

Contributions to International Relations

Nawaf Al-Tamimi  
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# Qatar's Nation Branding and Soft Power

Exploring the Effects on National  
Identity and International Stance

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# 1

## Introduction

**Abstract** This chapter presents the introductory remarks about the book and its content. In so doing, the chapter describes the blockade of Qatar and the ways in which Qatari government reacted to it. The authors describe different analytical perspectives and arguments put forward to understand Qatari policies in order to respond to the blockade. The chapter ends with an overview of the content of different chapters and the organization of the study.

**By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:**

- Understand the motivation behind writing this book
- Learn about different questions about the role of Qatar in the region
- Learn about our analytical perspective throughout the study
- Know about the content of different chapters of the book

From the outburst of the crisis with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates in May 2017, Qatar's diplomacy was identified as calm, confidence, and balance (Al-Tamimi & Amin, 2019). The observer cannot understand the diplomatic approach of Qatar in dealing with all stages of the crisis, from explosion to siege without realizing the behind the scenes facts (Al-Tamimi & Amin, 2019). Blockading countries planned to blow the crisis up under the cover of darkness, before the dawn of May 24. Nevertheless, Qatar could absorb the shock and awe of the first strike unsurprisingly. Scholars believe that the country's diplomatic performance was characterized by five main factors that helped Qatar to deal with the crisis successfully. These factors include the failure of the element of surprise, years of building

Qatar's nation brand, Qatar's arsenal of soft power, international alliances, and the opponents' quandary. In this book, we discuss how nation branding and creating a national brand assisted Qatar in absorbing the shock and awe. In this chapter, we first present a brief note about Qatar and its role in the region. Then, we briefly describe the content of various chapters of the book.

## 1.1 Qatar and Its Role in the Region

The role of Qatar in the political landscape at regional and international levels has been a controversial topic for politicians, journalists, and people interested in world politics in general and the Middle East in particular. Specifically, these debates and controversies raise whenever political activities escalate in the Arab region. This preoccupation with the Qatari case is not restricted to Arab, regional, political, or media circles. The corresponding circles in other contexts such as the United States, Europe, and the Far East follow the Qatari case with much attention. Since 2011, popular revolutions and events have taken place during this period of time, which were unprecedented in the Arab region in terms of their quantity and quality. Along with these changes, politicians and specialists have questioned the role of Qatar in the region. The examination of the role of Qatar is no longer confined to politicians and elites engaged in public affairs and has gone beyond the political, cultural, and media forums and platforms. It is now an issue discussed in public forums and a topic for talk among ordinary citizens.

## 1.2 Our Analytical Perspective

The present study was done to address two main problems/objectives. As noted earlier, the first objective of this study was to present the new forms of the questions and answers about the role of Qatar in the recent period. Additionally, the second objective of this study is to provide a different approach that views the Qatari case from the perspective of the science and the art of nation branding. Here, it would be useful to recount the most important ongoing debates in political and cultural circles first. In so doing, we do not aim to go into the details about the truth or accuracy of these debates and we do not purport to examine the depth or superficiality of these arguments. These four types of arguments (or debates) are as follows.

### 1.2.1 The First Argument

Those who hold this view argue that since the 1980s, the international superpowers (e.g., the United States), as the most influential power in the region, have developed a new strategy based on the idea of establishing and strengthening the power of new countries in the region to replace the traditional powers (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Algeria). This was mainly done to let emerging powers play a strategic role in protecting the interests of the United States as well as in influencing the general atmosphere in the region by using the tools of soft power. This Western-American idea was reinforced after events such as the decline of the Egyptian role, the international powers' concern over the ineffectiveness of the Saudi role, the absence of the Iraqi role, the declining role of Algeria, and the disputed role of Syria. Supporters of this idea argue that the US administration deems it necessary for the emerging powers to play their role through soft power, away from the traditional hard power approach that may raise the concerns of Israel and other countries in the region. Also, there is an idea that the US administration experienced "when they got the taste of their own medicine" as they armed Saddam Hussein's regime. The lessons that the US administration learned from this experience made it more in favor of the soft power choice. Therefore, supporters of this theory argue that this atmosphere paved the way for the emergence of the role of Qatar. They refer to Qatar's employment of public diplomacy and public relations tools reinforced with the superpowers' military and political support as the arguments for this claim.

### 1.2.2 The Second Argument

This second argument is probably driven from political references including theoretical, academic references. It interprets the role of Qatar as a state engaging in self-defense. Since the early 1990s, Qatar has had major concerns about its stability as an independent state. As such, this analysis argues that Qatar was prompted to search for a regional role to protect itself from the risk of being devoured unexpectedly without the attention of the world that does not care about small states and entities, especially when they pay the price of any conflict between regional and external powers (e.g., United States and Iraq—United States and Iran).

### 1.2.3 The Third Argument

The third line of argument accepts that a rich country such as Qatar could have some role in the regional situation. The small Gulf state currently occupies third place worldwide in terms of proven reserves of natural gas after Russia and Iran. In 2020, natural gas production in Qatar amounted to around 171.3 billion cubic meters. Qatar has about 63% of the total gas reserves in the Gulf. This analysis argues that there is no doubt that money is capable of making a role for Qatar, enhancing its influence and adding it to the list of regional players, whether by using money as carrot or as a tool of pressure. All these attempts seek to provide answers to questions revolving around the role of Qatar.

In this volume, this book aims to examine Qatar's role in the region and all questions related to this role through the lenses of the nation brand. We also aim to provide explanations for the success of Qatar in absorbing the "shock and awe" in the early stage of the last Gulf crises. In so doing, we present various arguments how establishing a nation brand helped Qatar to deal with the crisis successfully.

## 1.3 Structure of the Book

This book has been planned in several chapters. Chapter 1 presents the statement of the problem and the authors' theoretical stance. In this chapter, diverse views and analyses held by different parties about the role of Qatar in the region and in the international arena are presented.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical frameworks and scientific underpinnings of the study. Specifically, this chapter starts with the notion of soft power and explanation of different types of power. To this end, the authors provided their theoretical and operational definitions of soft power and clarify different resources and tool that states employ to create soft power. Building on the notion of soft power, the authors introduce the concept of nation branding. Different definitions for nation branding are given in this chapter, and a historical overview of how nation branding developed in the past three decades is presented. Moreover, the differences between product brands and nation brands are described in detail, the reasons for creating nation brands are discussed, and the parties that are involved in nation brands are mentioned. Chapter 2 also presents the notion of public diplomacy and different theoretical issues related to public diplomacy and nation branding. The second

chapter also states the theory of small states and the importance of nation branding for small states. Throughout the chapter, the authors present theoretical frameworks so as to help the reader to gain a better understanding of the notion of nation branding. This is done to pave the way for different profiles through which Qatar established its nation brand.

