiveness. Being part of a defensive multilateral agreement in the seventies and establishing a partnership with the United States in the nineties, Singapore has been provided a space to exert its regional influence in Asia.

The regional security scenery has been for decades led by Iraq, Egypt and Syria, by virtue of their leaderships that were influenced by revolutionary ideologies, in addition to the countries' military size and geostrategic location. The events the region has witnessed since the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 created a shift in the regional

balance of power that was in favor of Iraq, whose military presence and regional power once perceived influential. The fall of Baghdad then has been followed by the events of 2011 that resulted in a faltering regional leadership of Egypt, whose position as the capital of Arab decision-making was once undeniable. As for Syria, what once started as a peaceful demonstration has materialized into a prolonged conflict and an enduring refugee crisis that have paralyzed the international community. These regional dynamics had the potential to alter the landscape of the Middle East, where these regional powers could no longer lead the scene, falling victims to their own internal problems of survival. In light of the collapse of traditional leading powers such as Syria, Egypt and Iraq, the center of attention has shifted towards the Gulf region, leading to the emergence of traditionally small Gulf states to exercise regional power, filling in the vacuum left by traditional powers. In addition to developing some sort of hard power through a system of alliances to defend their own security, the small states of the Gulf were granted a space to exert some influence through the development of their soft power and one of these states is Qatar.

Through the strategic alliance developed with the United States as its security guarantor since 1995, Qatar has been able to focus on building its international status through the investment in soft power tools. Beyond using military power “to do things and control others,” Nye later explained, “to get others to do what they otherwise would not,” (Li, 2018). This early realization of the emergence of soft power has placed Qatar at the forefront of international attention, creating a compelling case for scholars who find it a peculiar case in the Gulf compared to its neighbors. Just as the launch of its independent foreign policy has been a source of admiration, it has also ignited international critique. Indeed, the ability of soft power to create recognition of small states even poses a definitional challenge to the concept of small powers. This has led

many experts to write about the ability of soft power to transcend hard power. A vivid illustration of this verdict is the ongoing military intervention in Yemen led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates since 2014 that seems prolong a war with no exit strategy. It is conventional wisdom to argue that this use of hard power is undoubtedly more costly for both states, whereas their resources could have been used for economic policy reforms necessitated in the aftermath of COVID-19. In addition to the financial drain arising from such miscalculation, the image of the Abu Dhabi and Riyadh has been stained by their records of human rights violations that have been documented by the United Nations since 2018 (Human Rights Watch, 2019). History has proven that the use of hard power appeared to be costly and consuming, with severe consequences on both winners and losers. While the defeated country suffers casualties and becomes weaker in every area, the triumphant emerges as the villain with a damaged reputation. This was the case of the United States after its invasion of Iraq, according to Joseph Nye (Nye, 2004). Kishore Mahbubani, a Singaporean academic and former diplomat, comments on the late realization of the West and the United States in particular in picking up the importance of soft power by noting, “confidence in the potency and legitimacy of soft power was so great that tremendous hard power was deployed in its name” (Li, 2018). In this way, both Qatar and Singapore as small states seem to challenge the stereotype of restricting the exercise of any form of power by the conventional great powers like the United States, Russia or China. According to the soft power index report in 2021, Singapore ranked 20th in a global ranking on soft power, which measures countries on their ability to use persuasion and attraction to influence others in international relations, whereas Qatar ranked 26th (Brand Finance, 2021). Qatar and Singapore’s willingness to exert a bigger role through international status by investing in their soft power strategies offers a model for other small countries

to follow, with the aim of uplifting their international status.

State of the Problem

The realities in contemporary politics indicate that small countries are often not given enough attention by the superpowers owing to their existing economical and security problems; a perspective facilitated by the realist mindset that views the world as a place of anarchy. This perception in international relations has contributed to small states being unable to influence or attract their views and foreign policy. Regardless of their internal and external security strategies to protect their countries from their bigger neighbors, these small states still face challenges in their effort to convince the world of their independent foreign policy because they were unable to use soft power tools efficiently to make substantial influence in the realm of international politics. “Soft power is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment” (Nye, 2004, p. 4). It has the capacity to bring about cooperation without compulsion and that is the reason why small countries must bolster their soft power. The adoption of this theory can be demonstrated through the analytical study of Qatar and Singapore in comparison.

Singapore is selected because it is ranked highly in soft power in South East Asia and Qatar is a small country that has quickly gained recognition in the Gulf region. How both countries have developed their soft power for status-seeking purpose is worth examining. Their ability to shape opinions to their favor and promote a global image contributes to the way they stand out from the rest of their small neighbors.

Literature on Qatar’s foreign policy

The discussion on Qatar’s Foreign policy as a phenomenon cannot be comprehended without scrutinizing Kamrava’s book that imagines Qatar as a “subtle” power, attempting to answer the question of whether Qatar’s influence is ephemeral or rather

a product of a more lasting shift in power (Kamrava, 2017). While this terminology fits the context of the period under examination (the reign of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani), it has become necessary to review the author's assessment of Qatar's global performance after that period under his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad that has taken a softer appeal. Thus, the period of the succeeding leadership is just as important in the assessment. Qatar's foreign policy amidst the 2017 Gulf crisis is worth studying with a focus on its performance during this strife and its crisis management strategies that includes the extent of the soft power resources in which it has invested over the years. Such discussion contributes to a better conclusion of the areas Qatar could work on to sustain a position of a recognized soft power and improve its soft power global index, which will be explored throughout the study. By studying Singapore, the lessons are formulated for Qatar to work on improving its soft power portfolio.

Similarly, in his book, "Qatar's Foreign Policy 1995 - 2013: Leverages and Strategies", Jamal Abdullah provided a comprehensive analysis of Qatar's foreign policy (Abdullah, 2014). However, the time framework of his study is reminiscent of his ancestor above. He touches upon the soft power tools of Qatar, focusing primarily on mediation and conflict resolutions as a foreign policy principle, where he believes that Qatar became a model in solving regional and international conflicts. Given that his focus was restricted to the leadership of the previous Emir up until 2014, it is necessary to explore Qatar's foreign policy under the new young Emir and the state's project under his leadership.

Contextualizing Qatar, other studies discussed the challenges foreign policies encounter in soft power deployment. Those challenges to the conduct of Qatar's foreign policy are said to be brought about by the absence of democracy in its liberal sense as the author puts it "promoting values without practicing" (Antwi-Boateng, 2013). However,

since this study dates back to 2013, it is worth reviewing the behavior of Qatar's foreign policy amid the Gulf rift as well as its efficient response to COVID-19 in order to assess the level of change it has experienced. There is no doubt that Qatar has witnessed a progress in its global agenda since then. Whether Qatar's soft power allowed it to become more transparent with its people is a question worth exploring throughout the thesis as it dedicates a section to identify areas of potential improvement and enhancement of Qatar's soft power capabilities. Another reason why this article needs a review is that it embraces the United States as a model for soft power effectiveness in the sense that it "sets standards for values and ideals romanticized around the world" and so, westernizing the concept.

Kristian Ulrichsen provides an objectively extensive analysis of Gulf crisis after entering its third year, providing an appreciated account of the Gulf scene from both sides, with a commentary on Qatar's response illuminating its crisis management ability and soft power strategies (Ulrichsen, 2020). This timely examination has aided the researcher in terms of validating observation of Qatar's public diplomacy. In this regards, another scholarly attempt assessed the public diplomacy of Qatar throughout the standoff. Al-Muftah is one of the scholars who assessed Qatar's response to the crisis by using public diplomacy as a means for crisis management (Al-Muftah, 2019). He draws on Joseph Nye's concept of soft power by applying it on Qatar's use of public diplomacy as a soft power tool, which he claims was effective in changing the discourse on Qatar and the way the West viewed it. However, the article runs short of the elaboration on Qatar's shortcomings at the beginning of the crisis, where it was seen as the negative player of the story. Whether Qatar's strategy of public diplomacy could be further improved is an emerging theme this thesis aims to explore as the gap seen in the public diplomacy pursued by Qatar is intensified when compared with the effort United

Arab Emirates (UAE) invests in its public relations campaigns.

Literature on Singapore's foreign policy

Guo and Woo published their book on "Singapore and Switzerland: Secrets to Small States Success", where they illuminate the cases of Switzerland and Singapore as two small states that achieved comparable levels of success but through different pathways (Guo & Woo, 2016). They question whether both approaches are similarly sustainable, concluding with lessons they hold for each other. However, this book like many others tend to compare Singapore to European small countries like what Alan Chong did in his article "Small state soft power strategies: virtual enlargement in the cases of the Vatican City State and Singapore" (Chong, 2010). He explored how small states, taking Singapore and the Vatican City as case studies, can use soft power as a base for their "virtual enlargement" by focusing on political economy, mediation, and good governance as elements for expanding influence. Therefore, there is a need for academic articles of comparison between Qatar and Singapore due to their striking similarities that were overlooked in this literature. They are located in Asia, along with other shared demographical and geopolitical characteristics that in spite of them, emerged as recognized small powers, holding lessons for each other. In this thesis, a close examination of the internal and external factors of both countries is provided in section 2, which could contribute to the literature of small states success.

Jaykumar's invaluable book "Diplomacy-A Singapore Experience" acts as a rich reference of Singapore's full record on soft diplomacy and more broadly, the foreign policy challenges of small states in a rapidly changing world (Jayakumar, 2011). The author outlines his experience as a diplomat who also served as Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister. By addressing the challenges throughout his tenure in the office, he skillfully provides a comprehensive book that does not only reflect the success of

Singapore but also brings in the lessons his country would hold for others. The book explains the approach followed and still followed by Singapore's foreign policy since its first inception in the sixties of the last century, which is the smart approach to problems that is a combination of practical, pragmatic, realistic, and conciliatory methods in dealing with regional and international issues alike. Even though this book could be prone to the dominance of a biased view given that the author is a former government official, the book offers a whole chapter on Singapore's role in the United Nations, which is crucial for small states' soft power.

By looking at Singapore's active role in international and regional organizations, Qatar's gaps in that area could be bridged, as the latter, unlike Singapore, does not have a leadership position in any international organization, which would reinforce its soft power. Concerning Singapore's international engagement, Koh (Koh, 2017) has provided a detailed account of Singapore's foreign relations with its regional neighbors as well as its position on prolonged conflicts through a compilation of essays and commentaries by Singaporean diplomats. This edited volume is of significance because through observing Singapore's relations in an intense environment that resembles Qatar, a conclusion can be reached on the lessons that Qatar could learn from the Singaporean diplomacy and engagement with ideological adversaries. Others have challenged previous attempts driven by the realist school of thought in the analysis of Singapore's foreign policy to provide a more efficient explanation of its behavior. However, the collection of essays focused on its relations in a troubled neighborhood and the engagement with ASEAN, without illuminating the soft power tools that describes its success in many global indicators.

Hong and Lugg dedicate a chapter for illuminating the soft power of Singapore in their volume, "The Rise of Singapore" (Hong & Lugg, 2016), in comparison to other

regional powers such as China, India and the United States (US). However, their exploration did not go beyond the general list of Singapore's tools, without rationalizing the significance of each tool for a small state's foreign policy, which will be addressed in this thesis.

Significance of this Study

This study will have great significance first for Qatar and also for the rest of the small countries. The focus of this thesis is to explore the similarities and differences of two small states, Qatar and Singapore, who have limited geographical and demographical characteristics in order to identify gaps and what Qatar is lacking so that it can maximize its soft power potential that would improve its ranking in the Global Soft Power Index. Literatures on the soft power of small states, particularly on Singapore and Qatar are plentiful; however, comparative studies between the two nations on soft power are non-existent despite the similarities. By examining the Singaporean experience, lessons could be drawn on how to maximize Qatar's soft power potential to sustain its influence in the international system. On Qatar, studies have often compared between Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar and Bahrain and Qatar. On Singapore, comparisons were drawn between Singapore and Switzerland (Guo & Woo, 2016), or Singapore and Vatican (Chong, 2010). Despite the structural limitations of both states and their historical differences, Singapore and Qatar share many similarities that are worth examining, where their foreign policies act as a source of soft power. They are both located in Asia, living in a turbulent environment, where they are positioned between two larger and powerful neighbors. Qatar is sandwiched between Iran and Saudi Arabia who happen to be regional rivals, while Singapore shares the same sense of physical vulnerability owing to its location between Malaysia and Indonesia, who happen to be the world's largest Muslim countries. In this sense,

both Qatar and Singapore have experienced occupation (by Malaysia in the case of Singapore) or diplomatic and economic blockade in 2017 (by larger neighbors in the case of Qatar). Despite their vulnerabilities as small states, they have managed to balance or bandwagon to surpass geopolitical environment and achieve foreign policy objectives.

Research Objectives

This study aims at exploring how the soft power of a small Gulf state like Qatar influenced the international community to recognize its role in the political order. It is worth noting though that by focusing on soft power potential and limitations does not necessarily mean that Qatar or Singapore's foreign policy should be reduced to a search for a "soft power". Rather, the study attempts to explain how maximizing soft power strategies would enhance Qatar's image as a recognized power and a trusted international partner by identifying gaps that will be highlighted further through looking at Singapore. In this sense, the thesis contributes to the soft power of small states where scholars with interests in Qatar's foreign policy can make sense of its soft power tools. It also aspires to provide a guide that assists Qatari policy makers to further develop the role of soft power in Qatari foreign policy. This study determines what resources can be used by a small country like Qatar that is willing to "punch above its weight" to boost its soft power status. That said, it is also worth noting that the purpose of this research is not to bring out Singapore's limitations or gaps but rather explore how Qatar can take Singapore as a benchmark to increase its global ranking in soft power. In other words, this research investigation identifies areas of improvement in Qatar's foreign policy (or other tools or resources) by comparing it to a successful small power like Singapore.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study will aim to answer all the following.

1. What is the relationship between soft power and small states?
2. How did the foreign policy developments shape the soft power of
 - a. Qatar between (1995-2021)
 - b. Singapore between (1959-2021)
3. What soft power tools do Qatar and Singapore use or share?
4. How can Qatar maximize its soft power potential?
5. What lessons could Qatar learn from its past practice and what can it learn from Singapore in terms of the exercise of soft power?

Conceptual Theoretical Framework

Using soft power by a superpower is often a second option where some countries realized its importance after failed experiences of maximizing hard power. The thesis claims that using soft power by small states represents a first option to convince the world of their foreign policy behavior, without underestimating the importance of hard power, by taking Qatar and Singapore as case studies. Indeed, their foreign policies act as a source of soft power that have allowed them to reach out to international community through the perception of their power, establishing political presence. Bringing into light the soft power resources that appear to dominate Qatar and Singapore's foreign policies in numerous areas of education, international investments, governance, and diplomacy, this thesis aims to provide a better understanding of the importance of soft power for small states' foreign policy. It is an effective form of power in the digital information age to consolidate small states' relevance to the international community, where soft power tools if utilized cleverly, will create recognition that is as no less than that of great powers.

Theorization of Small States

The negligence of international theorists to the study of small states seems to stem from the fact that theories of international relations have been explained through the lens of realism that center around the balance of power and competition between great powers. While small states are understood to lack the physical capabilities to compete with great powers, realists have concluded therefore that their “foreign and security policy options are by definition limited and imposed by the structural dynamics of the international system” (Rickli & Almezaini, 2017, p. 10). This idea has contributed to small states being unable to influence or attract their views and foreign policy. Therefore, they have received little attention compared to the typical attention paid to bigger powers due to the latter’s ability to alter regional and international discourse, recreating the circumstances of small states. In this sense, a western and orientalist thought dominates this assumption as it loses sight of the internal factors and the external environment that shape the foreign and security policies of small states, in addition to the individual perception of their leaders in regards with their vision of the global and regional order that affects their policy choices.

The end of Cold War in 1991 has created a shift in the international system structure from bipolarity to unipolarity. This shift was coupled with the emergence of small states that exerted influential roles despite their geographical and demographical constraints. This emergence has stimulated the importance of the study of small states, as they appear to challenge the stereotype that classifies them as vulnerable and ineffective in the international system. In response to the narrow classification associated with realists, another generation of theorists with neo-liberal thoughts believe that small states can exert influence only within a group and through cooperation. However, those states are confined by the lack of trust that seems to limit their influence. Therefore,

neo-liberals believe that small states can overcome smallness by joining international institutions that encourage cooperation amongst states, providing channels of communication, which incentivizes them to join (Keohane & Nye, 1973). While this bears some truth, this theory does not seem sufficient in explaining the conduct of foreign policies like Qatar. This is because neo-liberals tend to focus only on the impact a small state can create on the system, underestimating, to some extent, the priority of ensuring security within its own environment that later provides the space for a foreign policy to operate flexibly. That said, a “small state” continues to be a disputed concept in international relations literature, where it poses a definitional challenge to scholars who remain divided about the nature of power.

Another group of scholars from the constructivist school has adapted “a psychological definition that maintains that smallness is a matter of self-perception” (Hey, 2003). This provides more room for the study of small states that defines them in terms of perception. However, this theory does not provide objective standards to the definition as it relies on a psychological dimension. Since small countries’ attitudes show variables, the psychological definition remains insufficient. All of these definitions in relation to smallness seem to be inadequate taken into account the modifications to a country’s behavior in response to international trends and regional changes. Therefore, this inadequacy has led to the emergence of another set of scholars who adapted a different perspective that provides a more dynamic definition to the concept of smallness in international relations, which is based on power. They explain that small states can be defined in terms of the power they show rather than the power they own (Wivel & Mouitzen, 2004, p. 3). In this sense, “smallness does not stem from physical attributes such as the size or the population of a state, but from the lack of power that it can exert” (Thorhallsson & Wivel, 2006, p. 654). In support of this argument, interview

participants approached as a primary source of data validate that all small states, respectful of soft power limitation, can exert a form of soft power regardless of their financial status by building on their points of strength that can provide them with a recognized status. One of them affirms that every country can exert soft power, “if Singapore can do it, then everybody can do it because basically Singapore and Japan, while considered resource-less countries, have built a country that ranked highly without any resources other than human capital”.

The conception of a virtual or ideational power seems to be an appropriate theoretical framework to rationalize the conduct of foreign policy behavior by Qatar and Singapore that originates from the perception of power they exert. This perception of their recognition as small powers cannot be comprehended without the vision of their leaders that was oriented toward the development of their countries that reflected in global status. The contemporary world suggests the development of other more effective ways to reach out to the world at a minimum cost, with longer-term outcomes; soft power.

Soft Power

Joseph Nye explains the soft power ability of a superpower to build a positive reputational image and thus, bolster its leadership position in the world. He argues that a state can legitimize its power and seek recognition by others through how it appeals to them. The cultural, diplomatic and political means, if used innovatively, will make the state encounter less resistance to its aspirations (Nye, 2004). However, his definition seemed to be restricted to the American policy because it focused on the United States as the world’s “superpower”. In response to this American-oriented concept, other scholars claim that Nye’s concept is unsustainable because it disregards other political systems, providing another theoretical framework from a non-democratic lens that de-westernizes the notion (Zahran & Ramos, 2010). They view that both China and Russia,

“due to their shared legacy of adherence to Communism, consider that the West’s soft power tools are an existential threat, and conceive soft power policies as the outcome of state initiatives rather than the product of an autonomous civil society” (Ambrosetti 2018). Still, this framework focuses on communist societies who happen to be large powers, and so, confining their study to big states. In basic terms, the distinction between big powers and small powers is straightforward and the determinants of the state power are the conventional sources of power where geographical, demographical, and military dimensions shape the extent to their power.

For small states, enhancing internal security and protecting their countries from larger neighbors who seek to keep them under their sphere of influence does not suffice to convince the world of their independent foreign policy. Therefore, some have exploited opportunities to make themselves relevant to the internationally community by utilizing the soft power tools at their disposal to achieve their desired outcomes. The evolution of small states like Singapore and Qatar can be explained within the theoretical framework of soft power, which appears to be a salient factor that shapes their foreign policy. Both of these countries have been successful in placing themselves in the global map in a relatively short period by investing wisely in building their national visions that have reflected positively on how the world perceives them. They are both important players and contributors to the international community, presenting compelling cases for the ability of small countries to be recognized. They appear to challenge the stereotype of small states that destined them for marginalization in the global system, owing to small state characteristics.

A comparative study between Qatar and Singapore as two small states who managed to attract alliances and partnerships despite the constraints of their smallness compel scholars to acknowledge the growing importance of soft power embraced by Nye as a

powerful tactic in the information age. While Asia has been the epicenter of COVID-19, Singapore represented a successful case of a small developing country through its ability to combat a spreading global pandemic at times where the developed part of the world, exemplified through Europe and the United States, failed to contain the crisis. Likewise, a small country like Qatar, despite the enormous numbers of cases it recorded, affected by the majority of labor workers in the country, has managed to register the lowest global death rates through its ability to manage crises inspired by its long-term thinking. In fact, “Qatar has the world's highest per-capita coronavirus infection rate but one of the lowest death rates, due to extensive testing, a young population and lavish healthcare spending” (France 24, 2020). Prior to the global pandemic, Qatar has already exhibited an attitude of managing crises that showed a capacity to anticipate the uncertainty of its regional context, showing an efficient level of preparedness and contingency planning. Indeed, the ability of Qatar to convince the international community of its narrative amid the diplomatic boycott and the economic embargo imposed by three of its neighbors entails the power of its diplomatic network in which the country has invested over the years. This ability to convince allies and partners of the unjustified blockade and invalid reasons behind it cannot be read in separation from Joseph Nye’s concept of public diplomacy as a soft power tool that implies strategic communication as an effective instrument of disseminating messages by the government to reach out to foreign audiences. (Al-Muftah, 2019). That said, it is safe to argue that a strong narrative is a source of power, “power depends on how whose army wins, but also depends on whose story wins” (Nye, 2014). Qatar has manifested this attitude through its powerful media outlet, *Aljazeera*, that seemed to be a salient defense bar against the narrative of Qatar’s adversaries amid the Gulf dispute, which will be extensively explored in the upcoming sections. The outbreak of the Gulf

crisis in 2017 has witnessed a securitization of Qatar by the blockading countries through associating Qatar with terrorist organizations for such allegation resonates well with the West. In response, Qatar seemed to have countered their argument through a process of de-securitization by using public diplomacy as a form of soft power to shift the narrative to its favor, which will be critically assessed throughout the thesis. This shift seems to correspond to Nye's argument that soft power is not solely restricted to reputation or image but is rather about achieving the desired outcome through a country's appeal.

Nation Branding

In contemporary politics, the concept of nation branding has gained prominence in the age of globalization. Scholars have introduced the notion from economic, cultural and political approaches, all of which aim to contribute to the mental image of a nation. Economically, Kaneva has referred to it as “a strategic tool to boost a country's competitive advantage, seeking to inform – not question – the hegemony of the market” (Kaneva, 2011). Culturally, nation branding aims to “explore how marketing and branding influence the social sphere and how those practices alter people's perceptions of self and their national identity, linking the discursive dimension of nation branding to constructivist ideas of nationhood” (Moufahim et al., 2007). Politically, the concept is defined as “coordinated government efforts to manage a country's image in order to promote tourism, investment and foreign relations” (Volcic & Andrejevic, 2011). This means that the accomplishment of a country's successful brand is based on the collaboration between decision makers in the government, private sectors and the population for the city to attract international attention in such a competitive world. Simon Anholt has embraced this concept, providing a comprehensive definition as to “how effectively countries compete with each other for favorable perception, with

regard to exports, governance, tourism, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, or people (Anholt, 2007). Nation branding has become noticeable in the foreign policy of particularly small states who wish to construct an international image that distinguishes them from their neighbors, who also possess similar resources and environment.