Chapter 3 presents a description of Qatar, its geopolitical background, and presents the Qatar Vision 2030 in detail. This chapter describes Qatar in terms of geography, financial status, etc. Next, Chap. 4 also describes the process of building a nation brand for Qatar. In other words, this chapter discusses what made Qatar think in building a shield of smart power (hard and soft). In the rest of the chapter, we describe different tools that Qatar used to build its smart power. In this regard, we first explain Qatar's political profile. Then, we go through Qatar's economic profile and how elements such as natural resources, development of economic infrastructure, Qatar's economically beneficial relationships, and foreign investment portfolio helped with establishing a nation brand. Next, we discuss the media profile of Qatar and how the Al Jazeera network played an important role as a tool in the arsenal of defense for keeping stability and steadfastness of the state of Qatar against conflicts in the region. Next, we describe Qatar's sport, educational and cultural as well as humanitarian profiles, and their role in establishing a nation brand and gaining soft power. We explain how hosting different sport competitions and development of cultural and educational institutions such as Qatar Foundation and Education City contributed to the development of Qatari nation brand. We also review Qatar's civil society initiatives and charities and how taking part in humanitarian activities produced a brand of legitimacy for Qatar and the ways in which it helped support Qatar's foreign policy which is mainly to consolidate peace and stability.

Chapter 5 views the blockade of Qatar from a new angle and examines its effects on the psychological states of Qatari people. In this chapter, we review recent studies on the effect of blockade on national identity and well-being of Qatari citizens. Moreover, we examine the use of social media in Qatar, and we examine how social media were used during the blockade.

Finally, in our last chapter, we explain how Qatar was, unsurprisingly, able to absorb the shock and awe first strike after the political issues that raised in 2017. We elaborate on the various reasons for Qatar's successful management of the crisis and explain how establishing a nation brand functioned as a shield to protect Qatar from the damages caused by external powers and blockading countries.

## Reference

- Al-Tamimi, N., & Amin, A. (2019). Qatar's nation brand: Facing the regional challenges. In H. Alkhateeb (Ed.), *Qatar: Political, economic, and social issues* (pp. 1–12). Nova Science Publishers.

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# 2

## Terminological Definitions

**Abstract** This chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings for the book. First, soft power is defined and related issues to soft power are discussed. Next, the chapter introduces the notion of nation branding as an important asset in responding to political challenges. Moreover, the chapter presents different theoretical underpinning and empirical findings related to nation branding. Finally, the chapter explains public diplomacy and its relationship with soft power and nation branding.

**By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:**

- Develop an understanding of soft power concept
- Learn about the aim of soft power
- Develop an understanding of nation branding concept
- Learn about public diplomacy and its similarities and differences with nation branding
- Identify nation brands from product brands
- Learn about the notion of public diplomacy and its interactions with nation branding

### 2.1 Soft Power

The notion of soft power was originally conceptualized in 1990 by Joseph Nye, the American university professor at Harvard University, in a book titled *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power, Soft Power*. The

introduction of this notion to the international relations literature created significant changes in the academic discourses about power. While Nye's book was originally written to address the role of the United States in the world and the forms of power it utilized in the past, the concept of soft power soon expanded to other countries and areas. Nye (1990, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c) introduced a new facet to the definition and understanding of power which is the fact that the sources of power have changed. Nye (1990) argues that since the world is characterized by exhibiting increasing interdependence, states have to adapt to the limitations of military power. As such, he believes that states should utilize all of the tools that are available to them to leverage their influence. Nye proposes that due to the changing world, factors such as geography and population are becoming less central; on the other hand, elements such as culture, institutions, technology, education, sports, and ideology play an important role in assessing the power of a state.

### 2.1.1 Nye's Conceptualization of Soft Power

Nye (1990) defined power as "ability to do things, control others to do what they would not necessarily do" (p. 154). While Nye (1990), akin to other theoreticians such as Cline, Knorr, and Morgenthau, considers power as "the possession of resources is more practical than in terms of the behavioral definition of power" (Nye, 1990, p. 26), he offers a new schema for sources of power that is more in accordance with the new developments in international relations and international environment. Nye sees powers as a continuum ranging from hard power to soft power. Hard power is viewed as "command power," whereas soft power is considered as "co-optive power." The former end of the continuum corresponds to the use of coercion, and the latter reflects the use of attraction.

Along the continuum, Nye considers other behaviors including inducement, agenda-setting, and attraction. Nye believed that a state might gain the outcomes it wants to see in the world because other states have agreed to the system that creates such outcomes. As such, it seems essential to structure the situations and plan the agenda so that the other countries change in particular situations and particular directions. Nye calls the aspect of power that leads to getting other want what you want co-optive power. This is in contrast to the active command behavior in which a state gets another state do what it wants. In other words, co-optive power is concerned with presenting one's ideas attractively and setting the agenda in world politics so that "shapes preferences that others express" (Nye, 1990, p. 32). Later, in 2004, Nye provided a better

distinction between hard power and soft power by including coercion and inducement on the hard power end of the continuum and considered that using tools such as military force and sanctions as execution of coercion. He also thought of bribes, aid, and payments as inducements. On the other hand, Nye put agenda setting and attraction under the soft power end of the continuum. To Nye, institution building was considered as an agenda setting strategy, and employing culture, values, and policies were among the resources for building attraction.

From 1990 to 2004, Nye's description of soft power changes slightly. In his book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* published in 2004, Nye describes soft power as:

- The ability to shape the preferences of others
- Getting others to want the outcomes that you want
- The ability to attract (pp. 5–6)

Moreover, in his classification of different forms of power, Nye (2004a, 2004b, 2004c) identifies three types of power. The first one is military power that is characterized by behaviors such as coercion, deterrence, and protection. The primary currencies of military power are threats and force, and the government policies using military power might include war, coercive diplomacy, and alliance. The second type of power, according to Nye, is economic power which exhibits behaviors including inducement and coercion whose primary currencies are sanctions and payments. The government policies for economic power may consist of aid, bribes, and sanctions. Soft power, as the third type of power to Nye, is characterized by attraction and agenda setting. The main currencies for soft power are culture, values, policies, and institutions. The states who employ soft power employ public diplomacy and bilateral and multilateral diplomacy to pursue their goals.

As mentioned above, soft power uses different resources to create attraction. One of these resources is the values of a state. As Nye notes, the values that a state advocates can be indicated via official announcements and most importantly through the actions that the state does. Values can result in attractiveness only when the beliefs are expressed consistently, and the actions are taken to follow those values. Nye (2004a, 2004b, 2004c) believes that the degree to which a state adheres to its values can influence the credibility of that nation. To be more precise, high adherence to the values can corroborate the credibility of a nation, whereas low adherence can undermine the state's credibility. It is believed that states which support globally shared values such as peace and human rights would probably have higher levels of attractiveness

(Feizi, 2018). In contrast, egoistic, arrogant, and hypocritical policies are likely to weaken a state's soft power (Feizi, 2018; Nye, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c).

Culture is the second resource with which soft power creates attractiveness. Culture can consist of a wide range of attitudes, traditions, and ideas that typify a society. Culture can be attractive when people from other nations and contexts interact with the culture of the target country through business trade, tourism, international education, etc. It should of course be mentioned that Nye does not discuss qualities and characteristics that make a culture attractive. The next resource for soft power is policies. National and foreign policies are a tool for promoting attraction when they are in accord and consistent with the standards and norms of the international community. To Nye, foreign policy is particularly important because "both the most volatile and the most susceptible to government control" (Nye 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, p. 68). Finally, playing an important role in international institutions is the fourth resource for creating attraction. By having a strong role in international institutions, a country can influence the preferences of other countries and states. Moreover, positions in international institutions can create opportunities for agenda setting, which is another strategy employed by soft power.

### 2.1.2 Gaining Soft Power

While many nations might possess the resources needed for soft power, Nye asserts that having the resources is not enough and particular actions and behaviors need to be undertaken to translate the resources into soft power. In this regard, Nye outlines three focal criteria that increase a state's soft power (Feizi, 2018; Nye, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). These three elements are:

1. Nations gain soft power when their culture closely fits dominant global norms (e.g., autonomy, pluralism).
2. Nations achieve soft power if they are seen credible because of their domestic performance and active role in the international arena.
3. States can obtain soft power provided that they have sufficient communication challenges to affect how issues are framed.

As mentioned earlier, one of the key strategies for gaining soft power is agenda setting. In this respect, Nye believes that effective use of institutions can significantly assist in setting the agenda they want. In other words, Nye considers a country's behavior as a major element in agenda setting. The second behavior associated with soft power is attraction. Nye believes issues such

as that daily communication, strategic communication, elaborating on the state's domestic and foreign policy decisions, and keeping relationships with others over time via training, scholarships, conferences, seminars, exchanges, and access to media can significantly affect attraction (Nye, 2004b).

Soft power is important for small states in that it can bring them advantages such as security, popularity, and global significance (Stokke, 2010, 2012). Past evidence indicates that several countries have obtained influence via the implementation and exercise of soft power. For example, the United Kingdom, even though it faced major issues such as Brexit, has used media and entertainment through cultural research and global engagement. Moreover, Japan has used its technological advancements to emphasize its cultural and industrial influences. Other studies such as the Netherlands and Sweden have gained soft power through their educational institutions and innovation and investment opportunities, respectively (Karki & Dhungana, 2020). Finally, some others believe that the liberal image of the United States has been one of its key tools for the exercise of soft power.

## 2.2 Nation Branding

Every nation or country has a compound of historical and contemporary associations that can be used to promote a nation's image in the world (Fan, 2006). The study of how different techniques can be used to develop a nation's image is studied under the notion of nation branding. During the past few decades, several scholars have tried to define nation branding. Table 2.1 presents some of the definitions presented for nation branding since 2000.

In one of these widely cited definitions, Fan (2006) defines nation branding as “applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation's image” (p. 6). Fan (2006) believes that nation branding can be interpreted in several ways. According to Fan (2006), nation branding, at the simplest level, is synonymous with product-country image in which the name of the country or its logo is used, either by companies or organizations, to highlight the country of origin. In this type of branding, the main objective is to utilize a nation's image to encourage sales or exports. A second type of nation branding is to the country or a city in the country as a tourism destination. This type of branding is called place branding and is considered an element of tourism marketing. The aim of place branding is not only to attract tourists and visitors but also to pave the way for foreign investment, settlement, and job creation (Fan, 2006). In politics, governments manipulate the country's image so as to cope with those of enemy countries.

**Table 2.1** Common definitions for nation branding

Scholar	Definition
Kotler and Gertner (2002)	The sum of beliefs and impressions that people have of that place. The image represents a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are the product of mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts data of a place
Anholt (2005a, 2005b)	The nation brand is the sum of people's perceptions of a country across the six areas of national competence: The cultural, political, commercial, and human assets, investment potential, and tourist appeal. The process of creating a certain "brand" for a particular country, formulating it in audio and visual messages and relationships, and transmitting them to the outside world through various means and channels of communication
Florek (2005)	The process of establishing positive association for the nation itself, its people, and its products
Fan (2006)	Nation branding concerns applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation's image. Nation branding counts several sources as its "parents," including country of origin, destination branding in tourism, as well as public diplomacy and national identity
Fetscherin (2010)	A country brand belongs to the public domain; it is complex and includes multiple levels, components, and disciplines. It entails the collective involvement of the many stakeholders it must appeal to. It concerns a country's whole image, covering political, economic, social, environmental, historical, and cultural aspects

Source: Hao et al. (2019, p. 3) and Feizi (2018)

### 2.2.1 Nation Branding: The Origin and Developments over Time

Nation brand or branding was first conceptualized by Simon Anholt and Wally Olins in the 1990s. Anholt and Olins developed the notion of nation branding to interpret the practical application of building a unique mental image for a particular country and conveying this image to other countries and peoples of the world. They proposed that this application may employ the tools such as public diplomacy, trade, tourism, media, public relations, marketing, and humanitarian initiatives to make national identity tangible, powerful, and useful to others (via forming relationships based on interests) and to transmit this national identity through channels of communication (Anholt, 2007).

In its early stages, the cognitive theory of nation branding emerged from the literature and theories of marketing science and art, to encourage states and nations to deal with programs and plans of economic development from

a marketing perspective that involves competition. Nations have to improve the level and quality of economic development and convert themselves into marketing tools able to attract and maintain foreign investors, tourists, and outstanding human resources (brains). Thus, the process of nation branding is important to support sustainable national development and to enhance the competitiveness of the state both locally and internationally. In 2004, Nye suggested that this view has prompted many countries to develop a process of “nation branding,” as a tool of soft power, in the context of their political strategy. This was notable after the end of the Cold War, the dismantling of the bipolar system, and world politics’ attempt to replace the traditional struggle of balance of power with tools that are suitable for the concepts of the free world and open competitive markets.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the concept of “nation brand” has correlated with the concept of “globalization.” The process of nation branding turned into an important method or approach in formulating the values of national development, improving the quality of individuals’ lives, and improving the conditions of the state’s competitiveness in the global markets. In this regard, Szondi (2008) believed that nation brand has become a powerful and effective tool that enables the nation to invest its national resources in preserving its national values. Some even consider using soft power to build a nation as an essential component of the nation’s power in the global system. In fact, the end of the Cold War and the international community’s conversion into globalization has contributed to the evolution of the concept and applications of nation brand. On the one hand, the emerging states, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, and the collapse of the socialist camp, tried to create new national brands that reflect and reinforce their independence so as to find a place in the international arena. On the other hand, the new international reality produced other forms of economic and non-economic differences between nations. Such differences have deepened in many cases, generating political, cultural, and social conflicts that threaten the independence and stability of many peoples and nations. Therefore, many countries realized the importance of national brand in protecting their identity and existence, while other nations found that a nation brand reinforces the elements of their soft power. Additionally, powerful countries found that the national brands assisted in enhancing their competitiveness and strengthening their political influence. On the other hand, some countries considered nation branding as a robust solution to bridge the gaps between peoples, to end conflicts, as well as to provide better economic opportunities and cultural climates for citizens and nations alike.

Of course, it should be mentioned that soft power should not be confused with other concepts such as national branding. One important point is that soft power includes issues such as nation branding and public diplomacy in itself. However, soft power is specified with unrestricted actors involved in itself. In fact, everything can be implemented via soft power “even the thing that in the first glance seems as not proper for a soft power but is included in the framework of soft power by the method used there” (Haxhimehmeti, 2015, p. 399).

Since 2005, Simon Anholt has devised an index to measure the brand of a nation through an annual mail survey, involving 10,000 participants from 20 countries around the world. The index includes a list of 50 countries and was developed by a partnership between Simon Anholt and GfK, the American market research organization. Since 2008, the index has become known as the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index. The index includes among Middle Eastern countries Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The Anholt-GfK Index measures five elements: exportability of the nation’s products, governance, culture and people, tourism and immigration, and the size and attractiveness for foreign investment. The 2010 results of the index, for example, clearly showed that the following countries were in the top ten ranks: the United States, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Sweden. Smart states, just like smart companies, aim to go beyond their acquired identity and their stereotyped mental image to create an exceptional and distinctive national brand that results from the interaction of all elements of the country’s image in the minds of the international community. These elements include people, geography, culture, language, history, cuisine, fashion, figures, and famous brands.