Qatar and Singapore are small countries by traditional means; yet they have received international attention regardless of their limited size that make them typically subject to ignorance or underestimation by superpowers. However, the transformation of both countries during the process of modernization entails that the state vision of these small islands is so persistent that their regional rivals and hegemons feel threatened by their growing international recognition that could outweigh the perception of their physical limitations. Indeed, both countries seem to share the tireless determination by their strong leaderships who possess an ability to set long-term planning for their countries toward a path that creates global awareness of their countries, which makes them attractive destinations for international investments and tourists due to their successful branding strategies that are carefully sewed to serve foreign policy objectives. This in return reflects on the reputation of their countries that acts as a soft power asset, contributing to their international portfolio. Indeed, one of the interview participants in this thesis reflects on the success of the Maldives as a small country that made it an increasingly attractive destination for tourism, “What is it that made the Maldives special? They do not have resources, their capital is actually underdeveloped, and their population is very small and not necessarily highly educated. Regardless of these limited resources, they built a brand”.

Connrelia Zeineddine and Luminita Nicolescu state, “nation branding raises a country’s ability to attract tourists, investors and talented workforce alike. Findings illustrate that

the key indicators in a brand's formation encompass national elements (names, perception, geostrategic location, inhabitants, traditions, culture etc.) and infrastructure (security and safety, and economic solidity" (Zeineddine & Nicolescu, 2018). Qatar and Singapore have employed different strategies with which they wish to identify themselves in a way that serves their foreign policy aspirations. These countries have managed to brand themselves with names or ideas that reflect their desired image that resonates with their national and global orientations. For instance, in regards with names, Qatar has asserted itself as a "*Land of the Oppressed*" in response to Arab Spring when the country has decided to support people's aspirations to choose their leaders in promotion of Arab democracy. As for Singapore, it has "positioned itself as a "*Land of Opportunities*" for all Asia, given its geostrategic position as the crossroads of East and West" (Chong, 2010, p. 106). In this way, it can be argued that positioning a country in a way that adds value is what soft power is all about, which makes it an object of appreciation and appeal when this outweighs its smallness, giving it a new identity or a brand. A vivid illustration of the power of a brand is through Qatar's soft power tool, Aljazeera. As part of its identity, Qatar cannot be imagined without Aljazeera, as the power of media today has become a tool for enhancing concepts and articulating foreign policy objectives and trends. Soft power can be said to have the ability to build relations with the world beyond traditional diplomacy.

Late-Rentierism Theory

While the economic system of the Gulf overlaps with politics in the sense that it shapes the state-society relations, it is not accurate to restrict the stability of the Gulf to oil wealth. When their political economy is shaped by the abundance of natural resources, it does not exclusively define it. In fact, there are other political and social factors that contribute to the dynamic of the Gulf's political economy, which seem to challenge the

rentier state model. “Rentier state theory is a political economy theory that seeks to explain state-society relations in states that generate a large proportion of their income from rents or externally derived, unproductively earned payments” (Gray, 2011, p. 1). While this theory proved valid to explain the rentier states of the Gulf in the 80s, it did not seem sufficient to explain the contemporary political economy due the transformations that these countries have experienced since the beginning of the 2000s due the effect of globalization. Issues resulting from globalization such as telecommunication revolution have pierced societies in their homes, increasing awareness about democracy and wrongdoings by their regimes. The Gulf states have witnessed dramatic transformations with the rapid openness to globalization that made their societies diversified in their incomes, where they have developed their own strategies to decentralize their reliance on oil revenues. This has also been evident in the response of some Arab Gulf states to the challenges of the Arab uprising, where some of them paid more attention to their internal challenges such as the rising concerns over unemployment in an attempt to contain their people and protect their states from the domino effect of the uprisings. However, the traditional rentier state model failed to explain why these societies managed to survive with a stable wealth despite the demands of democratic system and political participation. Therefore, Gray Matthew has introduced a late stage of rentierism that provides a sufficient explanation for the dramatic shift in these countries’ political economies that “allows for both domestic imperatives and external influences to have impacted the wealthy Gulf states” (Gray, 2011, p. 2). The foreign policy of Qatar reflects the features of the Late Rentierism theory in a way that proves the early stage model to be obsolete. Without underestimation to the centrality of oil and gas in transforming the country’s economy, the argument relating to this study centers around the value of other key factors that

contribute to the legitimacy of the regime and political stability of Qatar, creating a fertile environment to construct its state-branding image. Pursuing an innovative foreign policy that centralizes soft power instruments is a feature of the late stage of rentierism. Qatar has taken advantage of financial capabilities to create a branding of its own as the “domestic and foreign policy identity, backed by a hydrocarbon powered ‘Riyal Politik’ has empowered Doha to influence struggles for geopolitical power” in the region (Miller & Verhoeven, 2020, p. 12). With respect to the importance of oil and gas in the development of the state building project, Qatar is a case that fits within the context of late-rentierism, where investments in soft power tools, economic diversification plans and foreign investments are salient factors that reinforced the country’s international outreach. The newly emerging geopolitics seem to anticipate a continuity of the development of stages in rentierism, where variables resulting from the interdependence of the global system act as an uncontrollable force in reshaping the political economy of Qatar.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

The research design adapted for this study is a qualitative research method using ethnographical methods in order to provide coherent and appropriate answers to the research questions raised. The purpose is to explain the behavior of a small state like Qatar and Singapore and the soft power strategies they deploy in order to appeal internationally. The primary researcher of this study explored the dilemma of small countries in search for both security and influence at both regional and international levels. This research intends to understand in depth the phenomenon of Qatar and Singapore's foreign policy as a source of soft power. Ethnography as qualitative research method has been found the most appropriate as data collection represented a combination between interviews and observation. The primary source of data was through interviews and secondary source for data was observations from literature and political news.

Primary Data

Interviews with experts in the field and taking observations help to understand how soft power is important for the countries' foreign policy. By studying a country like Singapore, Qatar can further improve its soft power strategy in order to assert and sustain its position internationally. In addition, this qualitative research approach, unlike quantitative method, can provide feedback of tangible experiences from target population in their natural settings/position. In other words, the information provided help obtain valuable information that is not clearly illustrated in the existing literature of Qatar and Singapore's foreign policy. It is worth noting that this research could be based on a grounded theory, as the primary aim was to find out how experts interpret soft power rather than what soft power is.

Researcher characteristics and reflexivity

Prior to commencing on the research, the researcher of this study was engaged in a process of critical self-awareness by positioning herself in a way that own beliefs, judgments and practices did not interfere with the data collected. This is known as reflexivity, and it is essential in order to ensure the credibility of findings. Although the primary researcher and collector of data was Qatari, she neither expressed her views nor did she favor or discourage an opinion about Qatar to guarantee the credibility of the results and reduce chances of subjectivity. Solely the researcher, who happens to be a Qatari female citizen of Qatar, has conducted all interviews. This was significant because the researcher's topic focuses on Qatar's foreign policy that bears the risk of conflict of interests when participants hold critical views and negative attitudes toward Qatar. The researcher has constantly ensured a tone of neutrality and objectivity through all conversations. In addition, as two of the interviewees has a personal relationship with the primary researcher, the latter avoided taking advantage of the relationship by establishing an exaggerating comfortable setting or using any gestures to gain the sympathy or extract further information from the participant. At the same time, the relationship served the researcher well in terms of facilitating a prompt consent by the participant to conduct the interview without hesitation. Furthermore, the researcher approached all participants on her capacity as a graduate student and avoided mentioning her diplomatic status to avoid the risk of giving the impression that the researcher exploits this as a tool of pressure to obtain a quick consent by the participants for future personal gain.

Study participants

For this study, the target participants were either diplomats or academics that were familiar with soft power, and have worked with Qatar and/or Singapore's foreign policy

settings. Another criterion for selection was their ability to speak English fluently. Since interviews were planned to be conducted in English language alone. This did not only help the researcher save time and effort of translation into English, but also ensure the accuracy of thoughts and terminologies. Notwithstanding Arab-speaking individuals were given the option to conduct the interview in a language of their preference to provide flexibility and make them more comfortable to express their thoughts freely without the risk of a language barrier.

Participants who were academics were selected based on their rich knowledge about soft power of small states, where their books and publications pertaining to the topic and relevant themes were located throughout the literature review. Moreover, the researcher intentionally approached academics with critical voices on Qatar's foreign policy to ensure a comprehensive and objective analysis that highlights the country's shortcoming and areas of improvement, which is the overall objective of the research. As for the participants who were diplomats, their selection was based on their area of expertise as well as their tenure serving at the countries under study, where they must have worked in either Qatar or Singapore.

Data collection

Interview Guide

For the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview was used where the wording of open-ended questions and the order in which they were asked were the same for all participants. This was formulated for the purpose of avoiding missing any questions, which also would assist at the time of data coding and analysis. By using open-ended question, complex issues can be addressed and it can lead to new dimensions and views that have never been explored (Stacey, 1969, p. 80). The primary advantage of open-ended questions is that it allows the participant to answer on their own terms enabling

to discover unexpected views about the how one sees a topic (Simmons, 2008, p. 188). In other words, the open-ended questions facilitated extracting new ideas from the responses that were of valuable contribution to the thesis as the researcher's aim was to delve deeper into the subject and grasp the perceptions, motives, opportunities, constraints, and patterns of current tools used to shape foreign policy.

Questions were formulated based on the research objectives of this study. The list of questions were formed based on what is positive and what is negative about soft power and its relation to foreign policies. The questions were merged into higher-level categories and sorted multiple times until a cluster was formed that captures the phenomenon. The questions were arranged to form a display of logical and orderly sequence similar to an outline (Lofland, 1995) (See Appendix X).

One-on-One Interviews

At the beginning, there were two options to decide on how to administer the interview schedule, one-on-one or by using a focus group. For the purpose of this study, a one-on-one interview was chosen instead of a focus group. It is well known that group discussions are quick and time savor when compared with individual interviews with similar number of participants. After careful study however, the researcher believed that group interviews could be disadvantageous in the context of this study and stated objectives. In fact, the researcher needed to interview top diplomats and academics who each has a very busy schedule and it would not have been possible to set at one time, which is inconvenient to all. Literature has shown that often in-group interviews, some participants tend to speak more than others do and participants often agree with the majority view (Gilbert, 2008, p. 252). Hence, there is a risk of a loss of information collected, which would affect the accuracy and quality of analysis. Indeed, individual interviews provided opportunity for the participants to give their feedback without

hesitation, interference and interruption. To be precise, diplomats in particular requested that their names remain anonymous, with some sensitive information kept off the record, which offered them a comfortable atmosphere to elaborate on their views. Another reason why a focused group method would not serve the purpose of the study was that the participants included female speakers and so, cultural or gender norms have the potential to influence how a group behaves, which would affect the quality of information provided. In other words, this approach allowed the researcher to retain the control over the flow of interview with a set of pre-determined questions while allowing a degree of flexibility in case the participant felt the need to share further insights on the topic beyond the written interview questions.

Even participants who were targeted to speak about Singapore were given the opportunity to comment on Qatar's actions and assess its performance in relation to other small states. Though the researcher internationally targeted participants familiar with soft power in contemporary politics, it was important to know how each participant defines the term to guide the discussion.

Recruiting Participants

After obtaining the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Qatar University (Appendix A), a brief summary of the purpose of the study, the consent form (Appendix B) and the list of proposed questions (Appendix C) were emailed to all participants providing sufficient time to prepare prior to interviews. This has demonstrated an insurance that no unexpected questions would be raised, encouraging participants to welcome the interview. During the informal communication that preceded the formal email, the researcher has given other options of conducting the interviews such as written via emails or even SMS to ensure that the researcher was open to all sorts of communications to make the participant most comfortable. For Arab participants, the

documents were emailed in both languages in case there was a preference to conduct the interview in Arabic.

Virtual/face-to-face Interviews

Once invited participant had confirmed to be interviewed and provided consent, a collective decision was made to opt for virtual/face-to-face interviews. All the face-to-face interviews were conducted with diplomats who preferred to meet in person at their professional settings in Qatar except for a Qatari diplomat who was operating from his ambassadorial post, while virtual interviews were conducted with academics residing in their countries. As for academics who are residents in Qatar, a virtual interview was also a preference due to precautionary measures necessitated by COVID pandemic. The researcher used Zoom meetings for virtual interviews, which went smoothly without technical interruption. Although Zoom meetings allow recording to be automatically saved on the computer, another hand-held recording device was used as a backup in case the Zoom recording failed. Another advantage of the Zoom meeting lied in the comfortable settings of both the researcher and the participants, where the researcher has given the participant the option of turning off the camera if they do not wish to appear on the video. However, all participants felt comfortable to appear on camera, which worked to the researcher's benefit to anticipate understanding of questions through their body language.

Probes

Probing is an activity that encourages the participant to provide an answer or add more words to explain what the participant felt. In this study, it was necessary sometimes, when the participant had provided an ambiguous answer. Obviously, the researcher was mindful of extracting the responses without putting words in the respondent's mouth. In fact, the researcher would often only repeat the question, rephrase the question

slightly, and ensure that probes were as neutral as possible. Whenever the researcher felt that participant could add more, she added probing remarks such as “what else”, “what other reasons”, and “yes” and “can you elaborate” followed by silence. This technique have worked efficiently in all interviews. It is worth noting that it was not possible to conduct pilot interviews because of unavailability of suitable participants. However, interview questions were reviewed and finalized with the co-researcher (supervisor) prior to the first interview.

Characteristics of the diplomats selected and context

Out of the ten participants included in this study, four were diplomats (Table 1). Diplomats selected represented different ages that took into consideration the generational gap between veteran and young to observe different insights. While a Qatari diplomat has over 20 years of experience in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serving in different posts that included small states, two other diplomats have only recently joined the diplomatic corps; albeit in senior positions, where one of whom is a high-level policy maker. The researcher was also considerate of a gender balance approaching two female diplomats, one is representative of Qatar and the other one is representative of Singapore. It is worth noting that it was harder to meet more diplomats for the case of Singapore for reasons of a lack of available network at the researcher’s disposal. For this reasons, three interviews were conducted with diplomats from the Ministry of foreign Affairs in the case of Qatar, while one was a former diplomat who served for years Singapore. Since the context of this study fits within contemporary politics, interviewing diplomats from Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in particular was crucial to extract information on what foreign policy practitioners believe about a small country’s ability. Moreover, it was necessary to find out what the vision of their country is after the Gulf crisis, in the case of Qatar and its international

priorities post-pandemic and post-Gulf reconciliation. Since Qatari officials tend to deliver more of key messages to the public than actual explanations of the Qatari foreign policy, interviewing diplomats on Qatar's vision for the region and the country's political aspirations helped grasp its foreign policy direction and the challenges facing Qatar. Qatari diplomats included an ambassador, department's director and a high-level policy maker. Given the previously established contact and access to these diplomats, asking the researcher has been able to ask right questions through a selection of thematic questions that facilitated the collection of the most meaningful data. If more information or in case of doubts over accuracy of some used quotes, the researcher was provided with the space and time to validate answers throughout the analysis.

Characteristics of the Academics included and context

Among the ten participants, the researcher has interviewed seven were academics while one of the seven participants was also a diplomat. The diplomat who happens to hold a PhD was more able to provide in-depth information and extensive literature on soft power and small states throughout the conversation, referencing a chapter he wrote on soft power in the case of Qatar. As a diplomat, he was able to identify the areas of improvement in Qatar's foreign policy in comparison to Singapore's more likely than the rest of participants as well as the gaps within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its conduct. Approaching academics was important to point out the gaps between theory and practice to derive lessons learned for Qatar in comparison to Singapore, with which Qatar shares common characteristics and thus, fulfilling the purpose of this study. Indeed, it was beneficial to substantiate findings from a wide range of sources by interviewing academics, bridging the gap between what is mentioned in the existing literature on small countries' soft power and the actual behavior of a country's foreign

policy.

The researcher has targeted experts in the Gulf from a variety of institutions who happened to write books and articles on Qatar and the Gulf affairs in general and who spent years observing the region. Those scholars are well equipped with information by virtue of their academic knowledge and so, have been able to note similarities and differences between Qatar and Singapore's foreign policy. Four of the participants were westerners or orientalist who are engaged in the Gulf affairs, while two are Arabs who follow Qatar's foreign policy closely. This diversification in nationality and affiliation helped the researcher note different assessment soft power tools Qatar possesses as they ranked them differently. The choice of this mixture between Arabs and Westerners was intentional to avoid bias by those who live in the region and outsiders who claim a rich knowledge of the Gulf, bearing a risk of a lack of a comprehensive picture. Interestingly, the researcher noted that an academic living in the country under study had a different assessment of its salient soft power tools than others who live in the West. It was also noteworthy that academics tended to be more elaborate and extensive in their responses, compared to diplomats who strived to some extent to maintain a diplomatic language. Thus, academics helped the researcher compensate any lack of data, minimizing the subjectivity of information probable by government's representatives. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of interview participants.

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants interviewed

No.	Gender	Academic/ Diplomat	Degree	Nationality	Affiliation
01	M [‡]	Academic	PhD	UK	King's College London, UK
02	M [‡]	Academic	PhD	UK	Rice University, UK
03	F [‡]	Diplomat	Masters	Qatari	MOFA, Qatar
04	M [‡]	Academic	PhD	UK	Hamad bin Khalifa University, Qatar
05	M [*]	Academic	PhD	Omani	National University of Singapore
06	F [*]	Diplomat	Masters	European	Embassy in Qatar
07	M [*]	Academic	PhD	Singaporean	National University of Singapore
08	M [‡]	Academic	PhD	Syrian	Doha Institute of Graduate Studies, Qatar
09	M [‡]	Academic and Diplomat	PhD	Qatari	MOFA, Qatar
10	M [*]	Diplomat	Masters	Qatari	MOFA, Qatar

Representing country: [‡] Qatar, ^{*} Singapore; MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Saturation of responses

As an initial plan, the researcher intended to target 15 participants to obtain the most efficient information for a deep analysis. Even though there was no obstacle regarding the availability and access to other more participants, the researcher has begun to realize a saturation of responses by the time it reached the eighth interview, where a realization that all participants have given almost the same assessment. Therefore, the researcher has decided to conduct ten interviews, where the last one revolved around Singapore in depth, which created a sort of balance between participants focusing on Qatar and those focusing on Singapore. By then, the researcher was confident enough of the sufficient information required to provide an adequate assessment of both cases for comparison.

Data Processing

Almost all interviews exceeded 60 minutes except for one interview that lasted for 30 minutes with a diplomat; albeit, comprehensive. Audio recordings were saved as .mp3 format on the personal computer. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, which means the transcript recorded every single word, exactly in the same order as were originally spoken by the diplomat or academic participants. Therefore, these transcripts included filler words, false starts, verbal cues and even grammatical errors but provide essential context to allow proper coding. Transcriptions were done using the assistance of the auto transcribe software Transcribe by Wreally LLC (Los Angeles, USA); however, these needed to be manually crosschecked and rewritten at least (30-40%) of the time. The transcriptions were re-read by the researcher and co-researcher (supervisor) prior to data coding.

Ethical issues pertaining to human subjects

This research project received ethical approval from Qatar University, IRB approval number. QU-IRB 1463-EA/21. (Append A). All consent forms' approval have been obtained through the participant's signature. The primary investigator of this study emphasized that this research would contribute to a better understanding of Qatar's strength and weaknesses, and opportunities to be able to assess the soft power tools at its disposal, with more importance conveyed to diplomats for their valuable contribution to overcome any concerns from their part on the quality or extent of information required. The researcher notified prior, that participation was voluntary and should not take more than 45-60 minutes of their time. The primary researcher also made it clear that should the participant/s wish to refrain from answering any particular question, they have the freedom to skip it as well as the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. Therefore, the researcher has always reaffirmed to

all participants that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. All audio recording were kept in password protected computer and neither personal information nor identifiable information was collected which was clarified and acknowledged in the consent forms.

Data management and security

All transcribed documents were saved and managed using MAXQDA2020 and kept in a password-protected computer, to which only main researchers have access.

Anonymization of participant

All participants were coded as Participant 1, 2, ... 10 in the software and were referred to throughout result and discussion without revealing any identifiable information other than gender and affiliation used to improve readers understanding of the context.

Data coding and analysis

Thematic analysis of the interviews was conducted using the MAXQDA 2020 software in three phases. The first phase included coding the interviews, which were transcribed. The first set of codes were pre-defined and based on the interview questions. For example, the answers to the question about whether size is important for countries to allow for soft power practice was coded as “soft power potential”. Second, the codes were rearranged in a way that the overlapping themes were merged together, generating sub codes. Third and final phase highlighted a summary of key issues raised by each participant, demonstrating the outcomes of each interview pertaining to the research questions.

Secondary Data

Literature Search

For other sources, the researcher has examined formal documents such as the Qatari

Qatar's 2030 National Vision and Singapore's National Vision to note similarities and differences. For Qatar, the foreign policy occasionally refers to the vision in all of its regional and international positions. As for Singapore, a close contemplation to its national vision was crucial to identify the key concepts on which Singapore relies in its foreign policy approach. For Qatar, it was also essential to analyze Qatar's actions to reflect on the level of the compatibility of Qatar's positions and actions with the principles that are said to guide its behavior. Since Qatar has not published a foreign policy document of its own compared to some other states, examining the Emir's speeches has also helped grasp the foreign policy principles that Qatar adopts to convince the world about its behavior. In addition, it was important to bring into light any concepts or themes that Qatar's foreign policy neglected or failed to provide more attention in regard with its soft power tools as the researcher intended to shed lights on its shortcomings and the gaps that could be further bridged. For this reason, the researcher has examined the established documents of other small countries like the UAE who is often compared to Qatar in its search for influence, where the two are often analyzed as regional rivals. Accordingly, the researcher was able to assess Qatar's strength and weaknesses, threats and opportunities that has given a closer picture of the soft power tools at its disposal. Furthermore, the researcher has investigated the theories tested on small states foreign policies and the level of their soft power strategies to provide an appropriate analysis for Qatar's capabilities and challenges.

Observation

The researcher has been engaged in a process of observation to contemplate the news and monitor social media on events pertaining to Qatar's reputation before and after the 2017 Gulf crisis reconciliation. This method has assisted in assessing the potential of Qatar and derive lessons learned to improve its international status. Monitoring new

laws and regulations with the approach of the 2022 World Cup was of critical importance to note the extent Qatar was willing to go to ensure a positive reputation and overcome malign campaigns. In addition, the researcher has paid a close attention to the activities of social media post-Gulf rift, monitoring the tone of Qatar and its opponents before and after reconciliation. Observation also took into consideration Qatar and Singapore ranking in the global soft power index as the time of the thesis proposal witnessed a lower ranking of both countries in the previous year. Thus, the improvement of the ranking of both countries, particularly Qatar stimulated research on what Qatar has done to gain a higher ranking, along with the temptation to explore the possibility for more improvement by looking at its regional rivals like the UAE who scored higher. Finally, observation could not be completed without monitoring social media as a tool for its power to mobilize and shape public opinion, representing the extent of soft power influence and its potential to be used in information war. Paying a close attention to the narratives and the key messages disseminated during the Gulf crisis by both parties was a key component of soft power assessment by the researcher. This also included observing public interviews by Qatari officials and diplomats and their responses to clarify the position of Qatar.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Section I: Soft power and the rise of small states

This section sheds the light on the importance of soft power in states' foreign policy by exploring the reasons behind using soft power tools in international relations. By doing so, it will first illuminate the challenges of small states in a world driven by realist perspective that counts a state's material possession as the main source of power. Then, it will examine the cases of Qatar and Singapore as two small countries who managed to exert a bigger role in the international system. The research findings from this study contributes to the literature of small states whose influence in the new world order gains more acknowledgement in the eyes of large powers known for dominating international politics. This recognition appears to validate the data on the long-term impact of soft power that challenges the myth on hard power, as the latter no longer serves as a guarantee of the success of world's politics. The results corroborate that soft power appears as more effective in shaping the preferences of other states representing a first choice for small states.