Many Eastern European countries sought to create a national brand, particularly states that emerged as independent political entities after the collapse of the socialist system and the Soviet Union. These states include Poland, Latvia, Croatia, and Bulgaria. Other countries aimed to create the nation brands to enhance the morale of its citizens, strengthen their competitive position, and reinforce their presence on the international scene. South Korea, Britain, Ireland, Australia, Norway, and Finland are among such countries. However, one of the most pressing experiences in this regard belongs the post-apartheid South Africa, which has been engaged in the process of creating a national brand since the mid-1990s to achieve basic objectives including:

1. Ending the state of division that took root in society over the long decades of apartheid policies



2. Consolidation of social security and elimination of social ills that have penetrated the structure of society, such as organized crime, the spread of drugs, and the resulting serious social phenomena, like the spread of deadly diseases such as AIDS
3. Revitalizing the national economy and the rehabilitation of infrastructure and the associated opportunities to provide more jobs and reduce unemployment
4. Restoring the confidence of the international community and restoring its place on the world map as an emerging state that is capable of playing a global role, particularly with respect to conflict resolution and ending civil or intra-continental war in the black continent
5. Encouraging and attracting foreign investment by creating a safe and attractive environment for investment (source: [www.gcis.gov.za](http://www.gcis.gov.za))

In order to achieve the above objectives, special committees were formed and dozens of public meetings were held involving components of the state and society, such as departments of public and private institutions, civil society organizations, and citizens. The task of the committees in charge was divided into two categories: first, to develop a national communication strategy to regulate the mechanism and channels of communication between the state and its citizens. The second category was to create a national brand that introduces the new South Africa to the outside world. The most prominent event in the context of building the national brand was hosting the football World Cup in 2010. It was an event and occasion to show the achievements of South Africa in building a modern state to the world, introduce it as a country safe for and ready to attract investment capitals, and identify it as a country capable of playing an active role in the international arena.

Recently, the field has witnessed a decline in the evolution of the concept of nation branding. The most concerning fact for researchers and practitioners in the field is that some of the nation brand theorists, Simon Anholt at the top of them, have recently criticized the very concept of nation brand. In his writings and seminars, Anholt has repeated that nation branding does not exist and that what is commonly mentioned about nation branding is nothing but pure illusion. He claimed that “To brand a country is vain, naïve, and foolish.” Instead, in his writings, Anholt promoted another concept, “competitive identity,” which he described as the new concept of improving the competitiveness of a nation through the employment of public diplomacy and brand management. Nevertheless, Anholt still uses the concepts of brand and nation brand on his website to distinguish between these and other concepts such as advertising, marketing, public relations, and public diplomacy.

Whatever terminology used, the idea of nation branding seems to remain as an important aspect of executing soft power as well as an essential tool for success in global markets.

### **2.2.2 Differences Between Nation Brand and Product Brand**

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines brand as “a class of goods identified by name as the product of a single firm or manufacture” and as “a public image, reputation, or identity conceived of as something to be marketed or promoted.” Moreover, brand, according to the definition by the American Marketing Association (AMA), refers to “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition.” Nonetheless, a nation brand is different from a product or service in that it symbolizes a wide range of concepts and factors including but not limited to individuals (ethnicity, race), celebrities and famous persons (footballers, actresses, poets), places (tourism attractions), natural resources, language, culture, history, handicrafts, and political systems.

Nation brand is different from a product brand in several ways. First, a nation brand does not offer anything in particular, whereas a product brand always offers a specific product or service. Second, it is difficult to define the attributes of a nation brand; on the other hand, the attributes and characteristics of a product brand can be defined clearly. Third, a nation brand can only create emotional benefits for its audience, while a product brand has both emotional and functional advantages. Fourth, a nation brand is different from a product brand in terms of its ownership. A product brand’s owner is legally identified by law. However, in nation branding, the nation does not own the nation brand. In fact, a nation brand is owned by any organization that produces a nation brand for commercial uses and exploits the country’s image. Because a nation brand is in the public domain and the nation cannot control their image, it can be manipulated by various third parties who wish to achieve different goals and ends. Fifth, it is really difficult to describe the audience for a nation brand because the audience for a nation brand are really diverse; on the other hand, the audience for a product brand are a targeted segment.

### 2.2.3 Parties Involved in Nation Branding

Gudjonsson (2005) proposes a “Nation Brand Influential Map” model to explain a nation’s dynamic and tools used to produce a successful and effective strategy to support its brands. These factors include people, economy, geography, and politics. Gudjonsson considers people as the most significant tool or nation branding. He argues that different facets of people’s lives including culture, costumes, and etiquette should be investigated and understood so as to promote and support a nation’s brand. Economy, including micro- and macroeconomics, is an important communication channel that can affect national competitive advantage. As such, it is essential to examine the context, resources, policies, and labor to understand how economics can influence nation branding. The next influential factor is politics, which is intertwined with a nation’s economics and culture. Finally, Gudjonsson identifies geography as an influential factor. He believes that a nation’s emotional attractions are mainly related to its geography. Cities, weather, climate, and nature are some attributes that are involved in how a nation is understood.

## 2.3 Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is one of the concepts that is closely connected to nation brand and nation branding. Since there is much overlap between the two concepts in theory and practice, in this subsection, we briefly review the key tenets of public diplomacy and its connections with nation branding. Public diplomacy is different from traditional diplomacy. Traditional diplomacy is defined as the practical application of foreign policy through political communication among the governments of different countries, while public diplomacy is practiced widely by informal bodies and formations. Moreover, traditional diplomacy was practiced by officials behind closed doors. Royce Ammon refers to traditional diplomacy as “old diplomacy” and argues that this form of diplomacy was practiced only until World War I. On the other hand, the practice of public diplomacy could be traced back to the 1950s (Szondi, 2008). In the 1960s, the concept acquired a new meaning, when Edmund Gullion used the concept of public diplomacy to describe the impact of the public on the attitudes and performance of foreign policy. In 1965, Gullion described public diplomacy as the role of the press and other media in international affairs, cultivation by governments of public opinion, the non-government interaction of private groups and interests in one country

with those of another, and the impact of these transnational processes on the formulation of policy and the conduct of foreign affairs (Szondi, 2008). According to Gullion, “public diplomacy encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication like diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.”

Over the past few decades, the concept of public diplomacy has been a favorite concept in the context of international relations. It was used to explain the methods and tools used by states and international organizations to communicate with other (foreign) peoples and societies. Consequently, the practice of public diplomacy is associated with tools and means to influence public attitudes and their role in the orientations of foreign policy.

Nevertheless, the emergence and establishment of the term dates back to the height of the Cold War, which significantly influenced and shaped public diplomacy’s evolution and practice and tested its results. Historically, American public diplomacy can be divided into three different stages that are linked to changes in the international political climate and marked by the collapse of symbolical landmarks. The first period stretches over four decades wherein the efforts were dedicated intensively to spreading American and Western values and norms throughout Eastern Europe to persuade peoples living behind the Iron Curtain. The second period marked the collapse of the Berlin Wall. In this period, less efforts and resources were devoted to US public diplomacy which resulted in the decline of its role and influence worldwide. The third stage commenced with the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the collapse of the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center in New York. This time, the US public diplomacy was oriented toward the Arab and Muslim worlds and was marked by decline to some extent in favor of hard power. As it can be seen, public diplomacy acquired new meanings, and interpretations at each stage made it necessary to re-define and reinvigorate the concept. In 1990, Hans Tuch asserted that public diplomacy could not be an effective tool unless there was general agreement on its meaning. While public diplomacy still lacks a universally accepted definition, the meaning and content of the concept have become understood to a large extent in academic and professional circles.

Traditionally, public diplomacy is defined as “government communication efforts to influence foreign audiences in order to change their convictions or feelings.” Hans Tuch, a former US public affairs officer, also defines public diplomacy as “a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics

in an attempt to bring about an understanding of its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies" (Tuch, 1990). According to the US Department of State "public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign audiences" ([www.publicdiplomacy.org](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org)). Tuch (1990) elaborates that public diplomacy encompasses the "official government efforts to shape the communications environment overseas in which American foreign policy is played out, in order to reduce the degree to which misperceptions and misunderstandings complicate relations between the U.S. and other nations." Public diplomacy is often associated with a country's endeavor to improve its image as a way to maximize its influence within the global community (Peterson, 2006).

It is noted that these definitions are limited to the stated goal of public diplomacy which is to influence the audience of the target country by changing beliefs and feelings, without mentioning the ultimate goal of public diplomacy. Put it another way, it aims to affect public opinion in the target country to put pressure on their government to change its foreign or domestic policy. Given the fact that public diplomacy often obscures this goal, this could be understood as masking it with other stated goals such as creating an open environment or promoting national interests.

In recent years, the concept of public diplomacy was redefined. In this context, Leonard (2002) stressed that public diplomacy is more concerned with building relationships than with policy guidance. According to Joseph S. Nye, former Assistant Secretary of Defense, professor at Harvard University, and author of *The Powers to Lead*:

Public diplomacy is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power, but smart public diplomacy requires an understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism, and civil society in generating soft power. If it degenerates into propaganda, public diplomacy not only fails to convince, but can undercut soft power. Instead, it must remain a two-way process, because soft power depends, first and foremost, upon understanding the minds of others. (Szondi, 2008)

Van Ham (2003) writes that, "A key element of public diplomacy is the building of personal and institutional relationships and dialogue with foreign audiences by focusing on values, which sets the activity apart from classical diplomacy, which primarily deals with issues" (p. 429). Public diplomacy activities include many daily activities (films, plays, seminars) and special programs (exchange of scholarships, economic forums, conferences, meetings, and academics). According to Wolf and Rosen (2004), the practice of public

diplomacy activities should not be limited to government departments or agencies. But it must be shared by all parties able to communicate and influence foreign audiences' attitudes. Public diplomacy may be linked with the national public in one of two approaches: whether through engaging citizens in the efforts of foreign policy or through explaining and clarifying the objectives of foreign policy to the national audience.

Often, the state's effort through community councils, non-governmental bodies, or political parties is more effective and efficient. Non-governmental bodies have a degree of credibility and reputation of being independent in a way that governments cannot be. Likewise, these bodies comprise of many professionals, foreign politicians, and activists. No governmental body or diplomatic mission can conduct pressure campaigns as non-governmental bodies can. Meanwhile, the relationship with expatriate citizens (national communities abroad) provides the state with countless capabilities in the areas of local language and knowledge of local culture as well as knowledge of political affairs and conditions of society. Furthermore, the establishment of relations and building bridges with political parties in various countries facilitates the mission of traditional diplomacy and provides a picture and information about the opposition parties and the possibilities of each party. It also provides channels for sharing policies. Moreover, the companies and their products and services are important tools in the creation of a nation brand, as successful and powerful brands contribute to changing the negative stereotypes and help to improve the national reputation.

Focusing on public diplomacy allows the small- and medium-sized countries with limited hard or soft power to play a greater role in the diplomatic arena through involvement in programs related to international civil society. Howard Cincotta said that "the world of communications, information revolution, and globalization will make future diplomacy depend more on the networks of relationships between individuals and technology." Talking about the key roles of public diplomacy, Pamela Smith (as cited in Kurbalija, 1998) mentioned that "the growth of communications technology has allowed more public awareness and involvement in foreign policy making." However, she does not feel that technological developments will ever eliminate the need for face-to-face diplomacy, as personal contact seems to be necessary to build trust and mutual respect between nations and states. In this context, Paul Sharp (2001, p. 343) expects that two new trends of public diplomacy will further develop:

1. The citizen diplomat as lobbyist or advocate of a particular international cause (e.g., human rights issues or issues related to the environment).

2. The star citizen diplomat as an autonomous agent in international relations, for example, world-renowned figures who act in a private capacity representing their own economic or political interests—celebrity diplomacy (such as Bill Gates, Ted Turner, and the Baptist minister Jesse Jackson). Such celebrities endeavor to contribute to solving some international issues or to support some humanitarian issues. On the global level, the star citizen diplomat is most notable among movie stars or athletes who are designated by international organizations as ambassadors of goodwill. They perform certain diplomatic humanitarian tasks. This form of citizen diplomat is turning into a common practice by states and local regional organizations and even by trade unions and civil society organizations.

### 2.3.1 The British Model of Public Diplomacy

In the 1990s, British public diplomacy underwent a comprehensive review. The transformations of Britain's public diplomacy today are only the output of the assessment of research undertaken in that period of time, which concluded that the outside world saw Britain as an outdated or expired country, heading down the slope, archaic, old, white, racist, and imperialist. Therefore, various public and private initiatives focused on changing this mental image and building a national image highlighting Britain as a modern, creative, and multicultural country. This process of change required a lot of planning and mobilization of public diplomacy and public relations efforts to identify the positive aspects that should be highlighted and promoted to introduce an "attractive" Britain to the outside world. Thus, British public diplomacy had to confront complex challenges. However, in this period it aimed to achieve two broad goals. The first goal was to defend the reputation of Britain in a way that introduces Britain and its policies to global audiences in an attractive and convincing way, while the second goal was to build trust with the audience by creating mutual respect and understanding that allows for differences.

Since 1997, British governments have worked to create this new climate of trust with its European partners and the rest of the world. Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister at that time, promised to turn Britain into a "young country." He also confirmed his intention to renew the British national identity and to create a national sense that reflects the reality of Britain at the end of the twentieth century. In 2002, the British government announced the establishment of a council to coordinate the efforts of public diplomacy strategy by promoting government initiatives to build relationships with nations



around the world. This council was able to channel the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the British Council, the British Tourist Authority, and UK Trade and Investment into a unified strategy for public diplomacy centered on two issues: dynamic tradition and principle and professionalism. Intensive efforts were made to build a new image of Britain. The new Britain is a creative and innovative country that has trained an active multicultural workforce. The marketing team worked hard to present Britain as an import and export center for ideas, goods, services, human resources, and cultures. During the years 2004 and 2005, British diplomacy efforts focused on introducing Britain as a country advanced in science and technology and a center of fashion, business, and design. In 2006, Britain reformulated its concept of public diplomacy, aiming at changing behavior, not concepts. Based on Bound et al. (2007), Britain outlined four purposes for public diplomacy in the twenty-first century, encouraging stakeholders to work in order to achieve the following:

1. *Increasing familiarity*: making people think about your country and updating their image of it.
2. *Increasing appreciation*: creating positive perceptions of your country and getting others to see issues from your perspective.
3. *Engaging people*: encouraging people to see your country as an attractive destination for tourism and study and encouraging them to buy its products and subscribe to its values.
4. *Influencing people's behavior*: getting companies to invest, encouraging public support for your country's positions, and convincing politicians to turn to it as an ally.