Challenges of small states

In regards with the challenges that small states encounter in their effort to implement soft power, six out of ten participants point out the lack of financial resources necessary to form the base of exerting soft power, while others relate the difficulty to geographical and demographical limitations. Participant 1 refers to these limitations as inherent challenges to small states that live in an international system dominated by larger power. Two other participants emphasize that the ability to appeal attractive is itself difficult for small states, where cultural attraction requires a careful cultivation to create the desired appeal, as their smallness prevents them from representing a universal model. "It depends on which card you want to play and what your ends are", adds

participant 7. Participant 8 makes the argument that while Singapore is a strong soft power, it cannot represent a universal example, as opposed to a big power with plenty of soft power tools like the United States that is capable of presenting itself as a universal model to the world. In addition to the financial assets, one participant refers to the lack of vision and leadership as a challenge that can thwart a small nation from implementing soft power, noting that with these elements, a small nation can rise into a recognized soft power, which is exemplified through Singapore and its visionary leader Lee Kuan Yew. One participant, who is a diplomat coming from a small state, reflects her field experience by mentioning the limited diplomatic service a small state can offer mirrored by a limited human resources. In fact, she notes that out of 193 countries in the world, her country is represented only in 100, “This suggests we miss another 100, we are usually running very-very small embassies, which means we simply sometimes do not have the resources to implement soft power. In the end, you need to engage with the public to engage with the host country, where you need personal resource. A lot of small countries simply do not have these resources”. As another challenge, the same participant also pointed out towards the political system of governance in a small state, emphasizing that though less appealing, autocratic systems can be more effective in making decisions that support the exercise of soft power, where decisions do not have to go through a long process that include the public. Furthermore, one participant warns against the random use of soft power that has the potential to create a negative impact for a small state that invests most of its resources on soft power tools. He explains, “When a small country uses soft power in a wrong way or not wisely, this will bring heat or backlash as small countries usually cannot stand the backlash that might come from deploying soft power only. Using media or financial resources in a wrong way might create a very negative effect”.

The relationship between soft power and small states

In regards with the relationship between the conventional concept of small states in international relations and the exercise of soft power, all participants, including scholars inclined to realist views, seem definitive that a country's size does not matter in response to the question "Is soft power important for small countries or big countries or size does not matter?". In other words, they are of the view that smallness is a contested concept depending on the eyes of the beholder as participant 1 notes the force of the geopolitical dynamics afterwards that formed a multipolar system, where it has become more difficult for hard power to assert influence through coercive means. In order to illustrate his argument, he explains the case of the United States as the world's superpower that is no longer as influential as its large size suggests:

"I would say they are no longer a superpower because of the fact that they do not have the ability to influence outcomes of conflicts across the spectrum of the globe at the same time. The limitations of American power in terms of reach, not just soft power, but also hard power, has been shown in Iraq and Afghanistan and it has been shown post Arab Spring in the Middle East where the Americans are not as proportionately influential as their absolute size".

In this sense, all participants were admmissive of certain limitations should a country, whether big or small lack a coherent soft power strategy to appear convincing in the twenty first century, where all information are public, making it harder for governments to manipulate. In addition, six participants explicitly assert that while soft power is important for all states, small states need it more due to the lack of other means. Participant 6 efficiently demonstrates this point by highlighting that while large countries use soft power to redefine a certain image of themselves, small countries would rather define themselves through means of soft power, attaching their small

nations to a certain identity. Participant 4 in particular affirms that in order for a small state to achieve an influential foreign policy, it ought to wield more soft power to reach out to the world. This view corresponds with participant 7 who claims that the key question remains as to “define what through which means” to achieve the desired outcomes because at the end, soft power is hard to quantify and it is only measured through influence and positive impression it creates on others.

The observation of all responses leads to the assertion that the exercise of soft power is not confined to great powers that are defined through wealth and military strength. Participants demonstrate awareness of the variables in contemporary politics with newly emerging trends that necessitate other non-coercive means to gain recognition and remain relevant to the international architecture. This suggests that the context of deployment is the key to create the kind of leverage on others. In support of this argument, Keohane emphasizes “contextual intelligence” as a progressively important concept in contemporary world that he defines as “the ability to understand an evolving environment that capitalizes on trends” (Kamrava, 2013, p. 58). Indeed, the uncontrollable force of information technology has given agents and non-traditional actors such as media or non-state actors such as Dae’sh and Al-Qaeda a space in international politics that is characterized with unpredictability. In this sense, hard power was destined to become less influential. Within this complex system, small states are provided with an opportunity to capitalize on their soft power assets to define themselves. In conventional definitions, Qatar is a small state that manifests the fundamental tenets of small state literature governed by the realist mindset that takes into account the conflictual nature of the international system when rationalizing the behavior of small states. In this perspective, small states are peripheral in the global structure, ineffective to play a contributory role. Since they lack physical capabilities

to respond to external emergencies, military arrangements and security guarantees must precede any autonomous exercise of foreign policy. Assured of the American protection, Qatar's policy makers seem to have taken a strategic decision to turn their focus to exploiting their financial assets for long-term objectives that contour the country's place on the global map. In this sense, Qatar's proactive approach to its foreign policy suggests "a willingness to choose long-term strategic positioning over short-term stability" (Miller & Verhoeven, 2020).

By the same token, Singapore that exhibits the classical challenges of small states, where survival and security are the ultimate goals. This notion is reinforced by participant 5 who has been engaged with Singaporeans for years as part of his profession, stressing on security and peace as a strategic priority for Singapore in its international relations outlook. He states, "Singapore's priorities are peace, security, stability, and economic prosperity that allows them to develop international relations in a way that serves the international peace and security and in that sense serves their own peace and security". Thus, Singapore diligently works to ensure security in both physical and economic sense given the lack of natural resources that amplifies innovative approaches to economic development as a small state. This is explicitly articulated through Rajaratnum, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore in the 80s, "Our approach has always been to shape the kind of foreign policy that will consolidate our domestic position, resolve some of our domestic problems and enhance our security, and our economic strength" (Acharya, 2007, p. 15). Through the understanding of their own vulnerabilities and inherent challenges as small states, both Qatar and Singapore resort to enter an alliance with potential rivals to minimize their threats to guarantee their survival in an anarchic system subject to conflict and instability.

While contending that a size of a country acts as a fundamental determinant in contouring its role in the international system, dictating the extent of its participation, this outlook has profoundly changed in the digital era that gave rise to other forms of non-conventional diplomacy that worked in favor of small states. Even respondents who embrace the realist school in their analysis of foreign policy behaviors appear to contend that size does not matter when it comes the implementation of soft power. Participant 3 seems to challenge the correlation between smallness and the use of soft power by referring to the Commonwealth organization whose majority of states are small states, “Most of the members of the Commonwealth are considered small states. Their main challenge is limited resources. In the case of Singapore, it is different because they were able to implement the knowledge-based economy model”. In this respect, the successful hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings by Singapore has resulted in the Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles. This move shows how Singapore as a small country has been able to achieve more than what its size suggests by being part of an influential network. Another indicator of Singapore’s willingness to escape the historically peripheral scope written for small states is its leading role in several regional organizations or hosting their headquarters. In fact, Singapore is a founder of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, it hosts the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat since 1993, and it hosts the “IISS Asia Security Summit: The Shangri-La Dialogue” since 2002 (Ferrer, 2018, pp. 25-26). In this way, Singapore seems to have a footprint in a variety of regional and international organizations to overcome its smallness through creating a voice of for small states to articulate their national and global agenda and influence directions to their interests.

As for Qatar, the small emirate seems to overcome its traditional constraint of size by

assuming the role of a major aid provider from the MENA region to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 2018). In a more recent context, the blockade on Qatar shows how the Quartet all together in their summed up size and military and demographic capabilities acknowledged the influence of a small state like Qatar in their international relations, regardless of the way they perceive it. Participant 3 validates this argument by drawing attention to the 13 demands that the Quartet put forward as a precondition to negotiations with Qatar, “among the 13 demands that were put forward by the blockading countries, it was only shutting down Al Jazeera that made headlines globally. This shows how much soft power can play a role in the case of smaller countries”. Drawing on this perception, both Singapore and Qatar reflect a constant unacceptance of their enforced categorization as exhibiting a marginal role in international relations. They act as a manifestation of Henrikson’s assessment that “a small state’s perception of its size is very subjective and differs greatly from the perception of other external parties” (Henrikson, 2001, pp. 62-63). This leads to the conclusion that power is ideational rather than factual. Having had a considerable influence on international relations and its trajectory, both Qatar and Singapore appear to validate the diminishing necessary link between size as a power determinant and the potential of small states to operate beyond their borders.

The relationship between soft power and small states’ rising status suggests that the wise deployment of soft power strategies can create a country from the scratch, regardless of its limited material possession. The cases of Qatar and Singapore reflect the tangible progress of small but influential in their region, challenging their stereotypical association with playing a peripheral role. Not only does soft power enlarge their role regionally but also enables them to operate beyond their borders,

making them subjects of international contemplation. While realist views are still relevant, they seem to offer incomplete explanations for the pitfalls of big states that are forced to approach small states to aid the implementation of their foreign policy objectives and develop diverse approaches to power.

Soft power potential

In regards with the reasons behind soft power use in states' foreign policy, all participants of this study are positive about the potential of soft power in achieving foreign policy objectives, with three participants specifically mentioned that soft power is cheaper than hard power, and creates a more lasting impact. All interviewees in this study are of the view that soft power can help states generate influence even if they lack hard power that is usually more expensive since it requires military capabilities and economic capacities. In this sense, participant 8 thinks that small states in particular use soft power to compensate for the lack of hard power at their disposal and therefore, soft power seems the only option for these countries to persuade others of their values. Simply put, participant 2 states "you can't just get everything through force and if you did try to do that, you are pretty unpopular", emphasizing on the negative consequences of using hard power as a means to achieve foreign policy objectives, leading to a damage to a country's reputation. On the ineffectiveness of hard power, one of the participants stated that hard power is getting less important over time, given how the international system has developed in which all countries should adhere to international law norms. Two other participants relate the use of soft power to achieve different reasons, using it as a form of subtle power to achieve certain objectives as participant 3 expresses "Historically speaking, if you look at the imperial powers globally, even those imperial powers had to facemask their hard powers and military powers to appeal". In addition to branding objectives, one participant who is a Qatari Ambassador

refer to the effectiveness of soft power in protecting the interests of the state that makes it able to achieve its vision and objectives. In doing so, he seems to reflect a recognition of risk to look at soft power as a matter of reputational image but rather as a means of achieving outcomes that serve foreign policy objectives (Nye, 2004, pp. 129-130).

The conviction over the potential of soft power to achieve influence and serve branding objectives seems to gain more popularity in contemporary politics, acting as a foreign policy enabler. Even participants who adopt realist views with respect to international relations could not ignore the importance of soft power in shaping foreign policy. There is more weight given to the power of culture in attracting and reaching out to wider audience in a way that hard power would never do. Speakers are assertive on the role of soft power as a pragmatic way to dissuade public opinion in a certain topic that clashes with a state's preference. In an era characterized with the dominance of digital media that touches every aspect of human life, hard power becomes less effective in shaping the opinion of the masses. In support of this argument, a recent demonstration of the ability of soft power to project a change is the recent documentation of the brutality of Israeli forces violently arresting a female journalist from Aljazeera during her news coverage of the war in Sheikh Jarrah, an occupied territory in East Jerusalem (Al Jazeera, 2021). This short video of the Israeli forces assaulting the journalist has gone viral, forcing the Israeli authorities to release the journalist within few hours. This reflects the potential of soft power in altering public opinion on the most controversial prolonged conflict throughout history. While Israel's desired image as a peace-loving nation has started to reach out some Arab countries exemplified in the United Arab Emirates through the achievement of a full normalization, Israel's attempts seemed to lose the media war with more sympathy voiced for Palestinians. The latter appeared as the only victim as opposed to the Israeli villain regardless of the enormous hard power

Israel possess and its alliance with the world's superpower, the United States. In fact, in the absence of the lack of conventional power that describes the Palestinian side, a trend of "electronic Jihad" has taken place with the Internet as a catalyst, competing with conventional war weapons on the ground, making the Palestinian narrative more persuasive in selling their story through images of dead children and infants. This has given Hamas, the resistance movement more leverage and popularity amongst Palestinians, making it indispensable in any peace talks despite the designation of it as a terrorist group by some western states. Furthermore, this progress has contributed to transforming public opinion in the United States, creating embarrassment for democrats and liberals who are supporters of Israel for anti-Semitic reasons. With respect to the importance of hard power in international relations, it cannot build a popular image without accompanying it with soft means. Participant 3 notes "For a country like the U.S., it would have not had all of this influence, if it wasn't for the cultural element. Many people might disagree with the American policy; yet, they watch Netflix, they watch American movies and they resonate with American culture in general". In this way, while increasingly important for all states, nonconventional factors of power in the form of soft means become crucial for states that lack coercive tools, which implies that soft power represents a first option to small states. In support of this argument, participant 2 elaborates on the potential of soft power to offset the limitations small states face in terms of their inherent inability to match the hard power of other countries by counterbalancing that dynamic through focusing on soft power. He states, "Soft power can enable small countries to rise above that and to break free of the constraints of conventional power projection". On the other hand, while all participants lay more emphasis on the use of soft power to accomplish long-term goals, five out of ten participants acknowledge the limitation of soft power alone, stressing on the need to

compliment it with a possession of military capabilities to secure outcomes, coined as smart power. In particular, participant 8 points out that soft power has certain limitations during crises, an example of which was manifested in the blockade of Qatar in 2017 that has shown “the world in which hard power is the main tool in your confrontation with your rivals”. He extends this view by emphasizing that “Qatar was very keen on showing the state’s military equipment during The National Day in December 2017”, showing the world its ability to defend itself against external attacks. This also suggests a deeper reading of Qatar’s attitude to show off defense capabilities, one that increases its appeal through the deployment of defense diplomacy that secures soft power tools. Participant 1 explains the significance behind the emerging defense pacts that Qatar targets in its bilateral relations, “Defense diplomacy is when you can basically offer the Americans or international partners such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) a niche capability in order to win over some influence”. In this way, the appeal of a country as a soft power, through highlighting a potential to develop a strong defense and military power has the ability to attract partners and allies from bigger countries, which acts as a form of soft power after all that reflects in high potential when used wisely.

Branding in Qatar and Singapore

In response to the question of “when did soft power tools start to be applied in your country”, all participants referred to the notion of nation branding where the country in question started to market for itself as different from its neighbors. On Qatar, almost all participants emphasized that the country had begun to distinguish itself from its neighbors in 1995 when Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani into power. This has been described as the turning point in Qatar’s history. The participants in this study all made a note the creation of the controversial news outlet, Aljazeera with which Qatar is

mostly associated. The participants in this study highlighted at the same time mediation and sports as emerging prominent tools that created a niche for Qatar. However, participant 2 recalls that the first time he heard of Qatar was in 1995 through a tennis event, “The player I liked who I followed closely was a Swedish tennis player and he won the event. I was following the event and I had never heard of Qatar before that, I did not even know how to pronounce it because of the Q, but I first heard of it was through sports”. Another participant interestingly notes that Qatar began to be recognized ever since the discovery of oil, becoming an attractive region of expats by virtue of the country’s geopolitical location that triggered all the developments afterwards. In this respect, participant 4 that comes from an economic background pays a special consideration to the economic capacity of Qatar that has started to come into fruition at the beginning of the millennium, where Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) started to be sold internationally, providing Qatar with “a much broader presence”. He believes that increasing the number of LNG clients around the world was “part of a longer term strategy for Qatar’s economic development, which dates back to the 80’s”.

On Singapore, all participants trace back the emergence of the state’s international status to the beginning of state formation period, with two of them noting that the country might have started the branding process unintentionally. In this regard, a Singaporean participant explains that Singapore had to work on self-reliance post-independence, capitalizing on its political stability to promote for the country as a business-friendly environment with the aim to become an international business hub, implicitly reflecting that soft power has been deployed out of necessity since Singapore lacks the natural resources in contrast to what had helped Qatar. Therefore, the former directed its attention to capitalize on its strategic location that formed the backbone of Singapore’s economy. Participant 10 seems to agree with this idea by

highlighting Singapore's only special point of strength, which is its port that has turned Singapore into a country of critical importance to all big players in the region.

The answers given show how Qatar and Singapore began to be recognized as small but recognized powers at the international stage and the way speakers from different backgrounds assess them. All participants agree that the capitalization on resources and a country's points of strength is part of a branding strategy to which a small state resorts to build its image internationally. In this way, both Qatar and Singapore's soft power seems to arise from an economic strength and resources that "function as compensatory symbolic power" (Chong, 2010, p. 385). The participant that notes Singapore's deployment of soft power as a first choice seems to validate the researcher's theoretical framework that assumes the use of soft power is a first option for small states to nurture their presence globally. In fact, Singapore relies on soft power due to its limited options arising from its physical constraints. In support of this argument, Yee explains that Singapore was ahead of its time in 1968, owing to its founding leader Lee Kuan Yew who had a vision of naming Singapore "The Garden City" as part of wooing investors by placing Singapore as a destination for tourists and investors (Woo Yee, 2009). Singapore's branding strategy seems to adopt to the aspirations of its tourists while emphasizing the central messages of "East meeting West" and "land of opportunities" through promoting its strategic location as a soft power asset. In this sense, Singapore has emerged as an attractive choice for people to live and work in through a cultivated image of a secure and vibrant city home to different races. In this respect, participant 10 who lived for years in Singapore reflects, "If you have the exhibitions in some country in Southeast Asia, nobody will go, but if you put it in Singapore many people will travel to go to Singapore. People like to go

there because they feel secure; they feel it is modern, where they can find everything they want in terms of brands”.

Similarly, Qatar has reinvested its wealth on tools that give the small Emirate a regional and international posture, creating a space for the country to make a meaningful contribution to the international system. Interview speakers emphasize on Aljazeera, sports and mediation as tools that made Qatar an invaluable regional and international player that can contribute to international peace and security by playing out these tools. With respect to the critical power of natural wealth in transforming Qatar’s economy, other key factors are perceived to contribute to the evolution of Qatar and its global image. Through its political stability and coherent society that has been developed on the basis of providing citizens equal opportunities, Qatar has created a fertile environment to construct its state-branding image. Ever since the launch of an assertive autonomous foreign policy in 1995, Qatar has shown awareness of the importance of economic diversification through the investment in soft power tools that turn the country into one of the key players in the international community. This notable determination to reflect an independent identity is understood within a vision to distinguish the country from its Gulf neighbors, emancipating itself from the shadow its bigger brother, Saudi Arabia. It has become impossible to imagine Qatar without Aljazeera news channel that has become now an integral part of its identity. Qatar has intelligently utilized its oil wealth to fund such channel as a means to serve its state branding objectives; the desire to create a regional and international influence by asserting relevance to the world’s politics. It sought to build a national branding beyond the conventional image of rentier states whose survival is attributed to their possession of oil and gas. As another tool, Qatar utilizes mediation not only as a survival strategy but also as a soft power tool to serve its branding objective of

becoming a peace broker and creating an international impact. In order to distinguish the country as a peacemaker, it has hosted mediation events over the years, where it mediated between different factions, groups or states, providing financial and logistical support to facilitate negotiations between conflicting parties. In this way, the capital of Doha has emerged as a venue for peace talks, of which the country is associated. Another most visible achievement of nation branding that counts for Qatar seems to be the growing reputation for being a venue for mega sports events, which distinguishes the city of Doha from its competitive neighbors. The international awareness of Qatar is embodied through its decision to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022, which not only brings economic benefits to the country through attracting international investments for its infrastructure projects and encouraging tourism but also this has branded the tiny island with the biggest global event to take place in the Arab region. As noted above, participant 2 has come to know Qatar through sports way before its decision to host the World Cup, which shows an early awareness of the country of the importance of sports as a soft power tool in branding a nation. The discussion on branding shows that both Qatar and Singapore have engaged in different strategies with which they wish to ascertain themselves and assist their foreign policy ends. These microstates by traditional sense have managed to brand themselves with labels or ideas that portray their desired image that resonates with their national and global aspirations.

Section II: Foreign policy as a source of soft power

Soft power shaping foreign policy developments

Having explored the challenges of small states in relation to their ability to implement soft power in their foreign policy, the context is set for the two countries under comparison to explain their foreign policy actions. Through a combination of hybrid

qualitative methods of observation, literature search and interviews, a clearer picture of a comparative analysis of the foreign policy of Qatar and Singapore seems to evolve, paving the way for an answer to their common soft power tools silent in their foreign policy. That said, a historicization of their foreign policy development seems to inform the rationale of their policy preferences, which is the primary focus of this study. An observation of their nation building process led to a development of their common internal and external challenges, which have been sewed throughout the interview responses that facilitated the comparison of both countries as small soft powers that contributed to their international standing.

The results of the interviews imply that five participants note the clearly common challenges living in a turbulent region and between two larger countries, with two participants emphasizing more susceptibility by Qatar to be moved by regional geopolitics in an atmosphere of high volatility, which explains why Qatar seems to adapt a more proactive approach in its foreign policy. In terms of their small size, one participant reflects on Singapore's size recalling its well-known description as the "little red dot" by saying, "728 km is very small for a country; Singapore does not have the components of a country, so it had to do a lot of things to be able to be called country. It also lacks the airspace in which its airplanes cannot even fly to do training on their own protection". He further adds that unlike Qatar, Singapore had to even import its sands and water, noting the water issue between Singapore and its bigger neighbor, Malaysia who has the power to shut water routes on Singapore overnight in case of a conflict. Another noticed similarity is national cohesion as one participant marks the national unity cultivation of both countries throughout their state development and their similar track of progress, while acknowledging their different development models. On their shared strengths, two participants point out the two

countries' economic capacity emphasizing their "economic clout" as the common denominator, suggesting that their soft power arises from their economic strength. Another participant marks the shared long-term vision both states adopt in terms of development. All participants conclude that the two countries share the traditional features of small states, albeit managed to build different brands to increase their visibility.

Building on the interview responses, Qatar and Singapore are located in the same region, Asia with similar geopolitical environment that dictates their foreign policy behavior. In fact, sharing the same sense of vulnerability pertinent to their larger neighbors place the issue of survival and sovereignty on top of their security and foreign policy agenda. In light of the theories of small states and their behaviors in the regional and international arena, this section attempts to examine the internal and external factors that shape the foreign policy of Qatar and Singapore to rationalize their regional and international behaviors, granting their states with a recognized status. The internal factors refer to the domestic features that are more salient in the foreign policy of small states and through which Qatar and Singapore outline their foreign policy objectives. They act as determinants of their foreign policy approach, which include geography, demography, natural resources, and social factors. As for the external factors, they refer to the geopolitical environment where regional rivals necessitate an external security guarantor to small states to ensure internal security that facilitates the exertion of an independent foreign policy.

Qatar (1995-2021)

The Development of Qatar's Foreign Policy

Internal Factors Upon the leadership of H.H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani in 1995, Qatar's foreign policy has witnessed a shift from "a conservative, marginalized state to an active player in the regional and global system" (Abu Sulaib, 2017). This foreign policy has sought to pursue an independent line of thinking, distinguishing the country from its Gulf neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia. In order to have the space to operate freely in the region, creating influence, Qatar has developed an alliance with the United States as its key security guarantor to protect the country from the domination of its bigger neighbors. Through the American military base, AlUdaid, Qatar has accomplished the building its own deterrence against external attacks.

First, geography plays a crucial role in shaping foreign policies as size limits the extent to which foreign policy makers operate and how the public responds. While geographical location of a country is a factor that contributes to the weakening or strengthening of a state, Qatar's vulnerable geographical location seems to drive policymaking. Qatar falls between two large countries, namely Iran and Saudi Arabia, who happen to be opposing regional rivals. In fact, Qatar shares only one land border with Saudi Arabia (Salwa Road), which puts the country at risk of land blockade, whereas its coastline along the "Persian" Gulf puts it at risk of sea blockade in case of major incidents that would block trade routes (Straits of Hormuz). Indeed, any military conflict between Iran and the U.S would be catastrophic for Qatar's security. The land border amid the Gulf crisis of 2017 has already witnessed an unprecedented blockade, blocking trade routes on which Qatar's food imports rely. Another crucial factor that shapes Qatar's foreign policy is demography. Human resources are the backbone of

foreign policies as they play a vital role in building the country's economic and military power, contributing to the achievement of the objectives set in the foreign policy. Qatar is a country with a small domestic population with nationals making only "11.6% of the population and non-Qatari residents coming in at 88.4% of the population" (World Population Review, 2020), which seems to put a ceiling on the country's efforts to build a military and economic power capable of countering threats inflicted by geography. This limitation has led Qatar to pursue a large foreign labor force to fill the gaps in light of the continuous growth of massive infrastructure projects in preparations for the 2022 World Cup. In an endeavor to mitigate the grave need for foreign laborers, Qatar directed its efforts toward the investment in advanced technology and human development. The small population; nevertheless, played to Qatar's advantage as it created the luxury of providing high level education to the national population.