The British Foreign Office website reflects this concept by emphasizing that public diplomacy is what they used to achieve their strategic international priorities (SPs) through work with the public overseas. To achieve these goals, British public diplomacy depends on three main tools:

1. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service: plays a vital role in broadcasting news and information around the world. It is funded mainly by the Ministry of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Though primarily and historically a radio broadcaster, the BBC World Service has a strong online penetration, both through its websites and mobile services. On radio it operates, depending on the geography, on short wave, on medium wave, and, increasingly to serve the urban audience, on FM. The BBC World Service has now moved into the television



market with Arabic TV, launched in March 2008, and Persian TV, launched in January 2009.

2. The British Council: the United Kingdom's main vehicle for cultural relations with other countries. It works to strengthen the United Kingdom's reputation overseas through programs in education, the English language, the arts, science, information provision, governance, and human rights. It has offices in 110 countries and territories and around the United Kingdom. Here are some examples of the types of activities carried out by the British Council:
  - Organizing courses for leadership skills for youth. According to the British Foreign Office website, 40,000 young people in 20 countries have learned new leadership and teambuilding skills.
  - On air in 18 countries every week, 5 million people tune in to the British Council's Selector compilations of British music on their local radio stations.
  - The British Council administers English examination centers around the world and 1.2 million examinations each year in the United Kingdom.
3. Wilton Park: an executive agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth that holds conferences covering the fundamental challenges in international politics at its headquarters near the city of Brighton on the south coast of England. The conferences address a wide range of international issues and infrastructure and attract high-level participation from all over the world.

In addition to the efforts of these institutions and agencies, the Foreign Office publishes a wide range of printed flyers and billboards to use abroad. The Ministry also funds and produces television documentary materials for broadcast in more than 120 countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth cooperates with other partners from all sectors of the British government to promote programs in major global events, such as the Summer Olympic Games to be held in London in 2012.

### **2.3.2 Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding**

The distinction between the concepts of public diplomacy and nation branding is still in the process of discussion and debate among academics, professionals, and practitioners. Some of them consider public diplomacy and

nation branding as two different concepts that do not share any common ground. Some others argue that both concepts share some points and are different in others. A third opinion is that the two concepts are synonymous and do not differ in their content, however different in form or definition. Finally, some try to distinguish between the two concepts on the basis of professionalism and its elements: “knowledge references’ availability, programs for training and education, professional organizations, and finally, professional rules and code of ethics” (Szondi, 2008).

The first opinion is based on the idea that both public diplomacy and nation branding are different in terms of strategies, objectives, tools, and actors. The second opinion argues that the relationship between the two concepts is complementary, and therefore, there is an overlap of strategies, objectives, and tools as the state, the public sector, and civil society share their roles. This integration or overlapping improves the performance of public diplomacy, increasing its effectiveness by reaching a wider audience through non-traditional or informal ways, with the possibility of applying tools, techniques, and methods of marketing communications (Szondi, 2008). Some advocates of nation branding theory go even further and consider public diplomacy a part of nation branding, especially with the fact that the latter offers general strategies to achieve broad objectives, while public diplomacy is related to foreign policies and its specific objectives. The third opinion argues that the two concepts are two sides of one coin and are based on a common ground to achieve common objectives, mainly promoting the state and improving its image and reputation. In this context, de Vicente (2004) viewed public diplomacy as a key dimension of nation branding and a multilateral initiative involving NGOs, the private sector, as well as individuals. In order to be effective, a strategy must be able to leverage public diplomatic efforts, such as a network of cultural or language institutes, the giving of developmental aid or participation in peacekeeping operations worldwide. In this sense, the process of nation branding is consistent with the core values and ideas of the country and is capable of representing the nation. Therefore, the process of nation branding must be at the core of the state’s strategies and directions. It should even guide the strategic options for decision-makers.

This theory concludes that states usually adopt any of the two concepts, depending on their goals and possibilities. Some states use the tools, methods, and techniques of public diplomacy, rather than being engaged in the process of branding. In contrast, there are countries that prefer to adopt methods and techniques of branding rather than public diplomacy. In most cases, the features of the two concepts are being integrated in a process that is based on the exchange of roles. On the other hand, there are those who believe that nation

branding and public diplomacy differ in goals, strategic tools, and actors. They identify the different elements as follows:

1. While the branding process is centered on creating a positive image of the country and relies on one-way communication in which the sender controls the content of the messages that is created to be simple and concise, leaving limited space for dialogue and interaction; public diplomacy is based on two-way communication, which depends on the exchange of dialogue in order to establish understanding and cooperation instead of competition.
2. If the main concept or key purpose of nation branding is to highlight the elements of the “excellence” or “uniqueness” of the state, its people or culture, as well as its geographical, natural, and climatic advantages, public diplomacy often focuses on the common elements that unite rather than divide people. This can be seen in the case of Eastern European countries that have sought to join Western Europe and the European Union after the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union. The public diplomacy strategy of these countries has focused on highlighting common elements between them and the countries of the European Union.
3. While the ultimate goal of the process of nation branding is to raise the level of awareness and knowledge of the country, the ultimate goal of public diplomacy is the establishment of mutual understanding that leads to close cooperation.
4. Another distinguishing difference between public diplomacy and nation branding is the approach. It is easy to identify the tools of branding which are often visible and concrete, while the tools of diplomacy are more precise and adopt symbolic methods. Branding is characterized by greater transparency and is more likely to apply accountability more than public diplomacy.
5. Branding often targets the nation’s broad masses, which are often described as passive or silent, while public diplomacy targets active and influential segments of the public, such as cultural or political elites, as well as public opinion leaders and those interested in foreign affairs and world events. Thus, the process of communication in nation branding is easier than in public diplomacy, which should, in many cases, communicate with groups opposed to government policies or individuals who have rigid views and opinions.

Szondi (2008) identifies the following differences between nation branding and public diplomacy. Table 2.2 presents these differences.

**Table 2.2** The differences between nation branding and public diplomacy

	Public diplomacy	Nation branding
Objectives	Encouraging political goals and interest	Encouraging economic goals and interests
Setting	Politicized; focuses on and priorities can alter by change in the government	De-politicized; there is some agreement between actors and political parties
Target	Identity-based International relations and culture drive it Stakeholders and publics that are active Citizens Geopolitical nations/countries	Image-based Marketing and consumerism drive it Consumers and masses that are passive Consumers More universal and applicable to all countries
Direction	For foreign publics	For domestic and foreign audiences
Governments' role	Both initiator and sender of messages, controlled messages	Can be initiator but not sender
Actor	Different bodies including diasporas, cultural institutions, governmental organizations, embassies, NGOs, Ministry of Culture or Foreign Affairs	Travel agencies, export councils, National Commission for Tourism
Strategies	Building relationship and maintenance Building trust Highlighting substance and content	Image management
Tactics	Decentralized approach Emphasizes both negative and positive elements Film festivals, educational institutions, exhibitions, networking, relation building. Exchange programs, language learning	Highlighting symbolic and visual elements Centralized approach Emphasizes positive elements exclusively Electronic marketing, logos and slogans, Internet, advertising in the media, newspapers
Social or mass media role	Mass media: less significant Social media: more significant	Mass media: passive
Budget/sponsor	Government	Public and private partners
Time	Continuous and ongoing	Strategic
Evaluation	Short-term, middle-term, and long-term	Long term