Natural wealth is also a central factor in the formulation and execution of Qatar's foreign policy. Despite the constraints on the traditional sources of power explained above, Qatar enjoys massive energy reserves, as it possesses the world's third largest gas reserves after Russia and Iran (United States Energy Information Administration, 2020). The country is the lowest cost LNG producer, which grants it a vital strategic position within the global market as an essential supplier to key Asian countries who have growing demands for cleaner energy (Salacanic, 2017). LNG and oil exports; indeed, provide for majority of Qatar's revenues, where the wise deployment of such generated income into investments in soft power tools enabled Qatar to exploit financial and economic instruments for political advantage.

Social factors are significant in contouring the foreign policy of Qatar. These include domestic elements that motivate foreign-policy choices, such as the extent of national cohesion and the commonly held beliefs and values by the people of Qatar. In fact,

national identity and social unity are important dimensions of a coherent foreign policy. The leader himself exhibits the same sense of national identity due to the engagement with his people, which is echoed in his policy choices. Such solidarity is even reinforced when the Emir reflects the aspirations and interests of his own people from whom he derives his legitimacy. While some of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are afflicted by sectarian clashes and socio-economic crises, Qatar appears to be unified and more coherent than ever rallying behind its leader, which was vividly portrayed amid the Gulf Crisis of 2017.

External Factors The region within which Qatar operates is characterized with deep polarization and it has become a theater for external interventions. The political and security upheaval stemmed from the Arab uprisings reconfigured the regional structure. The clay of political change post-revolutions is still moist, which increases the sense of uncertainty toward the regional outlook. Civil conflicts and proxy wars are anticipated to continue in failed states, giving birth to non-state actors in a turbulent region. The collapse of traditional Arab powers like Egypt, Iraq and Syria has stimulated the rise of non-Arab powers like Turkey, Iran and Israel, who are vying for regional influence.

Despite such turbulent atmosphere, the Gulf states remained structurally more stable than the rest of the MENA region. However, what was once perceived as the most resilient area of an erratic region has now become a region of inter-state tensions where the Gulf states appear to be in direct conflict with each other, resulting in the unresolved Gulf dispute. This dispute itself proves that the old geopolitical contours can no longer define the Middle East. When the MENA once presented a geopolitical importance for global powers to achieve energy security, it is today a region, full of security challenges. Populist movements and growing US energy independence have

narrowed the interests of the US in the MENA region, calling into question the American commitment to underwriting Gulf security and political stability. For these reasons, Qatar realizes the importance to build a new network of strategic alliances in light of the variables in MENA. All of these concerns show the importance of the diversification of alliances for a small state like Qatar to be able to operate freely in the international arena to create a recognized influence as a means to achieve its foreign policy objectives.

Singapore (1959-2021)

The Development of Singapore's Foreign Policy

A historical Sketch: The State Formation The turbulent history of Singapore is explained through the country's vulnerable environment to external forces, where key millstones can be identified. The island of Singapore has been realized as a major trade center with strong ties with China since the 14th century due its strategic location. However, the modern history of Singapore can be marked when the British Empire had established a colony in the island in the 19th century, making it a major trade hub that encouraged immigration from China, India and Malay Peninsula (Guo & Woo, 2016). During that period, the city's commercial sector has started to take place as a financial hub at the service of the British colonizers. Nonetheless, this economic development was halted by the Japanese invasion in 1942 during WWII, who ruled it for almost three years, leaving Singapore with a traumatic experience that continues to influence the mindset of its leaders and politicians in the formation of the foreign policy of their state. In comparison with Qatar, it is worth noting that this "siege mentality" developed in the Singaporeans mindset as a result of the Japanese occupation resembles the attitude by Qataris post-blockade that also lasted for almost four years, touching the daily lives of Qatari individuals and residents in Qatar. In response, it allowed Qatar to culminate

into a foreign policy that focuses more on self-reliance and national interests. As for Singapore, such trauma seems to translate into a calculated approach to foreign and defense policies that stem from a sentiment of vulnerability to external threats. After the Japanese withdrawal, Singapore returned to the British, becoming consequently a British colony until gaining full independence in 1971. Prior to independence, it is worth noting that the previous period has already witnessed a gradual British withdrawal from the domestic affairs, attaining control only over aspects of security, defense and foreign affairs. This influence also allows to draw a comparison to Qatar's history, though the latter has never been colonized but rather imperialized by the British. During Singapore's period of partial self-governance, an atmosphere of instability has characterized this period where some students invoked communist riots in 1956, leading the government to hold the first general elections two years later with the People's Action Party (PAP) that made up the majority of the government. It is worth highlighting that the British ruling has left an influence on the way the Singaporean government forms its parliament. The elections have resulted in the emergence of Singapore's iconic leader Lee Kuan Yew who has become the country's first Prime Minister, with whom Singapore's success is identified. The significance of his leadership that marks the country's emergence as a soft power will be further illuminated at the end of this section. This period has witnessed a rapid economic development that, according to PAP leaders, required a merger with Malaysia in 1963 to ensure its survival as Singapore was going through a process of modernization that turns the country into an industrial estate. However, this merge has made Singapore find itself at the heart of a diplomatic impasse between Malaysia and Indonesia known as *Konfrontasi*, which reflected on the internal instability of Singapore as political clashes between ethnic groups of Chinese and Malays were provoked by Indonesia

(Chua, 2015). A separation from Malaysia took place two years later, marking a period of economic and urban development in Singapore.

Internal Factors

Having laid out the historical overview of Singapore, the scene is set to establish the political context of the country. Even though the foreign policy of Singapore does not exhibit the level of controversy seen in Qatar's, it nonetheless, resembles similar internal characteristics that appear to be shaped by the imperatives of small states. In terms of geographical traits, Singapore is smaller than Qatar in terms of physical size of 704 square kilometers (Chong, 2010, p. 395). Just as Qatar's shared border with Saudi Arabia has destined it for a land blockade in 2017, Singapore is found to be at risk of water deprivation by its larger neighbor Malaysia, who can close water routes on the small island in case of a conflict with the former. Qatar echoes the same concern by Iran who often threatens of shutting down the Strait of Hormuz, in response to the American confrontational policy toward Tehran. As for the demographical size, Singapore is home to 5.6 million (Ferrer, 2018, p. 9) inhabitants from diverse ethnic groups, where Chinese, Indians and Malays make up the majority of the population. Analogous to Qatar, the majority of labor workers in Singapore contributes to the city's economic development and infrastructure projects, forming a cosmopolitan society. Unlike Qatar; however, Singapore lacks natural resources that is said to constitute a soft power asset for a country's recognition. This deficiency of natural resources makes the country dependent on imports from other countries to meet domestic needs. The country is entirely reliant on food and energy imports, which informs why Singapore is party to eighteen Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with major trade partners (Hong & Lugg, 2016, p. 106). Nonetheless, Singapore's strategic location has made it a trade hub,

where finance, trade and service industries shape the small island's economy, creating a niche for itself in these sectors within an international system controlled by larger powers. In this way, Singapore is cognizant of the fact that interconnected economies that favor secure environments tend to support the rise of small states policies, as "trade gives small states relatively more welfare benefits than it gives large states" (Long, 2017, p. 189). Thus, a maintenance of friendly and unhostile bilateral relations is key for Singapore to preserve the strategic importance of the country in the minds of bigger powers. "The perils of limited geographic depth has been more than offset by a locational advantage which the country's leaders have exploited fully to make it a hub of international commerce, which in return has given the major Western powers and Japan and now India and China a stake in Singapore's security" (Acharya, 2007, p. 8). Another factor that shapes Singapore's foreign policy is the social unity, where the extent of national sentiments and self-reliance is exhibited in the society, influenced by its ruling elites who display an independent, non-communist attitude that seems to be embedded in Singaporean culture. This can be seen in the country's leadership vision and state project that reflects a "do-it-yourself" attitude that drives its economic and social development. Just as Qatar has started to show this mindset post-Gulf crisis, Singapore has already established its post-colonial period.

External Factors The lack of human resources and military power also makes the country vulnerable to the threat of external forces by virtue of being surrounded by two bigger Muslim Countries, Indonesia and Malaysia, which makes it subject to radical movements or terrorist attacks.

Even though Singapore does not face an immediate threat from its neighbors to its national security since the end of the *Konfrontasi* crisis, the country seems to be in favor of the United States' security strategy in Asia, motivated by the belief of the American

indispensable role as a regional balancer and thus, preferring a U.S military presence. Influenced by the hostile relations between Malaysia and Indonesia, Singapore felt the urge to engage a superpower like the U.S to preserve its security to overcome its vulnerability. In fact, Singapore has supported the U.S during the Vietnam war in its effort to contain communism by allowing American forces in Southeast Asia using “former British naval and air bases in Singapore for the maintenance and repair of U.S military vessels deployed in Vietnam” (Chua, 2017, p. 32).

In exchange, the revenue from this engagement has contributed to Singapore’s economy, making the success of American strategy toward Asia dependent on the economic survival of Singapore. That said, it can be interpreted that the American-Singaporean security partnership is more directed against the rise of China as well as the protection of Singapore against terrorist attacks probated by the surrounding of two Muslim countries, which makes such partnership important for the U.S as much as it is vital for Singapore. At the same time, Singapore emphasizes on a policy of non-alignment with any major power as part of its neutral approach reflected in its foreign policy objectives as being friends with all. Alignment with the U.S would have its print on its relations with China, who has often described Singapore’s relations with the U.S as close.

Visionary Leaders

An emerging important theme during interview discussions was the component of a visionary leader that directs foreign policy throughout its development. Having engaged in a process of observation, the researcher finds out another striking soft power resource that seems to be missing in existing literature as part of comparison between Qatar and Singapore; their founding leaders as soft power symbols. While previous studies have tackled each leader on its own, little has been developed on this factor as

a common denominator that adds to their soft power appeal. In other words, these two iconic soft power have never been studied together in the context of soft power. Their forward-looking vision should be looked at as a critical factor that built their influential autonomous foreign policy as small states.

The former Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, placed Qatar on the global map, differentiating it from the rest of its neighbors. Similarly, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew built Singapore from the scratch, igniting the astonishment of the most developed nations to look at Singapore as a model or a benchmark for improvement. Indeed, how both leaders were responsible for the global notability their countries enjoy today seems to count as a driving factor in their foreign policy. According to Nye, skillful leaders have always realized the appeal of “legitimacy and credibility” in their search for international respect. The inherent personal traits of a leader with a clear vision contributes to the consolidation of a country’s status.

In answer to the question of “when soft power started to be applied to each country”, all interviewees evoke the period of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa as an engineer of Qatar’s independent foreign policy, while emphasizing on Lee Kuan Yew as an agent of change in Singapore that put together the ingredients of a successful small state. Participant 6 notes the same vision in regards with the position envisioned for their countries at the international level. This shows that the element of leadership serves as a critical factor in influencing the trajectory of the state, inspired by the vision they uphold for positioning their countries in the international structure.

Leadership of Qatar (Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani)

The post-independent period of Qatar is simply characterized with Qatar adapting a foreign policy of non-defiance to its bigger brother, Saudi Arabia. Qatar seemed to be

in alignment with its GCC neighbors and often compared to Bahrain in terms of obedience to Riyadh, to which smaller Gulf countries rely for protection against Iran's expansionist ambition in the Gulf. Qatar's leader in that period, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani shared a similar regional vision with his neighbors, one that served the collective interests of the GCC. In this sense, Qatar was no different in the eyes of international public, working under the Saudi sphere of influence. Qatar's trajectory has only changed after a bloodless coup in 1995 with the takeover of the Emir's son, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, to whom the rise of Qatar's regional and international profile is attributed. According to Krieg, "Hamad was eager to redevelop not just Qatar's image but more importantly its place in the region" (Krieg, 2019, p. 93). His ability to win over domestic legitimacy lied in the absence of social and sectarian disparities that seems to concern the rest of the immediate Gulf neighbors. According to Kamrava, "within the Arabian Peninsula, Qatar stands out uniquely for its absence of social frictions arising from societal divisions" (Kamrava, 2013, p. 43). Ostensibly, Shaikh Hamad's bold approach was provoked by Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 that exemplified a lesson for smaller neighbors that reliance on Saudi Arabia as a security protector would not only be insufficient to serve the maintenance of their sovereignty but could also augment their structural insecurities. Just as the launch of its independent foreign policy has been a source of admiration, it has also been a focus of international critique, which often described Qatar as a troublemaker that puts the country at odds with its bigger neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia. That said, the emancipation of the smaller neighbor from the shadow of its bigger neighbor has been accompanied with an ideological clash of narrative (Krieg, 2019, p. 92). Just as Riyadh uses the *ulama*; a source for spiritual guidance as a soft power instrument, Qatar has emancipated itself by leaving the Saudi orbit to establish its own interpretation of Islam, demonstrating

the ultraconservative society of Qatar and away from the Wahhabi doctrine. Under the reign of Hamad Bin Khalifa, Qatar has distinguished its place by presenting the state as home for exiled revolutionists and mistreated Islamists, which invited tensions with antagonistic neighbors who clash with its foreign policy. The idea behind this risky policy was to demonstrate Qatar as a place for alternative thought and a hub for modern Islam, calling itself *as Kaaba al Madiyoum* “land of the oppressed”. By this logic, Qatar’s new leader managed to promote his country as an international meeting center for conflicted parties, building on the web of various networks that provides it with a soft leverage. This strategy has consolidated the small country’s role as a regional soft power that takes both the interests of the state and the values it strives to encourage across the region.

In an interview with an American journalist, Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani noted that Qatar has started its “own Arab Spring 16 years ago” in response to a growing insecurities intensified with a wave of revolutions in the surrounding environment. In the same interview, the journalist acknowledged the U.S astonishment at how the once “desert country” has turned out to be a paradise free of taxes and electricity fees, and uncostly health care and education, representing the dream of every American (Navarro, 2014). By mid 90s, Qatar under Emir Hamad bin Khalifa had managed and redistributed its wealth in a way that created a luxurious life for its citizens; hence, eliminating any cause for frictions or internal unrest. In an older interview with CBS news, he has been explicit in his thoughts, “In the 70s, Qatar was a rich country, but because of the corruption and bad administration, everything went down. Now we are fighting corruption in a larger scale... the money coming from the high price of oil, we knew where to take it and where to put it, in education and health” (Amiri Diwan, 2017). He further explained that, while other countries in the region were engaged in

purchasing military airplanes, Qatar avoided this approach. It was part of the culture to see the army stand in front of its leaders; however, Qatar prioritized development over showing off its military potency. In this way, it seems that the perception of the leader himself was mirrored in a proactive and forward thinking foreign policy reinforced by a solid domestic ground that intended to influence beyond borders to create a distinct name for the country.

Leadership of Singapore (Lee Kuan Yew) Since Singapore's separation from Malaysia, Lee Kuan Yew has led the small country for three decades, with a clear vision that has transformed the tiny country into a global financial powerhouse. Under his leadership, the little nation, whose key trade was manufacturing ever since independence, witnessed an unprecedented boom in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita that turned the country into "one of the highest in the world in 2013, behind just oil-rich Qatar and private banking center Luxembourg, according to the IMF" (Alam, 2015). As a founder of the PAP ruling elite, the innovative leader was admired for political thinking that envisioned the national government as a paternalistic administrator of the public life and therefore, prioritized collective affluence over individual autonomy. In this sense, one could trace back the roots of Singaporean soft power to the prevalence of its ruling party and its authority to enforce the country's socio-political discrepancy within the post-colonial Southeast Asia, which counts as part of its appeal. This doctrine of pragmatism and self-reliance has facilitated a smooth application of soft power embedded in the style of its ruling elite that continues to run the country to date. This style of authoritarian ruling has made Lee subject to international criticism as he pressed political oppositions in favor of social discipline that is responsible for Singapore's economic incredibility. However, it was the assertive control and preservation of stability that tightened the space for corruption. The

uniformity with which Singapore is identified has become part of its attractiveness that made it a first choice for foreign investors that contributed to the small state's flourishing. Moreover, witnessing the legacy of ethnic unrest in Malaysia in the 60s, Lee comprehended the importance of cultural synchronization. Therefore, his government implemented many policies to preserve social stability that included racial quotas in terms of accommodation. In support of this, participant 10 reveals that Lee made people live next to each other by force in a process that melts all ethnic groups together to finally eradicate racial difference and exhibit the Singaporean identity. He explains that Lee played a big role to make people of different racial backgrounds live together, so he built public housing with small and reasonable price over many years to pay. However, he forced the plan that each apartment had four nationalities, where Chinese live next to Indians and Singaporeans next to Malaysians; Lee envisioned them molding together by force. Participant 10 recalls one of his Singaporean friends telling him "sometimes every day there is a celebration, somebody cook Indian food, another Malaysian food, another Chinese food". It can be argued that while this style of leadership has described Lee as a soft authoritarian leader, the social cohesion the country enjoys today is a source of strength that made it more focused to expand its international outreach being placed regularly "among the five top most competitive and globalized states in the world" (Chong, 2010, p. 395). In fact, Lee's capability to exploit the opportunities arising from financial setbacks since the 70s counts as a fundamental characterization of his leadership. When the U.S "de-linked the dollar from gold" (Economist, 2011), Lee seized the opportunity that recognized Singapore as a regional hub for foreign exchange. This achievement seems to be a translation of the vision he has articulated in the early days of his rule that foresaw Singapore as "a global city offering manufacturing and trading hub functions that would convert not only Southeast

Asia but the world at large into an infinite hinterland” (Chong, 2010). In this way, the disciplinary aspect of Lee’s political doctrine has formed a society based on strong merits governed by paternalistic rather than authoritarian principles. He seems to be inspired by the American welfare reformist Lawrence Meade who once said, “He who would be free must first be bound”, giving more weight to discipline (Pearson 2011). Ostensibly, Lee has ingrained such values that contributed to the socio-economic development by adopting a different approach to governance, one that aims to create a fair society than a welfare society that undermines productivity. Participant 10 notices the high expectations placed on Singaporeans, “They promote their country, but their citizens themselves are so stressed in a way when they go to Malaysia, they breathe because in Singapore they seem almost monitored in every way”. At the end, it can be seen how “leadership is inextricably intertwined with power” (The Economic Times, 2012). A country’s successful path cannot be read in separation from the Leaders that make crucial choices about the types of power that they deploy and the influence they aspire to project.

The current leader of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani seems to pursue the same craftiness by building on the legacy of his father that continues to grow in many fields, reflecting an attitude toward enabling the youth as part of policymaking. As for Singapore, presidents that succeeded Lee and his son are holders of the enduring principles of PAP that has built the nation and continues to persist in the exercise of foreign policy. The Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan who is also a member of PAP confirmed that soft power is the "ultimate currency" of his country’s foreign policy (Lai, 2019). It seems like the level of the political will pushed by the current leaders will determine the extent of soft power projection and the policy options they pursue accordingly.

Section III: Soft Power Tools

Painting a detailed picture of the foreign policy of Qatar and Singapore with respect to their internal and external characteristics, a comprehensive list of their shared soft power tools most salient in their foreign policy has been developed. The list is an accumulation of results from interviews and observation of their foreign policy conduct. This section answers one of the main questions of this study that revolves around identifying the soft power tools of these small states to develop an assessment of the effectiveness of their used tools for their international enlargement as soft powers. The questions revolved around the soft power strategies that Qatar and Singapore deploy and their effectiveness in fulfilling the foreign policy objectives of each country. Accordingly, the researcher conclude with a list of the most prominent soft power tools in their foreign policy by painting a clearer picture of their similarities and differences as small soft powers.

On Qatar, almost all participants assert the influence of Aljazeera as a major soft power tool that makes it stand out from the rest of its neighbors, drawing a particular attention to the advantageous spotlights offered by the Arab revolutions in the 2011. On the power of narrative, participant 1 pointed out that being a liberal himself, he was gratified to see Aljazeera acting a force multiplier embracing liberal ideals and attacking authoritarianism in a region full of corruption at times where information penetration was restricted by governments. Thus, he perceives Aljazeera as a “subversion tool” that “helped revolutions mobilized quicker”. Two other participants view this soft power instrument as highly effective during the Gulf crisis, acting as a front line defense for Qatar to illuminate the discriminatory actions by the Quartet. In this way, they imply that it has managed to counter-narrate four war information apparatuses and their campaigns, successfully altering the narrative to Qatar’s favor and

bringing out the Qatari side of story as “genuine” at times the White House appeared supportive of the Quartet’s measures. Another participant draws attention to Aljazeera descendants such as Aljazeera Center for Studies and Aljazeera Media Institute creating an impact on soft power projection. On sports, five participants emphasize on this tool as a means of unconventional diplomacy for Qatar that has positioned it on the global map. One of them pointed out that Qatar has been on the international spotlight for almost twelve years ever since it decided the bidding for the 2022 World Cup. On education, three participants spoke extensively about the prominence of education as a soft power strategy in Qatar’s foreign policy in the manifestation of Education City through Qatar Foundation that created linkages with other universities in the world and hence, promoted for a progressive education system that seems to prepare global citizens. Participant 5 underscores this tool as an evolution in Qatar dating back the beginning of this strategy to the 70s, “I am one of the people who was privileged to be given the scholarship to come and study in Qatar in the 70’s, where many students from all over the world coming to study in Qatar. Participant 4 adds that Qatar University has been enabled as an instrument to engage in some sort of public diplomacy, “Qatar University's recent decision to open branches internationally in Asia, Africa, and other places is a good example of public diplomacy, which will lead to soft power development”. On mediation, eight participants identify Qatar with a favored attitude toward diplomacy, with one viewing mediation as a strategy that branded Qatar differently from its neighbors. Two other diplomats consider mediation as one of the pillars of Qatar’s foreign policy. Furthermore, three participants clarify that one of Qatar’s influential soft power tools is LNG that has represented the small state as a secure reliable partner, attracting foreign investments through energy diplomacy. “It is all about Qatar’s LNG potential”, one academic states. Another brings into attention

the progressive development of the country that has achieved an undeniable level of economic diversification through these investments, which adds to its attraction. Three participants highlight the growing role of Qatar Investment Authority as a financial powerhouse in attracting and diversifying investments. Others notice the development of Qatar's soft power through aviation diplomacy in which Qatar Airways has gained the world's attention during the pandemic lockdowns.

Assessing the soft power tools of Singapore, all participants contend that Singapore's economic development model displayed it as a business hub, where trade is a powerful instrument of soft power that has given a good name for the country. Three participants praise Singapore's world-class education in terms of the best education system. The same participants mention innovation and technology as another niche area for Singapore. Two others affirm that Singapore's sustained neutrality derived from geostrategic and geopolitical reasons have allowed it take mediatory roles in some conflicts, which counts as a soft power tool, portraying itself as an appropriate negotiation platform.

Tools in common between Qatar and Singapore

Mediation in Qatar's foreign policy The highly polarized climate of the Middle East, of which Qatar is part, has the potential to disturb the stability of such a small country influenced by geopolitics. However, the connection that Qatar has developed by virtue of its position of avoiding direct conflicts with regional opponents has served the small state to develop connections with parties from different political spectrums. This seemed to immune Qatar from the potential of spillovers. In fact, the appointment of a special envoy on mediation and conflict resolutions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar in 2016 is a demonstration of the determination of the country to brand itself with peace and promote for its capabilities that qualify it to play a mediatory role.

This reflects a strong determination by Qatar to overemphasize its foreign policy pillar outlined in the Constitution in article 7, “encouraging peaceful resolution of international disputes” (The Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, 2004). This attention to such role has come into fruition upon the successful agreement between Taliban and the U.S after 19 years of long war, where Doha was the host and mediator of the violent dispute (Qazi, 2020).

While an argument of the unsustainability of such agreement begun to dominate due to the escalation in violence post-agreement, Qatar’s capability for mitigating tensions is indisputable seen as a primary force that made dialogues feasible. After all, there is no fixed recipe for a successful mediation in the sense that mediators are valued for their functional involvement rather than their institutional capacity (Kamrava, 2011). Indeed, diplomacy suggests that appearances are often as equally influential as substance in contributing to a country’s international stature. The interviews are reflective of this argument where all participants identify Qatar as a platform of talks. Prior to the achievement of U.S-Taliban deal, the accumulation of peace agreements by Qatar was exemplified in many countries that witnessed prolonged conflicts. Most evident of these cases were the Doha agreement in Lebanon in 2008, where a new election law was adapted, and in 2011, where it hosted the signing ceremony of the Doha document for peace in Darfur (Bukhari, 2020). In this way, the capital of Doha has emerged as a venue for peace talks, of which the country is increasingly associated. Qatar’s soft power abilities and popularity were tested by the onset of the Libyan revolutions, where the Qatari flag was seen raised by Libyan protesters, signifying an image of a likely increasing ascension of the small emirate’s reputation in the Arab world. This image gains more appreciation when the subject is a small state with modern history and without a long account of engagement in regional and international activities. Providing

international aids to other states in response to mitigating the effects of natural disasters, Qatar seemed to emphasize its global image as a key international player in mitigation efforts. In addition, Qatar tackles the root causes of terrorism through investing in education in conflict zones as a means of preventive diplomacy that protects children from falling victims to the growing phenomenon of violent extremism that has plagued countries suffering from inequalities. For a small state lacking conventional resources of hard power, Qatar's foreign policy becomes a subject of captivation for its ability to aid large powers in crisis management as a credible partner favored among other countries who also played a role in evacuating their citizens from Afghanistan. The political landscape seems to bring out the small emirate rescuing the world's super power from a political quagmire, where the former offers an opportunity for other countries' engagement with Taliban whose political scale is in its favor so far. In this sense, Qatar has made undeniable contributions in branding itself as a crisis mediator, bringing into light an image as a reliable actor with a capability of swaying the dynamics of international relations.

Mediation in Singapore's foreign policy

By consistently promoting a neutral position and a state, that is "friends with all and enemy of none" (Lai, 2019), Singapore is also equipped with the potential to act as a reliable mediator in regional conflicts. Despite the international isolation of North Korea, Singapore holds diplomatic relations with Pyongyang, which made it the most suitable host of the historic summit between the U.S and North Korea presidents, among other candidates like Switzerland and Mongolia (Lee, 2018). Singapore's neutrality enables it to take initiatives in hosting summits and promoting dialogues between diverse geographical regions. For instance, the small state was the first initiator of Asia-Europe Meeting in 1996 (Jayakumar, 2011). Capitalizing on this

potential, Singapore hosts the Singapore Mediation Center (SMC) that offers training in mediation and negotiations in for the region as well as other relevant centers such as the Singapore International Mediation Institute (SIMI) that provides dispute resolution services dedicated to the growing needs of businesses in Asia. This demonstrates the little nation's commitment to soft diplomacy with a favored approach toward the institutionalization of the concept of mediation and conflict resolutions, willing to portray itself as an eager balancer and moderator in ASEAN and South-East Asia. This reflects the pragmatic foreign policy of a small country that markets for itself as capable to interact with all parties, inevitably shaping their perception of Singapore's weight and value in the global order.

Education in Qatar's foreign policy

As part of the modernization process the country experienced, Qatar has exploited its oil revenues to invest in progressive education that serves to refute a certain stereotype associated with non-western cultures. Qatar has approached its western allies, mainly the United States to open branches of prestigious universities grouped together into what is called "Education City". In fulfillment of the strategy of incentivizing foreign universities to choose Doha as a branch, Qatar built the Education City with the aim to allocate all the Universities in the same area. Prominent among these Academes are Carnegie Mellon University, Texas A & M University, Georgetown University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Northwestern University and Weill Cornell Medical College. In this way, the city of Doha offers a reliable alternative for Arabs to pursue higher education when they are reluctant to chase it in the West whether for such reasons as long distance lands, living away from family or cultural concerns. This diplomatic approach supplements the rising status of Qatar in the Middle East and the potential to shape the outlooks of its current and future generations, which

counts as a foreign policy tool that aids Qatar in attracting partnerships and bridge cultural gaps. These students can potentially be the future elites or leaders in their home countries and intrinsically, the relationships that they establish with their Qatari counterparts or even other international students noting their living experiences in Qatar are capable of making them more understanding and tolerant of Qatari foreign policy in the future or even defenders.

Nye identifies cultural attraction as a soft power resource that countries promote to boost their image (Nye, 2004). One of the interview participants reflects that the efforts Qatar has put into education sector through the development of prestigious universities have paid off making the terrorism accusations of Qatar seem less persuasive, where the investment in research and academia seems to refute these arguments. “It was very striking that the educational component created a worldwide network of people who were not necessarily going to just say whatever Qatar does is right, but who were going to look at it critically and think that this blockade just does not sound right”, he explains. Nye seems to invoke a similar context during the Cold War, where some international students from the Soviet Union “played a pivotal role in the peaceful demise of the Soviet Union as they eventually rose to positions of influence upon their return home and began challenging the status quo from within” (Antwi-Boateng, 2013, p. 15). In this sense, Qatar’s ability to influence the regional foreign policy agenda becomes more achievable by inviting scholars and think tanks to join conferences that Qatar hosts to focus on the country’s priorities, which verifies a soft power asset at the government’s disposal.

Education in Singapore's foreign policy Singapore is branded for providing the best quality of education, particularly in science, where mathematics textbooks are taught in the schools of many countries including the U.S (Hong and (Hong & Lugg, 2016, p. 107).

While education is recognized as a soft power tool through which countries are won over to educate and train their people, Singaporean universities are perceived to be one of the top destinations for countries to train their next crop of leaders. “With its universities constantly ranked among the world’s best and its schools coming up first in the Programs for International Student Assessment (PISA), its education system is arguably as powerful as a political bargaining chip (Kong, 2017). One participant revealed that Singapore’s universities have a department in all fields and as a diplomat; he has always been impressed every time he met the Singaporeans, “They have Middle East Institute, have Asian Institute, African Institute, and they have Latin America Institute”. As a member in a number of Singaporean institutes, participant 10 shares that Singaporeans have been working for a long time in pharmaceutical research about coronavirus. He emphasizes enormous amount of capital is invested on their advanced education and medical research. He also adds that in terms of technology, the most brilliant people are recruited to work in the department of the Prime Minister's Office. In addition, one of Singapore’s assets is its strong public policy sector symbolized through the top Public Policy University located in the National University of Singapore that ranked first in Asia and 11th worldwide, according to 2020 QS World University Rankings (QS Top University, 2021). The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy University (LKYSPP) was named after its founding leader as a legacy, through which Singapore shows leverage on its education system as it markets for education diplomacy in foreign policy. Through its official website, LKYSPP articulates its aim

to “train the next generation of Asian policy-makers and leaders” and thus, Singapore clearly targets individuals that are anticipated to influence the policy trajectory in their home countries and could potentially adopt policies favorable to Singapore in the future.

International Organizations in Qatar and Singapore’s foreign policies

Multilateral institutions represent an appropriate tool for small states to vocalize their concerns derived from their inherent vulnerabilities. The significance of these institutions lies in their acknowledgement of the concepts of legitimacy and their respect for the rule of law. Therefore, small states are cognizant of the undeniable role of international law-based institutions in legitimizing their engagement and articulating their voices on regional and global issues, hence, contributing to agenda setting and levelling the playing field in a way favorable to their interests. All interview participants stress on the role of international organizations as a tool for small states to mobilize and coordinate efforts to respond to global challenges, serving as a proper choice for them because multilateral diplomacy is the most effective approach for small states. Multilateralism seems to gain more interests by super powers in realization of their critical support for their actions. In support of this argument, Nye evokes Washington’s uncalculated decision of acting unilaterally in the war against Iraq in 2003 without seconding it with a United Nation’s resolutions, escaping the norms of institutions and raising skeptics over the legitimacy of the American actions (Nye, 2004). In this sense, small states work diligently through the collective spirit of international organizations to attract support for their initiatives.

With respect to Qatar and Singapore, participants also note their common strategy of playing by the rules and their respect for international institutions. Singapore is widely known for working through international and regional organizations, focusing on the

United Nations and ASEAN. In fact, Singapore has chaired the UN Security Council in 2001-2002 and Qatar has won this leadership in 2006-2007 that is often seen as its peak moment (Ferrer, 2018). One striking observation is that Singapore has sued its larger neighbor Malaysia twice in international courts. Consequently, the small nation is represented today as an arbitration hub through Singapore International Arbitration Center (SIAC) that portrays Singapore as a rising popular setting for the resolution of international commercial disputes (Tan, 2021). Analogously, Qatar has taken four states including its bigger neighbor Saudi Arabia to International Court of Justice (ICJ) in response to the imposed air blockade on Qatar. Indeed, participant 3 refers to the value of international organizations such as the International Court of Justice as a pressuring tool on the blockading countries. “One of our main responses to the blockade was pursuing the legal paths at the international level and this has proven to be very influential, ironically enough, although we all complain about how ineffective international organizations are”, she reflects. The success of such pressure is exemplified through the reconciliation of Al-Ula agreement in which the Quartet agreed to lift the blockade while the latter suspends all lawsuits it filed against the Quartet in international courts. In this sense, Qatar has made use of international organizations to convey a message that unilateral measures against a small state is no longer acceptable in a multipolar system that respects the rights of states sovereignty. Pursuing an approach of internalization of the illegality of the Quartet’ actions, Qatar articulates a rejection against what seems a persistent realist characterization of international relations that denies small states the rights to exert autonomy and play constructive roles. In doing so, Qatar also aimed to enunciate the need for a rule-based system that prevents such aggressive measures from becoming a norm, encouraging other small states to follow suit. Participant 5 validates this argument, “We do live in the world

where there is no global governance and therefore the only way you can achieve semblance or near to global governance is through these international functional and regional organizations”. One participant is of the view that Qatar playing by the international rules during the crisis was effective in making its concerns and demands legitimate in the eyes of international community. Another one agrees by noting that Qatar “discovered the importance of international organizations particularly during the blockades between 2017 and 2020”, which helped Qatar stir international sympathy. Clearly, these organizations are perceived as powerful instruments, if used wisely, by small states to limit unilateralism by bigger powers.

Qatar’s soft power tools

Media Inspired by the early realization of media as a tool for enhancing concepts and articulating objectives and trends, “Sheikh Hamad provided the Al Jazeera founding team with \$137 million to establish the channel; today, Al Jazeera is one of the most influential aspects of Qatari diplomacy” (Abu Sulaib, 2017).

Qatar has paid attention to the crucial need to manage its resources away from rents by disseminating it wisely for long-term benefits. That said, it has empowered its soft power assets that contribute to a better projection of international influence. Through the launch of Aljazeera channel, Qatar has successfully created a national narrative with the aim to pursue an independent line of thought from its neighbors, symbolizing a regional Arab voice during a critical time of regional conflicts. As the only news agency that has an operating bureau in Kabul, the channel acted as a significant player in international politics through the immediate exposure of events in Afghanistan amid the Western intervention (Almaskati, 2014). “Al Jazeera’s cameras focused on the civilian and the infrastructural damage caused by the American-led invasion, producing images that were seen quite unfavorably by an American government struggling to build

international support of their newfound military endeavor” (Zayani, 2005, p. 3). The channel represents a successful tool empowered by the government to capitalize on the country’s regional influence through the notions of open press and giving a voice for the voiceless in the Arab world. In other words, it championed Arab and Islamic causes at times Arab media outlets were sponsored by their governments, who highlighted biased views that embrace their actions. Qatar understood the importance of building relations beyond traditional diplomacy to reach out to the world. Therefore, through this liberalization instrument, it has paid attention to audiences, focusing on what captures their interests. In doing so, the country has given the impression that it is attentive to the audience’s aspirations, which increases its appeal and popularity. The regional influence of this outlet was so powerful that restrictions on Arab media began to loosen to counter the growing influence of the Qatari owned medium. In this way, the small emirate has become a key influencer in Middle Eastern politics, showing that its media channel was a potent advocate that has shaped public opinion in other societies. While Qatar is not a liberal by the classical sense, it allows a space for expressing liberal views compared to its Gulf neighbors by enabling Arab voices through Aljazeera during the Arab Spring. The interview participants demonstrate relative awareness of the revolutionary stimuli the news channel exerts in mobilizing change in Arab politics. During the Gulf crisis, it acted as a public diplomacy instrument for Qatar dedicating special programs to provide exclusive coverage on the covert war operations in Yemen by the UAE and Saudi Arabia. “Qatar invented a new model of public diplomacy by operating Al-Jazeera as a hybrid state-sponsored/private network, effectively transforming the network into a highly potent public diplomacy tool” (Samuel-Azran, 2013, p. 1293). This approach was translated into the most widely viewed investigative documentary “What is hidden is greater”, initiated during the Gulf

crisis. When Riyadh once relied on Aljazeera to overcome the difficulties and the international pressure it faced by its unilateral intervention on Yemen, the network shifted its narrative by the onset of the blockade to highlighting the Saudi political scene of the war at times when the Quartet demanded the closure of the network. In this way, the Saudi government seemed to have lost a card on which it once relied to legitimize its operations in Yemen and compensate for its geopolitical losses. The channel's regional accessibility and the determination to newscast contentious topics have boosted a reputation for investigative press, which brings it as an effective agency for broadening the network of international relations and eventually advance foreign policy objectives.

Sports As the first Middle Eastern and Islamic country to win the bid to host the 2022 World Cup, Qatar is advantaged with a golden soft power tool that gives it the opportunity to convey its attractiveness and boost tourism for the event that “attracts a global television audience of over 35 billion people” (Almaskati, 2014). The mega event will allow Qatar to reflect its appeal by communicating its messages to the world through the universal values of sports, which lays emphasis on its international reliability and national prestige.

This acts an effective tool for practicing public diplomacy beyond the traditional means, where Qatar has the opportunities to build long terms relations with the world. “By successfully hosting a major sporting event to showcase shared social norms and sameness, the state can enhance its international prestige and attractiveness in order to boost its agency in international politics.” (Grix et al., 2019, p. 529). As a result, Qatar will be able to promote for these universally shared values within the framework of its own cultural and social values; a chance to communicate its national ideals to the world. While articles published on Qatar used to often begin by stating the country's wealth in

terms of possessing natural resources with the highest GDP performance, winning the bid to host the World Cup has made major headlines, making Qatar under global spotlight and international scrutiny. One could argue that globalization has dissolved states into one world in which they seem to be rivaling to attract attention to locate themselves globally. However, the investments driven by the engagement in sports diplomacy serves Qatar's cultural interests, where notions of quality, tolerance, and innovation will potentially contribute to the promotion of Qatar's values that contribute to the understanding of cultural diversity. In this sense, sports have become more than just a game, where they potentially build international partnerships and maximize economic and political gains. This worldwide reputation granted by sports diplomacy will create a liberalizing impact on Qatar's international relations, where Qatar conveys a geopolitical message that it has defined its place on the international playing field. Through the legacy of the World Cup, Qatar longs to be seen as a "modern sport oasis" that presents reasons for investments in services and infrastructure (Al Horr et al., 2016, p. 362). Though such event has put Qatar under the international microscope of criticism on violating labors rights, it has also opened the opportunity for developing legislations on labor reforms in response to the pressure, which represents the country as a responsible actor attentive to international requirements of securing human rights.

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) If natural wealth constitutes a fundamental component of power, Qatar would serve as model for a small state redistributing such wealth for tools that fulfill its foreign policy long-term objectives of appropriately positioning the country in the international system.

Advantaged with enormous reserves of natural gas that placed it as a leading exporter of LNG, Qatar's potential to influence the international gas market to its favor becomes higher. Since LNG is a common denominator between Doha and its key partners from

Asia like Tokyo and Beijing and in Europe like Moscow, Doha is represented with an opportunity to diversify relations in order to develop strategic partnerships away from Washington, whose alliance proved insufficient in securing the national interests of Qatar brought about by the reality of the blockade. According to Wright, “by providing a significant proportion of foreign countries’ energy needs, Qatar is creating “stakeholders” in its own stability and security” (Wright, 2013, p. 103). This energy strategy allows Qatar to develop further diplomatic ties with other partners that can contribute to its indirect security. Asia has become a central focus of Qatar’s investments and a fertile continent for its economic diversification strategies. Qatar is the largest LNG exporter to the region, in which 75% of gas exports go to Asia (Kumar, 2020). That said, Tokyo, Beijing, and Seoul did not follow the measures of the blockading countries nor were they convinced of their allegations, as they seem to be moved by their economic interests in the region, where Qatar is indispensable for their energy security. In this way, energy as a soft power tool was effective to prevent more players from isolating Qatar internationally. In other words, Qatar has managed to demonstrate that the security of Qatar lies in the security of these countries, whose growing energy demands are tied to Qatar. That said, LNG would potentially facilitate Qatar’s international expansion to diversify revenues. Doha seems to manifest this approach as it bases its energy contracts on commercial benefit rather than political considerations. Wright notes that “Qatar petroleum operates as an international oil company rather than traditional national company” (Qatar University, 2021). The small state’s oil wealth plays a critical factor in catering for Qatar’s profile building, which captures the focus of larger countries and contributes to empowering the international standing of Qatar. This mounting wealth in a region of intense uncertainty motivated Qatar to design a forward-looking plan through the augmentation of the country’s soft

power resources.

Foreign Investments Another tool Qatar deploys to enhance its influence is the growing profile on international investments. This idea is not only articulated through the establishment of the Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) that generates another source of profit for the country but also seems to be exploited by the government as a marketing tool. The establishment of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) in 2005 signifies a powerful apparatus for Qatar to strengthen its economy and support diversification policies. In parallel, Qatar exploits the SWF as a tool with which Qatar gains global perceptibility. These investments have extended to reach the largest British companies, most visibly Harrods, and Canary Wharf Group Investment Holdings, and German prominent companies, Porsche and Siemens (Cherkaoui, 2018). That said, Doha has exploited its financial assets to paint an image away from the rentier model securing a place in the future of global finance.

Participant 1 notes that Qatar's financial depth makes it a subject of attraction by many international investors. Since Qatar does not face the fiscal constraints of its neighbors, "many of the investments seem more glamorous and identity-driven than earnings-driven" (Young, 2019, p. 49). In this sense, all of these initiatives "have become core strategic elements of the late rentier state's development and diplomatic postures" (Gray, 2011, p. 36). Ostensibly, Qatari policy makers create an interdependent relationship with core global players with the aim to enhance the leverage of the government.

Qatar Airways Aviation diplomacy has become a new form of soft power, with which a nation is identified. In pursuit of broadening captivation, Qatar has sought to become a hub for air transportation through the launch of Qatar Airways in 1997 representing a competition to European airlines.

In fact, Qatar Airways has been named the best airline in the world by eDreams, one of Europe's largest online travel agents due to its exceptional performance in the course of the pandemic (Gulf Times, 2021a). In regards with Qatar's most effective soft power tool, Participant 3 reflects, "I think if there was one winner out of this pandemic; it was Qatar Airways in terms of its image. It has repatriated more than three million stranded passengers. For the first time, countries such as the U.S, the United Kingdom (UK), France and other countries submit official requests to Qatar in order to have Qatar Airways help them repatriate their own citizens". Another participant assures that he would rather fly all the way from the US to the Gulf through Qatar Airways in a direct flight drawing on "its reputation of excellence and luxury of comfort especially". As a branding strategy, the airline has succeeded in attracting the most followed celebrities such as Lionel Messi and Neymar Da Silva in awareness of mobilizing popular support and conveying messages of global values to a broadest possible audience. "FC Barcelona has been characterized by being not just a football organization, but also a powerful force for globalization, solidarity, integration and social cohesion" (Almaskati, 2014). Through Qatar Airways, the small state appears to associate the name of the country with these values, which creates a mental image that this partnership goes beyond the simple economic coalition to one that depicts the state's personality as a holder of universal values.

Singapore's Soft power tools

Business/Economics Singapore has been consistently ranked among the top five most competitive and globalized states in the world, according to the indices published regularly by the World Economic Forum (Chong, 2010, p. 395).

The small nation has sought to distinct itself from the region by liberalizing its economy to attract foreign direct investments projecting itself as the most desired business

environment by developing pro-business policies.

According to the World Bank, “Singapore ranks second in Asia and 18th worldwide” on the ease of doing business, preceding its economic giant neighbors like India, China, and Korea, even at times of economic uncertainty (Chia, 2020). Participant 10 emphasizes, “They use their investments as a soft power to influence decision in countries and everybody would like to get assistance from Singapore to develop their government systems and factories”. Participant 2 endorses this argument, “Singapore has created a name for itself as a sort of business-friendly hub for the entire region of Southeast Asia” emphasizing on the high level of trust and confidence in the Singaporean system. One of the participants even shares an information absent from the literature on Singapore, “nobody knows they are one of the biggest sovereign funds investor in the world”, which entails that the little nation pursues a strategy of keeping a low profile of its financial depth as public exposure could make it an object of greed by its larger neighbors.

Section IV Potential Tools for Qatar

Having unveiled the similarities and differences between Qatar and Singapore in terms of soft power tools in their foreign policy, this section aims to illuminate the underutilized tools by Qatar, along with other assets to increase its soft power appeal. According to the 2021 Global Soft Power Index, Singapore ranks 20th while Qatar ranks 26th (Brand Finance, 2021). Taking into account the structure of soft power that can be summarized into: Reputation, influence, familiarity and response to crises, this section concludes with identifying areas of improvement in Qatar’s foreign policy and its potential tools in order to improve or sustain its soft power influence globally by taking Singapore as a case study.

Qatar's Foreign Policy: Areas of Improvement

All interview participants that explored Qatar's soft power instruments have drawn attention to some downfalls in its foreign policy amid regional and international developments that painted a negative image, raising skeptics over its activities in the region. Two of whom convey that Qatar was more appropriately positioned as a neutral mediator pre-2011; however, appearing biased to rebels and Islamists during the Arab uprisings have undermined its neutrality, affecting its competency as a reliable actor in resolving disputes. As for sports, one participant comments on Qatar's limited awareness of the downsides of soft power through bidding for the World Cup that instigated criticism for twelve years by the international media. He notes that Qatar has been only able to respond to it more tangibly through the launching of International Labor Organization Project Office in Doha that ensures a compliance with international labor treaties, acknowledging labor reforms. Another participant who happens be a Qatari decision maker acknowledges the lack of coordination between state sectors as well as the lack of a holistic approach, "we have a policy that is not accumulative, and it changes in different directions. It does not build on what has achieved already. Non- accumulation is one of the big problems we have". Four others stress on the critical importance for Qatar to work on its narrative with an emphasis on coherent messaging. More specifically, a participant who is a frequent visitor to *Qatari Majles* brings into light the need to improve socio-political messaging in the small monarchy for a better management between governance and public expectations.

Potential Tools for Qatar's Soft Power

Some interviewees illuminate underutilized soft power tools, that if used wisely, Qatar's soft power appeal would be enhanced, creating a long-term influence globally.