Despite all these differences, there are some attempts, though some immature or incomplete, to integrate nation branding and public diplomacy so as to benefit from the advantages of both of them and to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. According to this approach, as De Vincent (2004) suggests

that integrating nation branding and public diplomacy would lead to some positive results such as:

1. Making public diplomacy more strategic.
2. Facilitating strategic planning and coordination.
3. Integrating communication with foreign audiences.
4. Improving diplomats' communication skills, which are often poor.
5. Increasing the competitiveness of the nation at the global level.
6. Generating additional domestic as well as international media coverage for the country as the branding activities and campaign can receive media attention.
7. Revitalizing public diplomacy and making it tangible.
8. Putting a new spirit in the means and methods of accessing foreign audiences. Nation branding achieves access to the public base wider than that that can be accessed through public diplomacy.
9. Providing knowledge of reactions to public diplomacy efforts through measurement tools used in marketing research, as branding practitioners are more results-oriented and tend to deal quickly and efficiently with the output for the purpose of development or review.

On the other hand, integrating nation branding and public diplomacy might have drawbacks such as:

1. Some governmental personnel, particularly diplomats, might misunderstand nation branding and view it as advertising or propaganda.
2. The nation branding process may be negatively affected by bureaucracy, formal regulations, and the complexities of decision-making mechanisms in governmental circles.
3. The nation branding process may be weakened or disturbed by political disputes between the players, whether government bodies or political parties, in the political arena. This interrupts the process of nation branding, especially in the case of changing governments, particularly if the new government abolished the initiatives of the previous one.
4. Audiences may view nation branding as political promotion or official propaganda, and, therefore, this approach's output may backfire.

## 2.4 Objectives and Reasons for Nation Branding

Scholars believe that nation branding is performed to pursue different goals such as promoting a positive image of the country, establishing an identity for a nation, enhancing exports, attracting tourists, and motivating foreign investment (Anholt, 2003; Dinnie, 2008; Dzenovska, 2005; Florek & Conejo 2007). Moreover, Gudjonsson (2005) believes that nation branding can be used to create positive environment for nation's brands and products to compete in global markets. In addition, he believed that nation branding is done to enforce political and diplomatic purposes. In addition, Gudjonsson (2005) presents three main reasons for nation branding. The first reason is to guard brands against negative and unfavorable effects politics, governments, or international actions. The second one is to support and protect brands and businesses. Finally, the third purpose of nation branding is to escalate living standards within the country and build prosperity.

Furthermore, based on Szondi (2008), countries tend to create national brands due to some factors and circumstances, including:

1. Democratization, individuals' deepened knowledge and awareness of the terms of democratic governance, and the increasing need for transparency and openness between the key players in the state, which leads to the individual's increasing awareness and knowledge of international affairs and issues.
2. The growing influence and impact of global media.
3. Lower costs of travel and mobility of people and their increased ability to search for attractive touristic and investment destinations, however far away.
4. Globalization of the economic system and the increased number of cross-border international companies seeking investment in various parts of the world.
5. Increased products and services exported from a large number of world countries competing in international markets and the need of such goods, products, and services to enhance their position and the position of their country where they are produced.
6. Increasing competition between poor and developing countries to obtain funding and foreign aid, whether financial or technical. There is also the need of these countries to share their skills and expertise, attract investments, and open new markets for export.
7. Increased competition to attract talents and minds to immigrate.
8. Increased consumer demand and market expansion.

After knowing about the objectives of nation branding, it might be helpful to have a look at different parties that are involved in the process of creating a nation brand. This is described in detail in the next section.

## 2.5 Stages of Building a National Brand

Unlike public diplomacy efforts, which may be sporadic, spaced, or incoherent, and unlike the mental image, which is formed by impressions, exaggeration, and inconsistent subjective and objective factors, the nation brand is built through a branding process that passes through successive and cumulative phases that do not allow overtaking, jumping over, or confusion. Besides, the fact that these phases are integrated and compatible does not allow contradiction or discord. A nation brand is established through the following phases.

### Phase 1: Higher Political Will

Studies show that the primary responsibility in the process of nation branding rests on the top of the state's administrative hierarchy. The first decision-maker in the state must be the initiator of adopting the branding strategy. Unless there is a higher political will, the process of branding will be vulnerable to complacency and lack of seriousness. Thus, it would collapse in the early stages. In contrast, the higher political will is urgently needed in the first stage and the rest of the stages for the following reasons:

- Highlighting the seriousness of adopting the new strategy and consequent commitment of all parties involved toward the requirements of the strategy's execution and the commitment to its outputs.
- Adding a moral and ethical dimension to the strategy by adopting it from the part of the first decision-maker.
- Enhancing the credibility and goals of the strategy.
- Providing (sustainability) to the process of the strategy.
- Providing administrative, structural, and financial support for the implementation of the strategy (such as the creation of administrative structures—functions and others), etc. This requires setting budgets.

### Phase 2: Response and Commitment of Executive and Legislative Authorities

In this context, the government must ensure three key points:

- All governmental institutions and bodies behave harmoniously, compatibly, and logically.
- The process of nation branding will influence investors, tourists, and consumers, encouraging them to buy and spend money.
- The process of nation branding will influence the nation's citizens and their behavior.

For its part, the legislative authority is working to create a legal and appropriate environment and enact laws, rules, and regulations that facilitate the process of building a (nation) brand, such as the enactment of laws to encourage investment and public freedoms and others in various fields.

### **Phase 3: Developing a Long-Term Vision**

In the process of developing a comprehensive long-term, strategic, and sustainable vision, those who are responsible should:

- Present the desired future for (next) generations.
- Be creative beyond the scope and standards of the current competitiveness.
- Match the collective vision of community members.

### **Phase 4: Collective Participation of All Segments of the Nation**

The government must not be the only one making efforts for nation branding. The process of nation branding cannot succeed without concerted efforts from all individuals and parties of the nation, including official, unofficial, and social players. This may include professional groups, civic activists, civil society or non-governmental organizations, politicians, political parties, journalists, media institutions, businesspeople, stakeholders, corporations, academics, universities, and religious leaders.

### **Phase 5: Providing the Resources and Infrastructure**

The net stage in developing a nation brand is to provide the resources and infrastructure required for the interacting elements in the process of creating the nation brand. This includes the establishment of the required government departments and agencies, human resources development and training, as well as helping the private sector and civil society to launch appropriate initiatives and developing specific mechanisms of action.



### Phase 6: National Awareness Campaigns

Launching national awareness campaigns is a necessary requisite to promote the nation brand. Such campaigns include the following:

- Explaining the process of (nation) branding with its dimensions and components, etc.; emphasizing the national responsibility of each institution and individual; highlighting interests and benefits achieved for the nation's institutions and individuals.
- Distribution of roles, tasks, and messages for each sector: for example, intensifying the participation of institutions in exhibitions and international events, increasing the presence and activity of civil society institutions in the event of humanitarian disasters, and the national army's participation in the peacekeeping forces in conflict zones. Therefore, every institution acts as if it is an embassy and every citizen will act as he/she is an ambassador at large.

### Phase 7: Reformulating Messages

The next phase in developing a nation brand is to reformulate messages including “the key messages” and “sector messages” while maintaining open channels of interaction, through national awareness campaigns to explain the dimensions of nation branding.