Three participants believe that QIA is underutilized and it can be expanded as a soft power instrument in a way that serves foreign policy objectives. One of them states that Qatar plays an effective role as a purely business investor, but not so much as a soft power. In other words, Qatar looks at foreign investments from a business point of view rather than a soft power tool to influence their host countries. Participant 10 explains that “Qatar has huge investments in Spain estimated around almost 21 billion dollars, but never been used as a tool of soft power unless it faces a crisis. Even the government of the host country sometimes is not even aware of how much Qatar invests in its capital”. Two other interviewees bring out the energy sector as a golden card for political leverage for Qatar and a tool that attracts a wider set of network essential for the country’s international outreach. While mediation is a foreign policy pillar for Qatar, two participants stress on the importance to appear less biased in conflicts to gain reliability. Another one concludes that humanitarian aids is still underused, suggesting that Qatar Charity be enabled to maximize its aids initiatives to serve the human face of Qatar in all parts of the world. Another underused tool is education, where two speakers evaluate the Gulf Studies program in Qatar University as a niche area for Qatar that is yet to be exploited by Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Participant 5 suggest that this center become an education hub, “Globally, the next generation of top scholars in the Gulf are going to be graduates from Qatar University from the Gulf Studies Center and if that is not powerful enough, what can be! Some of them are funded by the government of Qatar and they are now becoming the top academics writing about the region”. Participant 4 recommends a promotion of the role of Qatar University as “a hub for Arabic and Islamic studies” that would re-position Qatar as a center for moderate Islam. Participant 1 seems to endorse the idea of liberalization of thoughts by foreseeing the image of Qatar as a liberal hub in

the region by virtue of allowing a space for academic freedom, freedom of speech and advocating for ideas of political liberalism that is unique, emerging more clearly by the growing lack of expression in other authoritarian neighbors. Besides the already known tools, participant 9 draws attention to the promising image of Qatar positioning itself as a labor hub that he called “labor diplomacy”, enabled by the growing segment of labors brought in for development projects. Another participant raises the concept of a post-pandemic diplomacy as potential targeted area for Qatar to boost bilateral relations, where healthcare diplomacy evolves. This would provide a space for a wealthy state like Qatar to move with humanitarian initiatives prevailing for the next three years, which would boost its appeal as a provider country. Moreover, five participants underscore efforts that boost regionalism to support global trends, which is a pragmatic approach for small states to maximize momentum for issues pertaining to their interests. In this respect, all of them rank the United Nations and its apparatuses as a venue of first resort. For regional security purpose, three participants view the GCC organization as crucial for building a strong regional security, whereas the rest find that it has lost its functionality with the outbreak of the 2017 crisis as not serving Qatar’s interests. The same participants also praise Qatar’s public diplomacy and crisis management plans of the Gulf crisis, underlining it as an effective tool that brought out Qatar as a winner in the Gulf dispute. Thus, Qatar needs to ensure a continuity of a proactive diplomacy to prevent future crises. Two others think that Qatar is still behind in cultural diplomacy and there is room for foreign policy to sponsor the country’s cultural initiatives that are more reflective of its identity, which would contribute to fulfilling its nascent tourism. Overall, all participants settle that more coordination and better leveraging would fill in the remaining gaps in Qatar’s foreign policy to act as a source of soft power.

Strategic Narrative via Public Diplomacy Participants display the promising outcomes of non-conventional means of diplomacy in shaping people's preferences. Public diplomacy is new form of soft power that shapes public attitudes toward a country's foreign policy, allowing government to engage with non-state actors to spread values and define its interests (Cull, 2009).

Paying attention to a state's narrative has the power to influence the way other states perceive a country. As Nye has frequently discussed the significance of narratives in swaying the direction of international relations, depending on "whose story wins" (Roselle et al., 2014). This concept was obviously born out of the alterations in the world system in which the power of information outweighs the power of arsenals. Indeed, counting the followers to a Twitter or Instagram account entails the extent to which audiences are influenced by the narratives articulated by the owners of these accounts. A vivid example of this power can be seen through the permanent suspension of Trump's Twitter account, the President of the most powerful nation in an attempt to prevent the spread of his violent ideas resulting from his loss in 2021 elections (Denham, 2021). This movement by the company reflects the power of the war of rhetoric in inflaming people to achieve a predetermined goal. Examining the case of a small state like Qatar, participants demonstrate an understanding of how a systematic messaging has the power to alter attitudes as they all note that while Qatar has a number of soft power tools; it has never utilized them strategically, appearing as a terrible actor amid information operations before the outbreak of the 2017 quarrel. Participant 1 explicitly comments that had the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed some synonymous with the charismatic capability of the current Spokesperson before 2017, the crisis might have not happened. The elements of a clear and consistent narrative have only evolved amid the intense diplomatic movements in response to the crisis.

Some speakers are of the assessment that the UAE performed more efficiently in that department due to the clear vision and the strategic narrative. In support of this argument, a scholar explains that the UAE's narrative in Washington that capitalized on the neo-conservatives' fear of political Islam by demonizing Qatar as its sponsor resonated well with U.S policy makers, championing the Emiratis for partnering to combat radical Islamists (Krieg, 2019, p. 103). A western participant observes that the Government Communication Office (GCO) in Qatar has only been activated in 2017, which suggests a defensive strategy by Qatar that lacks a proactive mindset. However, Qatar has been able to catch up by ultimately switching the narrative to its advantage, translating such effort into signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S government that symbolizes an American position in favor of the Qatari side, changing the political discourse in the West. The Economist published an article explaining why the "siege" failed (Economist, 2017) while The Times wrote that Qatar's isolation failed with more partnerships evolving (Spencer, 2018). While existing literature praises Qatar's strategic communication during the crisis (Al-Muftah, 2019), little scholarly attempts have been demonstrated to illuminate the lack of a strategic messaging before the blockade. The perception of the victory Qatar has created internationally validates the assessment of participants that strategic communication in the form of public diplomacy is a soft power potential on which Qatar has yet to capitalize, bearing in mind that it is a double-edge sword.

Multilateral diplomacy The chances of small states to achieve foreign policy objectives become higher through engaging multilateral institutions. Multilateral diplomacy has become more prevalent in the twenty first century as it does not only open the windows for opportunities to manage complex issues, but also equips small states with the ability to legitimize the outcomes reached by giving them momentum.

In other words, they contribute to institutionalizing these outcomes making them more sustainable especially when they arise from joint endeavors. All participants agree on the role a small state can play through multilateral engagement, laying a greater emphasis on the UN for setting agenda items that create shared interests with divergent countries. The number of member states since the inception of the UN seven decades ago has witnessed a triple increase that now consists of 193 representatives. “A world government by a system of norms and codes of conduct that treat each other equally is clearly better for small states than the law of jungle” (Menon, 2017, p. 144).

Drawing on the core objectives for which it was founded, the UN is of critical importance to both Qatar and Singapore to form a constraint on larger power to act unilaterally and to lobby for their autonomous foreign policies. This works along with other economic and security associations to advance their interests. Compared to Qatar, Singapore seems ahead in terms of intensive engagement with multilateral institutions. Participants concerned with Singapore refer to its consistent effort to position itself as a strong advocate of international law by asserting presence at international fora. Though considered as an informal regional group, the Forum of Small States (FOSS) was first initiated in 1992 by Singapore with the aim to exchange information and views on issues pertaining to the interests of small states, which portrays the little nation as an activist for small states. Prior to this forum, Singapore was one of main founders of ASEAN that was formed two years after its independence, which served as a venue for the little state to play a larger role by being the generator of initiatives that enabled it to broaden its diplomatic space and therefore, fulfilling its foreign policy goals. According to participant 6, “Singapore ranks highly in the agenda of government and it engages with organizations related to law and business”. Singapore also made use of ASEAN to form a counterbalance to regional players such as China by encouraging India to join

the organization as a dialogue partner, allowing Singapore to exert a level of influence or containment over India's activities in the region. A former Singaporean official justified such initiative by its concerns over growing indicators that the U.S would reduce its military presence in the region (Jayakumar, 2011). These achievements entail that if Singapore with less demographical and geographical weight than Qatar and with non-existent natural wealth has been able to play a bigger role through multilateral diplomacy, Qatar has a greater space to expand its playing field in respected institutions. While Qatar is not perceived to take a leadership role in international organizations due its geopolitical environment, post-blockade period has created a new environment where the previous political considerations proved ineffective. For instance, since Qatar calls for a more robust GCC that respects rights of all states equally, its position as a member affected by its inefficient rules and procedures can create legitimacy to move with initiatives that propose mechanisms capable of guaranteeing non-recurrence of the crisis, along with instruments that ensure compliance. In parallel, a state like Qatar could consider joining other international agreements that also serve as a protective shield against a similar crisis. That said, opportunities are laid wider for Qatar to join the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) that could constitute a deterrence against a future military invasion that naturally results in crimes against humanity. In fact, the potential of the crisis to destabilize international peace and security was validated through the bold statement by the former Emir of Kuwait, who claimed that he blocked the Quartet from a military invasion attempt against Qatar (Al Jazeera, 2017). Though none of the GCC states is signatory to the Rome Statute of the ICC, the non-criminal profile of Qatar gives it a sort of credibility and confidence to join and ratify the Statute more so than Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This is validated through the former's clear record of human rights violation as opposed to the latter's

growing record of human rights violation pertaining to the war in Yemen as confirmed by the UN (Cumming-Bruce, 2018).

Furthermore, Qatar could pursue the candidacy in leadership positions in regional and international organizations in line with its national interests to more efficiently shape agenda setting. The city of Doha could also hosts international annual events on less controversial issues such as innovation or climate change. Even though it was the host of the 2012 United Nations Climate Change Conference, (The Guardian, 2012) Qatar has never built on this legacy as the second host in the Middle East after Morocco, which gave the impression that Qatar's summit diplomacy approach does not exhibit a sustainable nature or a long-term vision. However, Qatar's appointment of a Special Envoy for Climate Change and Sustainability reflects the political will of Qatar to re-engage more actively with such a global environmental issue that concerns humanity, displaying itself as an eager partner willing to play a constructive role in the world's most persistent issue. From a political lens, this demonstrates that the foreign policy decision makers are willing to prepare, through the foreign ministry, for the aftermaths of an emerging trend by dealing with increasingly prevailing issues when reviewing their institutional structure and procedures; an indicator of a proactive diplomacy. In short, targeting potential tools that advocate for Qatar's interests would help Qatar enlarge its international space and boost its role as a relevant actor in the international community.

Labor diplomacy One of the respondents shed the lights on Qatar's emerging soft power as a labor hub in the region. According to participant 9, Qatar could capitalize on its perception as a hub for other countries' nationals, given the growing number of diaspora that form the majority of Qatar's population.

In the context of the Gulf, labor diplomacy is a tool for rentier Gulf states that offer low

and high skilled jobs for different nationalities to contribute to their economic diversification plans. In return, these laborers contribute to their home countries through sending remittances that support their economies. The rising labor force in the Gulf has been subject of contemplation throughout the years by scholars with interests in the Gulf who explored the consequences of demographical balance in these rentier economies. However, the small Gulf states are likely more influenced by the non-national segment outweighing nationals. In particular, a small state like Qatar that took the initiative to host the World Cup in 2022, along with its accompanying infrastructure mega-projects seems in dire need for labors to conclude the country's development plans, which exposed the country to international criticism for human rights violations. Critics have described this as a soft disempowerment, where soft power tools display the country's susceptibilities and constraints that are subject to worldwide inspection by international players and regional rivals (Grix et al., 2019). Such critique stimulated Qatar to introduce labor reforms and new legislations compatible with international standards, lastest of which was specifying the minimum wage of labor workers (International Labor Organization, 2021).

With gowing reforms and enforcing laws that secure the rights of labors, Qatar can re-position itself as an attractive hub for migrant workers. Participant 9 clarifies, "Qatar is becoming a hub for both blue collar and white collar labor. Being attractive to labors can make you establish strong relationships with other countries using their nationals as a labor, professionals or semi-skilled labors". He also adds that, "with growing nationalities such as Indians, Bangladeshis, Nepalese, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, and Pakistanis, a huge number of expats are living in Qatar and take part in strengthening the relationship between Doha and their home capital because they look at it as a hub for their nationals, where they transfer a lot of hard earned currency back to their

countries”. During her state visit to Doha, the president of Nepal stated that Qatar has become an attractive country for Nepalese diaspora, revealing that the size of the Nepalese labor in Qatar is estimated at 400,000 workers participating in building developmental projects, which is also facilitated with Qatar Airways offering 5 direct flights between Doha and Katmandu (Al-Watan, 2018). Furthermore, Qatar’s capability to treat all segments of its populations, nationals and non-nationals, equally during the health pandemic at a free cost paints an attractive image of Qatar. This makes diaspora more appreciative of living and working in Qatar as the latter offers a privilege that other neighboring countries would no longer tolerate with their growing taxation policies in response to post-pandemic pressure that drives to generate another source of revenues. In this way, Qatar can capitalize on labor diplomacy as a soft power tool that would generate benefits for the country in the end by boosting further partnerships that advances its economic diversification development.

Healthcare Diplomacy Since responses have validated the aptitude of Qatar to manage and contain crises effectively, one potential tool that creates an opportunity for Qatar to exert soft power lies in its reputation for providing humanitarian aids.

The reconciliation of the Gulf dispute that concluded with lifting of the blockade on Qatar seems to provide more financial flexibility for Qatar to engage in further humanitarian initiatives that would serve its foreign policy objectives pertaining to sustaining its image as a trusted international partner. A participant who is a decision maker explains that for three and a half years, their talking points during every single bilateral meeting were centered on lifting the blockade. Now that the dispute is resolved, the speaker reflects on the need to redefine priorities and agenda to be articulated into their new talking points. In the post-pandemic period, a participant expects a room for Qatar to exercise health diplomacy in a period characterized with a

fierce competition for influence by regional players. While the concept of health diplomacy has been somehow sidelined in international relations, the emerging variants of the pandemic will make this practice more prevalent in bilateral, regional and international relations. From an international relations lens, health diplomacy can be understood as “international aid or cooperation meant to promote health or that uses health programming to promote non-health-related foreign aims” (Fazal, 2020). The nature of this ongoing pandemic, which is anticipated to last for more years even with the accessibility to vaccine, necessitates for intensifying international partnerships for response and adaptability with future viruses. More importantly, pandemics generate opportunities for states not only to contribute to global health but also to drive their foreign policy vision and pursue predetermined objectives in line with their national interests.

Due to dual shock that the Gulf economy has witnessed in which the Coronavirus coincided with a period of a sharp decline in oil prices that has only worsened with outbreak of the disease, the future economic outlook of the oil exporting monarchies would not seem promising in the aftermath of COVID-19. This suggests a reordering of economic priorities would create political implications that are naturally followed with radical economic fluctuations. It is noteworthy that these difficulties came along at a time where economic blockade on Qatar was still ongoing. However, the level and pace of Qatar’s humanitarian aids to countries most suffering of the health disease did not witness a decline. For instance, though Italy is known for an advanced health care system, Qatar sent immediate medical assistance to the country to contain the outbreak, which included two field hospitals (The Peninsula, 2020). At the bilateral level, Qatar’s humanitarian aids were allocated to nearly 100 countries with an estimate of 258 million dollars ever since the eruption of the pandemic, with 20 million pledged to support the

Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI) (Bukhari, 2021). At the International cooperation level, Qatar Development Fund (QDF) signed an agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the organization with 10 million dollars for its five year plan (AlSharif, 2021). While Qatar has purchased U.S vaccine in conviction of its higher effectiveness, it could make use of Russian and Chinese vaccine through a humanitarian assistance strategy to underdeveloped countries and therefore, broadening bilateral areas of cooperation that serves foreign policy goals. More practically, Qatar can take advantage of its successful containment of the virus and its efficient health sector to invest in health and pharmaceutical research.

Taking Singapore as a case study, Qatar can learn from Singapore that is advanced in this department through the investments in medicine and building professionals. An observer who studied the Singaporean management of the health crisis commented on its successful response and forward thinking, “With its SG Clean initiative, Singapore created a template for COVID-19 responsiveness that other destinations have emulated, leading the way into a post-pandemic future” (Phoon, 2020, p. viii). As mentioned earlier, a participant who lived for years in Singapore praised their activism in this field, where he revealed that Singaporeans shared with him their commitment to developing medicines, in anticipation for similar viruses long before the discovery of the Corona virus. In this sense, Qatar can demonstrate good will and soft power through seizing the opportunities laid wider in the increasingly emerging trend of health diplomacy.

Defense diplomacy While the existing soft power tools at Qatar’s disposal illuminated in the previous sections are not hard to define, the interviews were significant in identifying an interesting revelation that highlights an emerging soft power tool in Qatar’s foreign policy that works hand in hand with its defense policy coined as defense diplomacy.

Defense diplomacy is understood as a tool that “functions as a military variant of soft power which relies on the processes of norm diffusion and state socialization to influence the strategic thinking of foreign governments” (Phoon, 2020).

It contributes to displaying the state’s military might, encouraging the development of a network of military elites that exchange ideas that can be integrated into a comprehensive foreign policy. This approach has begun to come into fruition, grasping attention amid the Gulf dispute. Qatar has shown a tendency to bring international attention to its defense deals with allies and partners with the aim to convey messages of deterrence capabilities amid a period characterized with a violent attitude by its Gulf neighbors. According to Nye, demonstrating the capabilities of military armies and defense equipment by a state can act as a source of soft power that leads foreign governments to perceive a certain nation as powerful, serving as an instrument to attract allies (Nye, 2004). The attraction becomes even a source of admiration when the subject country is small by conventional definitions. Indeed, deterrence seems to characterize both Qatar and Singapore’s military canon. Indeed, this sort of tool if used wisely can show that armed forces can be deployed without necessarily engaging in acts of violence. This impression seems to challenge the existing view of defense diplomacy as a tool of coercion.

Taking Singapore as a comparative case, the little nation possesses a rich dossier of engagement with defense diplomacy initiatives. Such engagement is translated through the formation of ASEAN as a center for regional commitment to preserving peace and security in the region. It acts as a shield that protects member states against external attacks, taking into account the sacredness of each state’s sovereignty. In parallel, Singapore’s latest defense agreement with China can be read within a framework of a balanced strategy that integrates both the U.S and China into Singapore’s foreign policy

calculations in an era of great power competition (Parameswaran, 2019). This type of diplomacy is also seen through Singapore's tactics of disseminating peacekeeping forces in different conflict zones in collaboration with the UN.

By the same token, Qatar seems to realize the importance of defense diplomacy amid the blockade, which entails that the small nation leans toward adopting an outlook based on an interplay between security and politics in which pursuing foreign policy objectives are guided by national security interests. However, Qatar's engagement with the UN in peacekeeping forces is not as highly visible as that of Singaporeans'. Regardless, more visibility could be achieved should Qatar seek to boost an image as an impartial and peaceful player. Through a growing set of defense deals with different powerful actors with joint military exercises, Qatar intends to build a perception of an ideational power targeting the strategic thinking of potential allies. Participant 1 argues:

“Qatar's C-17, for example, is a heavy lift aircraft, which is the biggest military heavy lift aircraft in the world while most countries have just a few. For instance, the UK and Germany do not have that much capability in that department and the Qatari Air Force has helped NATO to bring back some of the material from Afghanistan, just because Qatar has that capability ready to be used and it is already in the region. Something of this sort can obviously help a lot with building these partnerships”

Qatar's approach toward the establishment of military attachés in Washington London, China and Turkey is read within the growing realization of the effectiveness of this new form of soft power, where Qatar develops the potential to integrate it into a grand strategy within its foreign policy. This behavior seems responsive to the geopolitical changes in the region that require coping with the emergence of new regional players that seem to be integrated into the Gulf's security architecture. If built on further,

defense diplomacy can represent a tool for advancing international statecraft that contributes to the empowerment of the foreign policy of a small state that seeks to contribute to regional peace and security, particularly Qatar that reflects the possession of the perceived capabilities.

Section V: Lessons learned for Qatar

The exploration of areas of improvement and the potential tools for exerting soft power in Qatar's foreign policy makes it appropriate to derive lessons learned from past shortcomings and builds on the experience of Singapore that shares with Qatar many similarities, albeit, ranking consistently higher than Qatar in the Global Soft Power Index. These lessons are formulated through a combination of interviews, observation, and literature search.

This section aims to provide policy makers with a critical assessment of Qatar's foreign policy as a source of soft power and recommends ways for supporting or improving the soft power performance should an approach toward international relations is intended to be softer to project a long-term and sustainable influence. It should be noted that the main purpose of the comparative analysis laid out is to derive lessons learned from Singapore without noting what lessons the latter derives from the former since Singapore precedes Qatar in soft power ranking.

Lesson 1: Systematic foreign policy

Despite appearing positive that it is soft power rather than hard power that created name for Qatar, all participants agree that Qatar has many lessons to learn from the past. Responses show that the most prevalent lesson for Qatar is to demonstrate a consistent foreign policy and integrate information into a greater strategy to avoid ambiguous messages that affect its international credibility. Indeed, participants assert that whatever tool it targets, Qatar must develop a grand strategy to sustain it. More

importantly, Qatar is ought to direct endeavors toward finding its own niche area instead of distracting time and effort to be a hub for everything. Singapore has found its own niche, which is business and therefore, has been able to focus on directing its foreign policy to sustain this kind of financial powerhouse, forcing international key players to turn to the little nation as a first choice in Asia for investments.

Discussion: Apparently, there seems to be a growing sense that Qatar is keen on maximizing its soft power influence and therefore, it strives to leave a footprint on every soft power tool for this end.

However, this multi-dimensional approach often creates a reversed outcome that shows inconsistency of thinking. For this reason, the country is ought to focus on trends that are compatible with its strategic objectives. What appears to serve the foreign policy objectives ten years ago may no longer be as effective due to the changes in time and context.

For instance, when Qatar launched Aljazeera, the region was in dire need for an Arab voice at times of authoritarian constraints. Though the news channel seems unrivaled in the region, Qatar is not as responsive to the changes created by the rapid influence of new media, which has the ability to create damage for the state if mismanaged. This is manifested through the onset of the Gulf crisis, where the blockading states showed more awareness of the new media influence by disseminating systematic messages of wrongful acts by Qatar. This has made their public and other Arab countries who suspended diplomatic ties convinced of Qatar's alleged malign activities. It was only after a while did Qatar start to put the pieces together to appear systematic; an argument reinforced by the impression of interview participants. Since influence through media is a critical component of soft power, Qatar should exploit the power of the digital media should it wish to target public opinion. An innovative approach to the growing

influence of social media is key in keeping up with the pace of information age. This means intensifying investments in new media more than traditional outlets to tailor ideas and information in a way that effectively targets the younger segment that makes most of the world's population.

Lesson 2: More empowerment of women and youth

Two Gulf scholars draw attention to the empowerment of women and youth that plays to the augmentation of soft power. Participant 1 depicts a generational gap in Qatar that witnesses a growing segment of educated but frustrated young graduates who graduate with hopes and aspirations to work in powerful institutions as agents of change. However, they experience a cultural shock, where they are forced to work under older individuals who are not as well versed in their education and culture. This situation results in a growing disappointment amongst the youth who are not utilized to their fullest potential, which makes the country continue to import professionals from the outside to close the gap.

Discussion: Enabling the role of women in society can serve as an indirect contribution to the state's profile of soft power. This notion is referred to as engendering soft power where "there is a clear connection between women's inclusion and increasing prosperity and stability, and it seems that equality may also enhance nations' soft power" (Cameron, 2017). Qatar increasingly shows awareness of the contributing role of women to the performance of national economies and so, it has broadened the scope of female participation in several fields. A feature of the late-stage rentier state is a state being "responsive to societal needs" (Gray, 2011, p. 23), which seems to explain the behavior of Qatar.

Indeed, the blockade on Qatar has provided an opportunity for women to occupy leadership positions that used to be restricted to men in a patriarchal and conservative

society like Qatar. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has appointed its first female spokesperson, who played a crucial role in responding to the anti-Qatar media campaigns. In addition, the same period witnessed the incorporation of women in the legislative system, where the Shura Council has appointed for the first time three female members; a move that is reflective of the country's supportive efforts of women representation. In addition, Qatar has encouraged youth participation in the first parliamentary experience by developing legislations that broaden the scope of candidacy requirements enshrined in the Permeant Constitution through Article 80. The issued decree in 29 July 2021 allows individuals at the age of 30 to assume candidacy, taking into consideration the protection of their professional rights as civil servants. However, the comment of some interview participants reveal that Qatar's effort in integrating youth are still not visible to the public, which suggests a room for creating more incentives for the youth to join the public sector. One participant who has frequent exchanges with young Qataris confirms that many young graduates that are interested in becoming researcher are not incentivized at their work to pursue their higher education. According to him, this issue seems to be a continuous grievance by these young individuals in which the state needs to pay serious attention. For this reason, participants who stress on promoting education as a soft power tool in Qatar's foreign policy recommends that the Gulf Studies Center in Qatar University be sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to nurture Gulf scholars from inside the country. According to Tok and AlKhatir, most scholars who write about the Gulf are outsiders not living in the Gulf, which has the potential to reflect an inadequate reflection and analysis (Tok et al., 2016). Moreover, a literature search has shown that the British Council is in fact under the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs not the Ministry of Education, which reflects how education is salient in the UK foreign policy. Education

is a powerful soft power tool for Qatar that is yet to be expanded as a soft power component in its foreign policy should the country aspire to broaden its soft influence.

Lesson 3: Maintaining a neutral approach

Almost all speakers believe that should Qatar seek to improve its soft power image that resembles the Singaporean model, it ought to focus more on internal development. “Less politics, more development”, as participant 8 efficiently summarizes, is an approach for Qatar to consider for a softer appearance. In agreement with other participants, participant 8 also thinks that it is in Qatar’s interests to avoid polarization that fosters a situation where as a small state needs to choose between two bigger rivals. He invokes Switzerland as the only country that was not damaged in Europe by managing since the mid-19th century to present itself as a neutral state, “When Germany attacked France three times in 1870, in 1914 and 1940, Germany avoided Switzerland in three occasions, attacking France and avoiding Switzerland due to the latter’s cultivated neutrality”. Participant 5 supports this argument by emphasizing:

“The two crises that happened to Qatar, besides the clearly historical reasons, there was a reason of pursuing an active foreign policy. I am not saying that Qatar should become less active, but should rather become extremely careful in what is possible and what is not to recuperate its foreign policy according to the experiences it has gone through”.

In this context, Singapore has demonstrated an ability of balancing relations between China and the U.S, and between Malaysia and Indonesia in an effort to focus on delivering the message that Singapore is not part of any conflict. In this regard, two participants bring into light that the success and continuation of the Qatari mediation will depend largely to the extent of the latter’s neutrality that needs to be restored after years of having discrediting it by the biased position toward Arab revolutions. While

underlining the gains of capitalizing on mediation as a tool that creates a niche for Qatar, speakers note that Qatar's partiality would be challenged by the competition of some regional players who started to take mediatory roles in the same conflicts that Qatar once resolved.

Discussion: In soft power calculations, mediation offers small states a space to entertain their capability to contribute to peace and security by attempting to resolve conflicts. The reflections of the interviews drive to examining the concept of neutrality as a foreign policy approach and verify whether it gives more flexibility to assume mediatory roles.

Though similar in terms of being cornered in a tensed geopolitical environment with opposing demands of two larger competitors, Qatar and Singapore are different in their foreign policy as small states driven by the imperative of sovereignty and aspirations for recognition. Singapore is known for abstaining from taking sides or making statements in conflicts of which it is not part. This can be observed through refraining from criticizing the Chinese militarization in the South China Sea to prevent a confrontation between the two sides that could adversely affect their deep trade relations (Panda, 2020). By the same sense, Singapore never criticizes Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians due to the historical ties with Tel Aviv and their defense cooperation, while consistently provides humanitarian aids to the Palestinians through the verified channels; albeit tied spenders in comparison to Qatar (Kai, 2021). This is probated by the fact that Singapore, unlike Qatar, is not confined by the obligation to act within the Arab or Islamic framework.

Pursuing a balanced approach, Qatar has carefully designed its relations with Iran over the years taking advantage of the geographical proximity while seeming diligently wary of upsetting Saudi Arabia. "Qatar finds its maneuverability at times constrained by its

need to conform to the policies and resolutions adopted by the GCC” (Kamrava, 2017, p. 167). This dilemma has often put Qatar at odds with its neighboring countries, making it trapped between the resistance to antagonize Iran and the risk of disturbing the Arab brethren. However, Qatar’s turning point of behaving differently than Singapore is prevalent in the last ten years with showing support to particular entities amid Arab uprising without envisioning the feasibility of counterrevolutions. Facing an unprecedented blockade by four Arab neighbors, Qatar was pushed further and forced to seek help from Iran that provided an alternative for securing the livelihood of its trade route. In other words, while neutrality seems to dominate the discourse of Singaporeans to prevent tensions, Qatar’s discourse can be rationalized by a balancing strategy rather neutrality. Balancing permits the small state to exert a degree of flexibility, while neutrality is rather a fixed or permanent stance that does not permit a review of political positions related to the behaviors of other states. “The policy of neutrality is a static position, while the policy of balancing is a dynamic position” (Guo & Woo, 2016, p. 37) which entails that a neutral stance potentially limits the space for a state to maneuver and so, limiting the scope of tangible outcomes within mediation attempts. Whether Qatar can show more neutrality in the future to change any misconception regarding its credibility as a neutral party in conflicts it looks to mediate is worth a study. The key question remains whether bigger powers would allow such space for Qatar to enhance its mediatory role in the future, given the limitations in the small state’s capacity and personnel. Another challenge would be the regional competition exemplified through Oman, Kuwait and Turkey, the latter seems to be intensely present in the U.S-Taliban negotiations that witness a setback from time to time. This also draws attention to another challenge Qatar faces, which lies in the question of sustainability of the conflict agreements characterized by a “sign and go” attitude.

Nonetheless, Qatar demonstrates a clear interest as a small state with no agenda for expansionist ambition typical in big states' behavior, which still brings out Qatar as an honest broker trusted by superpowers. Since indicators show that mediation has become a pillar in Qatar's foreign policy, Qatar is ought to institutionalize the this soft power tool by possibly expanding the office of the Special Envoy of the Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar for Counterterrorism and Mediation of Conflict Resolution into a permanent department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This would ensure a long-term strategy that prepares the future generation to be skilled negotiators.

Singapore is advantaged with having strong diplomatic teams evident in hosting many centers tasked with training and enhancing mediation skills. The small state has become a partner in all international matters, even though observation reveals that it has been refrained from pursuing mediatory roles five years ago perhaps due to the imperative of neutrality explained earlier. An observation of the background of many Singaporean elite diplomats shows that Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs rarely assigns diplomats from military backgrounds. It can be argued that this approach reflects more of soft power behavior that is contrary to some states that are found to militarize their diplomatic corps with assigning diplomats from military backgrounds. Qatar has shown an attitude toward the latter approach post blockade by appointing ambassadors with military experiences to serve countries of a securitized mindset, driven the imperative of a realist perspective intensified after the blockade. This is understood to be part of the securitization of a foreign policy enforced after the Gulf crisis (Dogan, 2017). Nevertheless, this does not suggest that the country does not have room to invest in young diplomats to ensure a sustainable generation of diplomats in the future within a long-term strategy directed at strengthening human development.

Lesson 4: Influence through consistent values

Two participants explain that Qatar's political values have changed post-2012 from a proponent of democracy reflected in leaders' speeches to one that seems refrained from articulating it, which indicates an absence of a defined strategy for the emerging regional structure post-revolutions. Participant 1 argues:

“A long-term strategy would have meant that you had a plan for what would happen after the revolution and it was naive to think that once you overthrow a regime, you could just put a democratic system in its place and everybody would be happy. They would start voting, but it has not really happened and transpired in that way in any of these Arab Spring countries”.

Results suggest there is a persistent view that Qatar has lost credibility post-Arab spring, evident in the discourse it adapts when highlighting its position on regional conflicts that once began as revolutionary acts against Arab dictatorships. It appeared to support Arab revolutionary ideologies at the outset of revolutions but this approach has phased out over the years with the return of authoritarians in the region. A close observation at speeches articulated by Qatari leaders at international fora verifies a gradual refrain from using the term “Syrian revolution”, replacing it by “Syrian conflict”. This signifies that Qatar does not seem as vocal of the idea of revolutions, creating an impression of an inconsistent foreign policy that undermines its regional influence. This argument also gains validity by participant 1 referring to a “say-do gap” in Qatar's foreign policy. He argues that while presenters and journalists from revolutionary ideologies run Aljazeera, the foreign policy of Qatar no longer exhibits the same attitude today. This is a reason why another Qatari scholar describes Qatar's foreign policy as “partial” in which it changes every two or three years.

Discussion: A critical element of soft power is the way the political and cultural values of a nation appeal to the world, particularly to the common public. Values that represent a state have the power to either raise or undermine its international appeal. Examining the popularity Qatar has gained by embracing the notions of freedom, justice and accountability amid the Arab revolutions, it can be argued that the political values Qatar decided to endorse has formed a source of attraction and admiration of the small nation that chose people over their regimes. However, it appears from the participants' reflections that Qatar has not cautiously studied the implications of unstable political values on soft power. On the other hand, Qatar's image has gained a popular boost through the static position on the Palestinian cause amid the war in Sheikh Jarrah, through the intensive coverage of Aljazeera that shed the lights on facts on the ground veiled by other Arab media, whose governments have normalized with Israel. Prior to this, there was a rational view by observers that Qatar would resort to normalization with Israel in return for lifting the blockade that would be used as a political leverage by the Trump administration (Berni, 2021). However, Qatar's firm stance on anti-normalization attempts was a subject of admiration by Arabs and Qatari elites who were given the freedom and space to express their views against normalization, which has become almost a taboo in neighboring Gulf countries. It can be seen how political values reflected by a nation can either undermine or raise its dossier of soft power.

Lesson 5: Continue to detach Qatar from the rentier mentality

Scrutinizing the projection of values from a development point view and away from political lens, Qatar's blockade turned out to be a "blessing in disguise" offering Qataris a lesson on the importance of such values as self-reliance and productivity. Observing the Emir's national speeches, one can detect the constant emphasis on national values

and standards that indicate loyalty, by fighting indolence and dependency on others (Government Communication Office, 2018). The strength of national values of a particular culture is an integral part of its appeal acting as an indicator of an internal soft power. Therefore, Qatar would benefit from building on this experience by sustaining these tenets of a strong nation that gain international respect. Qatar has demonstrated a national cohesion and synergy between nationals and non-nationals, forming a solid social fabric.

However, this path is not void of unfortunate moments that seem to test the domestic comprehension of foreign policy. An accumulative monitoring of social media has shown some vocal grievances by the public in response to the generous foreign aids by the government at times of increasing public spending cuts as an emerging strategy of managing the economic implications of the pandemic. This has created a confusion conveyed amongst citizens, raising skeptics over the country's impacted revenues. The two opposing directions indicate an existing gap between the government's policies and public expectations. Therefore, Qatar could improve the communication of its decisions by aligning international narrative with national narrative. In other words, a part of building an internal soft power lies in enhancing the domestic understanding of soft power by clarifying the tenets of Qatar's foreign policy through the appropriate channels.

Discussion: The power of globalization is undeniable in affecting societies, forcing authoritarian governments to be more responsive to public opinion to maintain the desired level of social stability. Although characterized by being undemocratic, Qatar's foreign policy has nonetheless witnessed a progress towards political reforms accommodating public concerns.

The commencement of Shura elections activities revealed some flaws in the citizenship

law through intense cyberspace grievances over the exclusion of some tribes from elections (Lucente, 2021). However, the leadership shows tolerance and openness to manage these social concerns through offering a space for constitutional lawyers and elite writers to criticize in public spheres such legislations, which indicates a possible inclination by the government to review them. In this way, since the late-stage of rentier state suggests variables driven by the continuous nature of globalization, such move shows a level of good governance and transparency, which suggests another feature that can be added to the late-stage of rentier states.

Qatar today seems more responsive to domestic pressure; a feature that falls under the characterization of the late-stage model of a rentier state. In resistance to the negative consequences of globalization on a country's moral and Islamic values, Qataris furiously expressed bold statements against a lecture organized by Northwestern University (NU-Q) in Qatar to host a talk by a homosexual band. In fact, Twitter users created an Arabic hashtag "demanding the event be cancelled, with some accusing the band and NU-Q of encouraging views contrary to Qatari, as well as Islamic, values" (Al Jazeera, 2020). The government choosing to respond to an issue that has turned into a public opinion in a few days by cancelling the event shows a level of engagement between the state and society, which acts as an indicator of a mature rentier state that strives to sustain its investment on domestic soft power.

Singapore can be taken as a successful illustration in which the little nation has built a strong state based on values of openness and self-determination that uniquely define Singapore in its Asian continent. After gaining independence from its separation from Malaysia, it begun sowing the seeds of soft power at the domestic level in recognition of the importance to legitimize its actions in the eyes of its people first. Thus, the country took serious steps in combating corruption through a system of good

governance, cutting the way on any socio-economic unrest. According to The Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2020, Singapore attains a high score in corruption perception, marked as the 3rd least corrupted country at the global level out of 180 countries (Trading Economics, 2021). Participant 10 highlights that Singapore's success in public sector lies in "putting the right person in the right place". Likewise, Qatar scores highly in this area ranking 2nd among Arab states and 30th globally (The Peninsula, 2021). Qatar seems to anticipate further improvement in its score with the serious steps of fighting public corruption, last of which is exemplified through the arrest of the Minister of Finance allegations of misused power and public funds that went viral in the last few months (BBC, 2021). Leaders have expressed the country's genuine endeavors to combat corruption at the highest levels, which is accentuated through the abolishment of the law on immunity for ministers in determination to ensure accountability (Abdallah, 2021). This move is a tangible indication of a willing government striving to raise the level of transparency that boosts good governance as an integral part of a nation's soft power. Eradicating corruption contributes to enhancing a country's legitimacy in the eyes of its public, which positively resonates abroad.

Lesson 6: Appealing as less internationalized

Another area where Qatar can learn from Singapore is the impressive achievement in education as a world's class education. Participant 6 explains that Singapore "shares rather than imports education", criticizing the system of Qatar Foundation that looks more Americanized". She appreciates the Singaporean education system showing Singapore as "more domestically driven", noting at the same time that Qatar does not lack its own systems, but perhaps it was easier to bring institution to the ground to have it immediately implemented at a period driven by a process of rapid modernization. On

culture, the participant recommends that Qatar sell more authenticity to attract foreign tourists. As a foreigner, the participant explains that she is interested to enjoy sights of more desserts that reflect Qatar's cultural heritage and identity than green areas. As a European, she emphasizes that green scenery is not what a tourist desires to explore given that Europe is already blessed with such scenery, "Qatar is expected to have well-kept deserts not greenery". The participant appreciates the modern architecture of Qatar; however, the intense internationalization and westernization of touristic spots is not necessarily adding to its attractiveness. "As a tourist, I cannot connect with the concept of the Pearl and it is odd to see a small Venice here", she elaborates. At the same, she extends admiration for the National Museum and Souq Waqef, hoping to witness the growth of more to create the balance between modernity and authenticity.

Discussion: The reflection on culture and heritage throw light on another aspect of soft power that lies in the country's ability to boost tourism. Comparing Singapore with Qatar, the former seems more advanced as a tourist destination.

Participant 6 specifically comments, "It is far more advanced when it comes to Singapore because it had built certain parts of the city to become a tourist hub symbolized through the marina basins and this is what I am missing in Qatar. The reason why people visit Singapore is to see the Botanical Garden, the Sentosa, the gardens by the bay and all these shopping streets. It is not the mall but rather the street". The 2021 Global soft power Index shows that Qatar scored poorly in familiarity index (Brand Finance, 2020). However, the report expects this index to improve with more projects finalized in preparation for the World Cup that would visibly increase the sense of familiarity.

On cultural heritage, existing literature is not dismissive of Qatar's progressive endeavors that demonstrate awareness of modernization, which does not necessarily

reflect westernization. The attractiveness of a national culture is a form of soft power that contributes to nation branding. The city of Doha today is reflective of many historical sites that are structured and promoted to reflect the country's history and culture. For instance, the location of the Cultural Foundation "*Katara*" at the heart of the urban city, designed with a blend of modernity and tradition shows a diligent effort by the leadership to protect cultural identity from erosion in light of rapid developments emerging from the process of globalization. In addition to making the cultural village a destination of tourists through hosting art exhibitions, conferences and theatrical performances, the building of a huge exquisite mosque at its center portrays the attachment of the little nation to its Islamic identity in which it wishes to assert to the global audience. "Qatar is ruled by one of the youngest monarchs in the world, trying to keep the pace with the constant modernization, while keeping the social norms aligned to the conservative vibe of the region" (Zeineddine & Nicolescu, 2013). This careful consideration shown by the government to its citizens is a demonstration of a good governance that acts as one of the components of a strong city. It is an example of a country that "has rooted its nation in history and projected the state into the future" (Maziad, 2016). In this sense, it aims to attract a global perception that the country respects its customs and values and thus; making the people of the country subject to global admiration. In line with its national vision that aims to transform the country into a hub for various economic and cultural activities, Qatar launched the *Lusail City*, a project that represents a future epicenter of Qatar's heritage, merging modern traits with traditional norms in the design of its architecture. This project is intended to become a trusted investment hub that contributes to Qatar's national economy and social development. Moreover, *The Pearl* is a place with prestigious architecture that is attractive to both citizens and foreigners, where the symbol of the pearl seems to be

thoughtful to reflect the tradition of the pearling industry that used to be the backbone of Qatar's economy in the pre-oil era. Qatar aspires to illustrate how deployment of sea resources constructed the cultural identities of its society. Furthermore, the preservation of the national identity is exemplified through the launch of several museums and Qatar's National Library that emphasize the vision to enhance the quality of the young generation. This also confirms the awareness of the state of cultural diversity and multicultural understanding. In this way, cultural tolerance seems to consolidate the idea of co-existence between different cultures, which places Qatar as an emerging attractive international destination.

Despite acknowledgements of certain aspects of soft power such as attractiveness and prestige, some researchers assess that Qatar is found to limit its attractiveness in terms of the capacity to reflect historical and cultural sites, justified by the deficiency of the appropriate infrastructure, "injecting too much modernity" into its architecture (Brannagan et al., 2014). Participant 7 reinforces this perception of the Gulf in general, "what do you do to your heritage? You are moving so fast forward, are you forgetting your roots? Do you forget your pearl diving experiences?" He envisions an image that corresponds to Qatar's culture, recalling the perception France creates via Eiffel Tower as an attractive heritage. Observably, Qatar's effort of promoting its national culture and displaying historical sites seem undermined by an overwhelming random blend with globalized elements. For instance, a branch of Costa café is spotted at a strategic location at such a historic heritage as the Cornish. Another striking detection is the presence of Ralph Lauren at the heart of the National Museum, which appears to de-emphasize the visibility of such national value. The importance of cultural heritage for a nation can be best exemplified through the admired decision by Italy that prohibited the construction of a McDonald branch nearby the county's Ancient Roman Baths in

its determination to preserve cultural heritage (Isda, 2019). A lesson can be drawn for Qatar should it aspires to improve its ranking in soft power. The gaps illustrated above leads to the interpretation that Qatar's foreign policy is ought to take a more comprehensive approach in deploying soft power by integrating culture into a wider strategy that makes it salient in foreign policy. This approach would lessen the gap between the state's effort in defining its culture and others' perception.

Lessons 7: Advancing technology and innovation

Deriving a lesson learned from Singapore, almost all speakers are able to identify Singapore's ability to anticipate trends that drive its policy makers to invest in tools that look promising in the future, creating benefits for the country's soft power and security. They refer to the investments in technology and cybersecurity to cope with the challenges of twenty first century. This approach is driven by a realization that Singapore lacks natural resources that contribute to a nation's relevance in international relations. Therefore, it resorts to invest in other means to create a desired attraction by positioning itself as an innovation and intellectual hub. A Singaporean participant confirms that Singapore "constantly innovates and reinvents itself". Another one notes, "Singapore has become synonymous with high technology with a value added creation, something that Qatar is yet to pursue because it is still primarily focused on producing or exporting natural resources".

Discussion: Technology and innovation is a soft form of power that states pursue to provide efficiently unique services as part of driving economic transformation in a competitive region. Singapore maintained its ranking as "the world's second most digitally competitive country, after the United States", according to the 2020 report of the IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (Chang, 2020).

This position has brought out the little nation as a digital innovation hub through the

unparalleled distinguished digital trade that positions the country on top of its Asian neighbors. In pursuit of the vision of turning into a visibly smart nation, Singapore's commitment to the digital environment touches every aspect from transportation to education and urban planning, along with diligent search for innovative ideas. This transformative environment has created a niche area for Singapore as a major attractive hub for international businesses that enabled its enlargement.

Based on the report of the Economic Development Board, "80 of the world's Top 100 technology companies have business proceedings in Singapore" (Seah 2020). This illustrates the growing importance of digital diplomacy. One participant reveals that Singapore is working toward becoming a hub for digital currency driven by geopolitical rather than commercial aims, creating the potential to dominate Asian economy. By positioning itself as a safe portfolio of Asian investments, Singapore serves as a guarantor of Asia's capital in the face of unexpected crises. This impressive and well-planned revolution informs Singapore's ability to anticipate trends and respond to them effectively by exploiting innovative ideas, which makes other countries follow Singapore closely.

Qatar is one of those countries that realize the striking geopolitical similarities with Singapore. However, Qatar can be anticipated to gain a similar recognition by "putting the right people in the right place", because it has the right potential to invent soft power elements. In its effort to move away from the rentier economy, Qatar has pursued many economic diversification plans as part of its 2030 National Vision that places a great importance on technology and innovation as part of the economic transformation. Nonetheless, there seems to be a gap between what was intended to achieve ever since the publication of the National Vision more than a decade ago as Qatar cannot be argued to achieve a knowledge-based economy. While the outbreak of the global pandemic has

slowed down some of economic diversification plans, it can serve as an opportunity to scale up projects pertaining to technology and innovation in a time digital platforms gain more momentum. The more Qatar invests in this field, the more it represents itself as a soft power actor. Taking Singapore as model, Qatar could learn how to integrate the tools of soft power to the modern organism of international relations so that the salient tools are cultivated into the phenomena of digital diplomacy.

There is a relationship between digitalization and soft power as the former nurture the growth of the latter's instruments. However, the influence of the digital dominance is a double-edged sword leading to negative repercussions, explicitly the prevalence of fake news that influence the global narrative and produce digital inequality. In 2017, Qatar experienced this dark side of technology through the hacking of Qatar News Agency that was used as a pretext to the Gulf crisis. In regards with cyberspace, Qatar has signed a treaty with Singapore on cybersecurity last year, according to a diplomat participant. The determination to be responsive to this growing challenge of cybersecurity is translated through the Emir's initiative to host the cybersecurity conference to address the challenges of such a transnational issue, announced in the United Nations General Assembly at its 74th session (Gulf Times, 2021b). The growing challenges of the information age necessitates that Qatar deploy innovative methods by liberalizing its foreign policy from the constraints of conventional diplomacy, instrumentalizing trends of universal nature.

Strengths and Limitations of this Research Study

The major strength of this study was the ability to recruit a high number of top academic and officials (Ten) with a lengthy experience in the field of both academic and politics regarding foreign policy. Being able to recruit some experts who have written books on soft power and experts working with the same motive in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

has helped gather a vast area of knowledge and information from different perspectives. Another strength of the study was that although the COVID-19 pandemic prevented social and official gatherings, online video meetings one on one instead of focused group enabled the primary researcher to capture more information from each individual perspectives and all these add to the quality of the data collected during the interviews. Fortunately, the timings of the interviews could not have been any better. Although the preparations and planning were ongoing before the lifting of the blockade on Qatar blockade, all interviews coincidentally only occurred few months after the reconciliation of the Gulf dispute. Therefore, the results and data obtained were highly relevant to the effect of soft power and the ability of Qatar to display a success story for other small nations. Nevertheless, if the interviews were conducted prior to the lifting of the blockade, the theme of this thesis would have been entirely different. It would be to display how Qatar despite the ongoing multiple efforts from big neighboring countries still managed to defend and withstand and control the instability financially, economically and socially.

Despite having several strengths of this study, there are a few limitations to consider while interpreting the results of the study. The primary researcher of the study was a Qatari national and hence, there is a potential for some bias or shift in opinion that might favor Qatar. However, prior to the commencement of research and qualitative interviews, the primary researcher had studied the importance of not being inclined for or against a group, which can be considered partial. Therefore, all results and interpretations were made entirely based on participants' actual statements and opinions were presented based on objective information. The same strategy was used for the interpretation of the results where the research supervisor who is a non- Qatari was involved in coding of the qualitative data. Another minor limitation or that could be

actually a recommendation was that for the purpose of an enhanced understanding, this study could also include other small states which are higher in soft power ranking along with Singapore. However, due to time constraints, other countries such as Belgium and Norway could not be considered. In terms of size, they are a lot bigger than Qatar and belong in the European region. This is indeed would have been a larger project and would be better suited for a Doctorate program.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This thesis, titled “Soft Power Shaping the Foreign Policy of small states: a Comparative Study between Qatar and Singapore” explores the growing importance of soft power in foreign policy by arguing that while this concept is important for all states, it represents a first option for small states due to limited hard options. Both states are exemplifiers of power as ideational rather than factual concept, drawing on their similar internal and external factors that shape their foreign policy. The results of the study validate that soft power is crucial for all states, regardless of their classical definitions in international relations that relate to their physical characteristics. Considering the perception of power it can create, it is even safe to argue that soft power becomes an inevitability rather than an option for small states that aspire to secure a place in the international system and legitimize actions in a new world order characterized by the prevalence of a force of logic.

The thesis shows that the foreign policy of both Qatar and Singapore is shaped largely by soft power strategies with the aim for a long-term influence. This strategy seems to be a natural response by small states to offset their conventional limitations. Small states are cognizant that other larger powers have the potential to recreate their positions and define their status. Therefore, they resort to other means compatible with the uncontrollable forces of globalization that gave dominance to the power of information over the power of war. In a world of increased multipolarity and rapid dissemination of information, states are forced to innovate ways in foreign policy to convince the world of their actions. Since globalization gives rise to cultural contact, international relations are no longer confined to the contours of traditional diplomacy, enabling other forms of non-traditional diplomacy for expanding international outreach. The new feature of international relations dominated by digitalization allows for a greater role of soft

power, which seems to be beyond the direct regulation of governments. For this reason, a foreign policy that looks to take a softer approach to dealing with the variables of the twenty first century is ought to integrate other influential forces such as non-governmental institutions and multilateral organizations that mobilize for certain ideas and potentially convert them into long standing norms.

However, experiences are informative of warnings against the illusion of mistaking the huge potential of soft power with undermining hard power. Qatar and Singapore have only been given the space to exert soft power roles after strengthening internal security that allowed for the practice of autonomous foreign policies. This means reinforcing the internal front is a pre-requisite for entertaining other tools for exerting influence beyond borders. The thesis is not dismissive of the inherent limitation of soft power; nevertheless, it draws attention to man-made limitations that can result in intangible outcomes. As the results of the study reveal, soft power takes long to cultivate but can collapse in the blink of an eye if the right establishments are underestimated or uncalculated decisions are made or more critically, if the wrong people are put in the wrong place. The last gives significance to leadership as an integral component of a nation's soft power manifested in the visionary leaders with forward-looking thinking who founded the modern states of Qatar and Singapore. This makes the continuation of a country's soft power largely dependent on enriching the legacy of its founding leaders with whom soft power is accredited.

The relationship between a leader and the rise of its nation is hardly detachable, where leaders have the power to either improve or undermine a nation through the policy choices they make. Leadership acts as a source of power that is a detrimental element of a foreign policy trajectory. This impression is validated through the interview results that attribute the evolution of Qatar and Singapore's foreign policy to the vision of their

leaders. The successful transformation of Qatar and Singapore is a product of forward-looking leaders that set a lesson for many states that struggle to achieve economic prosperity and international influence. Both Hamad bin Khalifa and Lee have become synonymous with soft power, setting an example of how small states, progressed with big leaders that prioritized domestic development that founded a strong ground for a sustainably thriving nation. Both leaders have been the driving engine behind the international stature of their countries today.

Soft power is instrumentalized in small states' foreign policy through a number of tools and assets to reflect an international appeal and influence that serve national interests. The Global Soft Power Index identifies seven core elements of a nation's soft power: Governance, values, business and trade, international relations, culture and heritage, media and communication, and education and science. Qatar and Singapore seem to share similar tools for such projection shown in mediation, education and the instrumentalization of rules-based international organizations to vocalize issues and trends of national interests. However, it appears that Singapore makes use of its tools more efficiently and strategically than Qatar, where the tools of education and multilateral institutions are more salient in its foreign policy. While Qatar happens to possess more soft power tools than Singapore, the latter seems more advanced and articulate in promoting its foreign policy objectives with tangible outcomes. In other words, despite their strikingly analogous characteristics and some soft power tools in common, Qatar and Singapore seem to entertain these tools differently, with some more utilized than others. This assessment leads to a deduction that Qatar is yet to entertain some of these tools in a way that makes them more prominent in its foreign policy that can offer more room to incorporate these tools to achieve the standing of as a recognized soft power. While Qatar's foreign policy is extremely instrumental in media, sports and

international relations that include mediation and foreign aids, Singapore is more salient in business entrepreneurship, education and technology. The difference lies in finding the right tool for entertainment and integrate it into a wider strategy within the foreign policy framework.

Observation of results show that while it is anticipated that the most frequently identified soft power tool for Qatar would be Aljazeera, the interviews have shown that mediation has been more emphasized as an activity with which Qatar is more obviously branded. One reason could be is that Aljazeera has been fulfilling a purposed role at its peak upon creation, when Arab media was known for being government-sponsored. With the information age, this tool might have lost some of its momentum due to changes stemmed from globalization, which brings with it changes in trends. The matter of how trends can be echoed in the prevalence of each tool can be best exemplified through one participant who ranked the soft power tools of Qatar by recognizing defense diplomacy as the most visible soft power tool for Qatar post-blockade, seconded by international investments and then Aljazeera. This validates the argument on the varying influence of each tool over time. Another striking observation was that the same participant has ranked sports diplomacy fifth after education as he was of the view that sports is not a means to an end but rather a means in itself, suggesting the need to incorporate it into a broader strategy for a better realization. Another participant has drawn attention to the fact that education is the most effective soft power instrument for Qatar that has yet more potential to consolidate the country's image. Another interesting thought the interviews unveiled was the different assessment of soft power tools between diplomats and academics. While academics have noted education and sports as the most notably effective tools, diplomats have laid more emphasis on the supremacy of aviation diplomacy and mediation, which indicates that further effort

needs to be directed toward visualizing these tools through foreign policy.

More importantly, questions of interviews were formulated in a way void of anticipating the visibility of each tool to test whether there is a gap between how the existing literature ranks them and the actual perception of the targeted individuals who have been observers of the upsides and downsides of each tool. Accordingly, the most frequently elaborated tool and the first tool to be recognized by participants as a strategy initiate the soft power tools identified above for discussion based on their sequential prevalence.

The extent of how countries entertain each tool efficiently has the potential to raise their ranking in the global index of soft power. However, it is noteworthy that the criteria the global index sets seems to ignore the peculiar characteristics of each state by forcing universal values that are western-oriented. While many arguments refer to authoritarian political systems as limiting soft power appeal, others contend that soft power is not necessarily effective in all democracies. The argument of the potential of democracies to appeal to the world through liberal values seems to be undermined with the success of communist China that is ranked 20 in the 2020 Global Soft Power Index; it was not among the first 20 countries in 2020. On the other hand, the index shows the U.S dropping from the first time to the sixth for the first time, probably due to reputation damage resulting from the tough approach of Trump. At the same time, the index saw noticeable progress by small states in their classical sense as “the highest ranked new entrants” such as Iceland (30th) and Luxembourg (32nd) (Brand Finance, 2020). These examples do not only assert the advent of small states as recognized soft powers but also suggest an accepted outlook of de-westernizing soft power in the future, after failed attempts by western democracies to convince the world of their actions, intensified by the digital age. The horizontal power of the new media requires that government

develop a responsive attitude to national and international public opinion that determines the government's ability to shape preferences. In order to sustain a pragmatic foreign policy, governments are under constant pressure to explore new topics in diplomacy to respond to the nascent challenges of an interconnected world.

The U.S failure as opposed to Taliban's success in capturing the city of Kabul entails the waning image of the most powerful nation reinforcing the argument that size and military force pertaining to the growth of a hard power loses its relevance in explaining contemporary politics. The US has spent over trillions of dollars in training about 350,000 soldiers for twenty years and equipped them with the highest standards of military arsenal. Nevertheless, the world's greatest power has profoundly lost its war on terror to such as a non-state body as Taliban, raising doubts over the American ability and credibility of its alleged war on terror. The disturbing development in Afghanistan shatters the image of the American commitment of exporting democracy, enabled by abandoning its allies with what seemed as a blunder in policies. This paints an image of a shrinking American influence and attraction as a superpower. The growing cynicism over the U.S intentions and foreign policy drivers is on the rise among the general public that were once admirers of American leaderships that looks now faltering. One expert in U.S security programs reflects, "It is impossible to look back at the past two decades and not be struck by the degree to which a small band of extremists led by a charismatic outlaw managed to influence global politics" (Lahoud, 2021). This reflection seems to allude to the strength of ideological over physical forces, which empowers the small entity with legitimacy in the eyes of its supporters. One of the interview participants of this thesis refers to religion and ideology as an attractive soft power tool that could alter power calculations. It also demonstrates that Washington possesses all the potentials for success; albeit uses the wrong tools as it

appears to have used all tools that achieved no gains. Pallaver once stated, “militaries are well suited to defeating states, but they are poor instruments to fight ideas” (Pallaver, 2011, p. 13), which explains Taliban’s persisting influence in America’s foreign policy in particular and the world’s politics in general. It appears that soft power is a rising relevant device of this era. For small states, this device gains much appreciation given their lack of conventional potency in the global structure. Whether Qatar has made a foresighted and accurate assessment of its mediation capacities, making a bet on Taliban seems a pressing question given the level of success the little nation has reflected in making Doha a capital of resolving critical conflicts. Indeed, the international interest and praise Qatar has received after the American withdrawal from Kabul makes Doha indispensable in the political equation of big powers. The U.S transferring its post from Kabul to Doha for the former’s diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan, whereas Britain is using Doha as a channel to negotiate with Taliban on the safety of its citizens (Riley-Smith & Rothwell, 2021).

The notion of soft power is a dynamic concept that changes over time according to the medium of communication and the tools of cultural influence. Soft power is subject to rise and drop depending on the balance of the moral capital of the state that seeks to exemplify the role of a model as well as determining the extent of allocated budgets it invests that enables it to exercise influence. Any state, regardless of its status in the international system, is exposed to the failure of creating influence if it misreads political equilibrium or confuses it for illusory interests. This argument is reinforced by some interviewees confirming the diminishing attraction of the U.S that is thought of so far as the most influential country in the region. Indeed, they refer to the European Union as becoming increasingly influential particularly in North Africa, Iran’s expansion in the Middle East and Turkey that has stretched disproportionately, while

Russia is and China are also trying to reach that region. Therefore, one participant stresses on political will as a determining factor verifying that great powers today are not necessarily capable of wielding the role they assumed 30-40 years ago, which reflects a persistent gap in small states literature that requires a revised assessment.

Having delved into the soft power strategies of the foreign policies of Qatar and Singapore as small states, defining their resources and tools, and the way their influence is measured, the thesis concludes that these small states share demographical and geographical characteristics that shape their foreign policy. However, they also possess some peculiarities and opportunities that differentiate them from one another. Accordingly, the degree of their influence differs from one another by the differences in their cultural and political values and their capabilities to attract and build an international prestige. It seems each of them represents a center of attention and a subject of attraction to a number of countries in their respective regions. While Singapore relies strongly on its strategic resource as a business hub, Qatar relies on its leading position as a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exporter that makes it a vital international partner to many great powers. By exploring Singapore's soft power strategies salient in its foreign policy, drawing on its similarities with Qatar, many lessons can be derived to improve Qatar's ranking or sustain its soft power influence. Undoubtedly, Qatar possesses more soft power assets than Singapore but the latter seems to surpass Qatar as a soft power for many reasons. Most persistently, Qatar lacks coordination and a holistic approach to soft power that leads to an inefficient communication of messages. Singapore shows synergy between its respective agencies that reflects on a robust consistent strategy in the service of its foreign policy objectives, driven mainly by trade. Ever since the launch of an independent foreign policy, Qatar has invested in numerous soft power tools that reflect the relevance between soft power

and the state's progress in fulfilling its strategic interests. Yet, the gap between soft power and these interests can stem from unwise decisions related to the absence of a clear vision that is ought to be translated into a broader long-term strategy in foreign policy in addition to employing the wrong tool. It appears that Qatar's main issue revolves around ineffective communication of efforts that market for the country's foreign policy. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy must be developed by all parties involved in marketing for Qatar's soft power to assert a global weight through pursuing a more innovative approach to display its strategy abroad coupled with transparency that pushes the wheel of soft power.

Suggestions of future research

The thesis has focused on interviews with elite scholars from international backgrounds that serve its purpose of identifying areas of improvement in Qatar's foreign policy to maximize or even sustain its soft power influence by looking at a similar nation. Qatar's soft power would require a reassessment post-2022 World Cup to evaluate its popularity amongst the world's public. For this reason, other methods such as surveys that target other segments than scholars or diplomats would help identify any improvements pertaining to Qatar's image and familiarity. This would be paralleled with conducting a survey at the societal level to find out how the youth views trends and identity, which could inform soft power potential and limitations in de-westernized cultures.

Taking into account the conceptual theoretical framework of this thesis that intends to illustrate that soft power represents a first option for small states that wish to remain relevant to the international system, a potential area of research could assess whether other small states absent from this arena can actually perform it to gain a global notability. These highlights would also offer lessons for other small states that still

struggle to exert soft power influence.

Furthermore, since this thesis was confined to the examination of small states foreign policy as a source of soft power through comparing Qatar with Singapore, a future area of research could assess their hard power, taking into account their growing defense portfolio in a world driven by a realist perspective of international relations.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval





QU-IRB
Request for Ethics Approval
Research involving Human Subjects

طلب الموافقة الأخلاقية لمشاريع البحوث المتضمنة عناصر بشرية

Note to Applicants: Please provide all information requested below to avoid delays in processing. (put "N/A" where the information is not relevant or not required on your part)
يرجى استيفاء كل متطلبات النموذج لتجنب التأخير في الحصول على الموافقة (وضع عبارة "لا ينطبق" في حال كانت المعلومات المطلوبة ليست ذات صلة أو غير مطلوبة من جانبك)

Project ID:	رقم :		
المشروع		
Title of the Research Project:	عنوان مشروع البحث :		
<i>Soft Power Shaping the Foreign Policy of Small States: A Comparative Case Study between Qatar and Singapore</i>			
External Sponsor(s) / Collaborator(s):	المرعاة / المعاونون :		
الخارجيون		
Expected start date After the IRB approval	التاريخ المتوقع لبدء المشروع.....		
Expected end date Mid-March (upon finalizing data acquired from interviews)	التاريخ المتوقع لإنهاء المشروع.....		
A. Details of All Investigators تفاصيل جميع الباحثين			
Name & Department الإسم و القسم	PI الباحث الرئيسي Co-PI الباحث المشارك Others آخرون	Position الوظيفة (Faculty/Student/etc.) (عضو هيئة تدريس، طالب، باحث... الخ)	Previous and/or Current Training related to Research التدريب السابق و/ أو الحالي المتعلق بالبحث
Dr Mahjoob Zweiri	PI	Supervisor	
Aljohara AlObaidan	Co-PI	Graduate student	Advanced Research Methodology GULF500 Course
B. Lay Summary (Max 300 words) This should be accessible to non-scientist who is a member of the QU-IRB Specify the research problems this project addresses ملخص البحث (300 كلمة كحد أقصى) يجب ان يكون الملخص مفهومًا لأي غير المتخصصين من أعضاء مجلس المراجعة المؤسسية (IRB) بجامعة قطر قم بتحديد مشكلات البحث التي يتناولها هذا المشروع			

إقرار المتقدم بالطلب	
G.	Declaration Statement from the Applicant
<p>I confirm that all information reported in this application form is true and accurate. I agree to report ANY DEVIATIONS from the reported procedures and methodologies to the QU-IRB. I agree to maintain adequate records of all procedures. I agree to become informed and comply with the principles outlined in the "Handbook for Ethical Rules and Regulations;" as published by Qatar University and comply with all Acts and Regulations in the state of Qatar pertaining to the use of human subjects in research.</p> <p>أقر أنا الموقع أدناه أن جميع المعلومات الواردة في هذا الطلب صحيحة ودقيقة. وأوافق على الإبلاغ عن أي تغيرات أو تعديلات عن الإجراءات والمنهجيات السابق ذكرها إلى مجلس المراجعة المؤسسية (IRB) بجامعة قطر. كما أتعهد بالاحتفاظ بسجلات وأقنية لجميع الإجراءات، والإبلاغ على المبادئ الواردة في "دليل القواعد الأخلاقية واللائحة التنفيذية" والتي نشرتها جامعة قطر والإستقال لها ولجميع القوانين والأنظمة الخاصة بدولة قطر والتي تتعلق باستخدام العناصر البشرية لأغراض بحثية.</p>	
Name: Aljohara AlObaidan	الإسم:
Address: AlQaissoom. 827	العنوان:
Phone Nos.: 55853226	رقم الهاتف:
Email: 200659703@qu.edu.qa	البريد الإلكتروني:
Signature of the Applicant	توقيع المتقدم
	
Signature of the PI	توقيع الباحث
	
Date of Submission	تاريخ تقديم
13 December 2020	

Please do not write below this line. This part is for QU-IRB use only:

يرجى عدم الكتابة أسفل هذا الخط/هذا الجزء لإستخدام من قبل مكتب المراجعة المؤسسية QU-IRB

Received on:	Sent for Expedited review Sent to Members
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QU-IRB Decision:

EXEMPTION (from Full Ethics Review)	
Category of Exemption	
APPROVAL (ONE YEAR Only)	
Renewal Due Dates	
1 st	
2 nd	
3 rd	

QU-IRB Exemption/Approval No.: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson Sign./QU-IRB Stamp: _____ Date: _____



Appendix B: IRB Consent Form

Consent Form for Interview

IRB No.: QU-IRB 1463-EA/21.
IRB Approval Date: 18/1/2021

My name is Aljohara Al Obaidan, and I am a Graduate student conducting a study for my MA thesis under the supervision of Dr Mahjoob Zweiri.

The aim of this study is to explore the similarities and differences between Qatar and Singapore as small countries to identify gaps and address what Qatar lacks so that it maximizes its soft power potential and improve its ranking in global soft power index. It also intends to find areas of improvement in Qatar's foreign policy (or other tools or resources) by comparing it to a successful small power like Singapore in order to increase or sustain its international status. Subjects for the interviews will include at least 10 participants, divided between academics and senior officials of both Qatar and Singapore. For officials; their years of diversified experiences in the diplomatic corps will inform their views in foreign policy. As for academics, the researcher will approach academics with specialty in the Gulf region as well as those experts in Asia from different institutions who are well equipped with information by virtue of their academic knowledge and so, will be able to note similarities and differences.

As a part of this study, you are being requested to participate in an interview as your input will be of added value to this study.

Participation should not take more than 45 minutes of your time. Participation is completely voluntary. If you wish to refrain from answering any particular question, you may skip it. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

You will not be penalized in any way for deciding to skip a question or withdraw at any time. You also will not be affected professionally if you refuse to participate. There are also no direct benefits to you personally if you choose to participate. However, this research will contribute to a better understanding of Qatar's strength and weaknesses, threats and opportunities to be able to assess the soft power tools at its disposal.

I would like to audio record this interview to ensure that all the information you provide is accurately documented. In case the interview is conducted online, the camera will be turned off to avoid an accidental video recording. You may still participate in the interview if you do not want the interview to be recorded.

Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. The electronic data will be stored on a secure password-protected computers to which only the research team will have access. The audio transcription will be deleted after the completion of data analysis. As for the data analysis, it will be deleted after one year of the thesis publication.

Yes No

If Yes, signature _____.

Do you voluntarily consent to take part in the study?

Do you also voluntarily consent to this interview being recorded?

Yes No

If Yes, Signature: _____

If you chose to be interviewed, you will be given a copy of this consent form with your signatures.

Each respondent will be referred to as A, B, C ..etc., which will be used for all transcription of data from the interview forms. The identity of the respondent will only be known to the members of the research team who will keep this information completely confidential.

The study is approved by the Qatar University Institutional Review Board with the approval number QU-IRB 1463-EA/21; If you have any question related to ethical compliance of the study you may contact them at QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa

Contact information of the research team is as follows:

Aljohara Al Obaidan
Email: 200659703@qu.edu.qa
Telephone: 55853226

Dr Mahjoob Zweiri
Email: mzweiri@qu.edu.qa
Telephone: 4403 4703

If you have read, understood the above, and agree to participate in this study, please sign below:

Participant name in block letters:

Participant signature: _____

Researcher signature: _____

Date: _____



Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Questions of the interviews:

- A. General questions applicable to both Qatar and Singapore
1. Are you familiar with the term Soft Power?
 2. If yes, how would you define soft power? (If No, the researcher will read out the definition as mentioned in the Text book).
 3. Why do countries use soft power in their foreign policies?
 4. Is soft power important for small countries or big countries or size does not matter?
 5. What are the difficulties of small countries in implementing soft power?
 6. Do you think soft power is effective enough to create international influence?
 7. When do you think, soft power tools began to be applied in your country?
 8. What are the soft power strategies being used in your country?
 9. Are they effective?
 10. How would you rank the tools of soft power being used in your country?
 11. Which of these tools is most effective?
 12. How does your country rank in soft power?
 13. What are the areas on which your country should work more to improve its ranking in soft power?
 14. Do you see any areas where your country has a potential/opportunity to improve?
 15. What are the challenges that your country face today (other than COVID 19)?
 16. What are your countries priorities in the international agenda?
 17. Are international organizations important for your country? If yes, how/why?
 18. What are the most important international organizations for your country?
 19. What lessons can your country learn from other countries in terms of soft power?
- B. Comparing Singapore vs. Qatar.
20. Singapore is ranked 21st and Qatar is ranked 31st in the global soft power index, what do the two countries share in terms of soft power tools?
 21. Some experts say Qatar is rich and uses hard power to exert its influence! Do you agree with this statement?
 22. Can you identify shortcomings or areas of improvement of soft power in Qatar foreign policy in terms of (tools and resources)?
 23. What lessons can Qatar take from a successful country like Singapore that is ranked 21st in global soft power index?
 24. How can Qatar maximize soft power potential to sustain its influence in the international system?
 25. What suggestions do you have for small countries that are not able to exert soft power?



Appendix D: Data Coding in MAXQDA

Code System		
Code System		450
small country use the soft power in a wrong ...		1
01 Definition		12
Familiar with Soft Power		9
Assessment		0
Singapore		8
Branding Singapore		5
Areas of improvement		2
Potential tools		0
Qatar		15
Branding Qatar		12
Areas of improvement		31
Potential tools		22
Singapore's international priorities		6
International organizations for Singapore		10
RED		8
Comparison with Singapore (foreign policy)		23
Technology and innovation		2
Mediation		2
Neutrality		1
Economics/Business		5
Education		3
Lessons for other small states		17
Lessons for Qatar		48
Qatar's international priorities		35
Smart power		8
Qatar's soft power tools		12
Ranking soft power tools for Qatar		8
Public diplomacy		1
Investments (QIA)		3
International Aids		1
LNG		3
Education/Culture		10
Qatar Airways		3
Mediation		8
Qatar's soft power tools		12
Ranking soft power tools for Qatar		8
Public diplomacy		1
Investments (QIA)		3
International Aids		1
LNG		3
Education/Culture		10
Qatar Airways		3
Mediation		8
Sports		10
Media		13
Soft power influence		31
Crisis management		3
Challenges of small states in implementing so...		23
Challenges facing Singapore		6
Challenges facing Qatar		17
Soft power use in FP		13
Sets		0