### Phase 8: Communicating the Brand

The last step in establishing a nation brand is the activation and employment of all communication channels and tools: including public diplomacy, public relations, media and marketing, passing the key and sector messages to citizens and foreign public opinion.

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# 3

## Describing Qatar

**Abstract** This chapter describes the state of Qatar in terms of different geographical and demographic characteristics. This was done because the authors believe that an in-depth understanding of nation branding and soft power in Qatar would be possible when a good understanding of different political, geographical, and demographic issues related to the country is obtained. Moreover, this chapter describes the key pillars of Qatar Vision 2030 as the government's major plan for country development in different domains such as economy and humanitarian issues.

**By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:**

- Know the history and demographics of Qatar
- Learn about Qatar National Vision 2030
- Develop an understanding of Qatar's economy

### 3.1 Introducing Qatar

Qatar is a small country covering an area of approximately 11,572 sq. km, while the number of its population is 2,668,811 according to latest estimates conducted by the Qatar Statistics Authority in January 2020. Of the population, 1,936,214 are male and 748,115 are female (Qatar Statistics Authority, December, 2020). Moreover, the population of Qatar by age group is as follows: 14.70% (less than 15 years old), 10.30% (15–24 years old), 73.51% (25–64 years old), and 1.49% (above 65 years old).

Qatar is located in the east of the Arabian Peninsula in Southwest Asia overlooking the Gulf, bordering the south of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and bordering the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain on the sea. Qatari citizens have the highest income in the world. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimate of Qatar's per capita income is expected to reach *USD 61,940.00* by the end of 2021, up from \$109,900 in 2012. Moreover, econometric models predict that the Qatar GDP per capita will project to around *USD 62,100.00* in 2022.

The farthest two points in Qatar are 160 km apart, while the maximum width, which is roughly in the middle of the peninsula, is 80 km. Beaches and sand dunes are predominantly found along the eastern coast, especially at Khor Al-Udeid and Mesaieed. Qatar's terrain is characterized by many geographical phenomena, including a large number of bays and inland seas scattered along the seaboard. In addition to this, there is the phenomenon of basins and depressions, called the Riyadh, which are located in the central north part of the most fertile sites that are rich in natural vegetation, while the southeast is arid desert sand. Qatar has ten provinces (Ad Dawhah, Al Ghuwariyah, Al Jumaliyah, Al Khawr, Al Wakrah, Ar Rayyan, Jariyan al Batnah, Ash Shamal, Umm Salal, Mesaieed). It also has 12 main cities (Doha, Al Wakrah, Al Khor, Al Khuwayr, Ar Rayyan, Ar Ru'ays, Dukhan, Ras Laffan, Umm Bab, Umm Sa'id, Umm Salal Ali, Umm Salal Muhammad).

Qatar gained its independence from the United Kingdom on September 3, 1971. The current Prince Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who was born in June 3, 1980, is the ninth ruler from the ruling family. He assumed power on June 25, 2013, launching a new era of reforms at all levels, especially sports, health, tourism, and economic and political development.

In 2020, Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani was appointed as Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. The cabinet, which is formed under an Emiri decree, is the highest executive authority in the country, and the Prince must approve all laws and legislations. The Shura Council was founded in 1972 by Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, who was mandated under the modified Provisional Constitution to organize the contemporary state's structure and institutions. The Shura Council consists of 45 seats with 30 elected seats and 15 appointed by the Amir. Qatar held its first-ever Shura Council elections on October 2, 2021, which saw an impressive voter turnout of 63.5%. The Supreme Judicial Council, working independently, manages judicial affairs. At the end of the year 1999, the Prince formed a higher ministerial council mandated to examine planning for economic and industrial growth of the country in the future considering global trends.

## 3.2 Qatar's Economy

Qatar is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of natural resources. Oil and natural gas exports contribute to more than half of the revenues of the Qatari government. The private sector has witnessed active and exponential growth in recent years. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated the overall growth of the projected Qatari GDP to be 2.5% in 2021 ([www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)). The Qatari government invests the budget surplus in foreign investment reserves for future generations. It also spends a significant portion of oil and gas revenues on developing projects of infrastructure, housing, sports, health, and education.

Qatar has proven oil reserves of up to 25.4 billion barrels and has the third largest global reserve of natural gas (estimated at 896 trillion cubic feet). Japan, South Korea, and Singapore are the largest importers of Qatari oil. Qatar's LNG production now is 77 million tons per year. Now as the largest source of LNG, Qatar will raise Qatar's LNG production from currently 77 million tons to 126 million tons per annum by 2027, representing an increase of about 64%.

Qatar has witnessed an unprecedented economic boom in the past few years. Qatari government has attempted to escalate the economic flourishing by using the following strategies:

- Implementing its policies on diversifying sources of income
- Developing the economic infrastructure
- Utilizing the hydrocarbon resources of oil, natural gas, and petrochemicals
- Developing and marketing large natural gas projects
- Liberalizing the economy
- Activating the role of the private sector
- Issuing laws designed to facilitate and simplify procedures for investment and attract foreign investment

## 3.3 The Risk of the Geopolitical Site

Qatar is one of those small countries that the international community and its bodies and organizations have long been concerned about its weakness. The issue of vulnerability of small states was a persistent feature in international relations literature during the 1960s and 1970s. The literature tended to

emphasize the limitations that size imposes on the ability of states to function competitively in the international political and economic arenas. The growth and proven track records of many small states since that period has reduced those earlier concerns. This does not, however, diminish concerns about the particular problems and risks that small states may face. International organizations such as the United Nations have commissioned researchers and research centers to prepare studies on the problems that small states confront. Titles of papers on small states frequently feature terms and phrases such as “problems,” “vulnerability,” and “small is dangerous.” In addition to these internal characteristics, small states are held to be particularly vulnerable to external forces. Their small size and strategic locations may embroil them in international politics. Particularly, larger regional or greater world powers may force a small state to acquiesce in an unequal bilateral relationship (political, security, military, economic, etc.). This increases security concerns for both the small states and the international system as a whole. Thus, small states must necessarily adopt a more defensive attitude than larger states. Peterson argues that small states must adopt at least some of several complementary strategies for survival, such as:

1. Strategic good-neighborliness with neighboring countries.
2. Strategic regional and international alliances.
3. A strategy of creating a national brand and build a unique regional and international position.

This becomes more significant as the geopolitical region in which Qatar is located witnessed numerous political events over the past decades that increased the concerns of the Qatar. Some of these events are:

1. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which raised concerns of small countries in the Gulf region. Qatar was particularly concerned, as it is geopolitically located between the two rivals of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, increasing the possibility of falling victim to the competition over geopolitical domination in the region. Watching the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, Qatar has also witnessed the tension between Iran and the UAE over three islands in the early 1970s, and the long history of the border dispute between Qatar and Saudi Arabia which ended only a decade years ago, on the July 6, 2008, with the two countries signing the final demarcation agreement after nearly 35 years of a border dispute that amounted to an armed clash in 1992.

2. The former Qatari leadership, which came to power on June 27, 1995, felt that some major regional countries, i.e., Saudi Arabia and Egypt, did not welcome the new regime of Qatar, considering it a source of concern. This Saudi and Egyptian attitude, the following border dispute, political conflicts, and media skirmishes have deepened Qatari fears regarding the possibility that one of the countries in the region may act against Qatar as Iraq did against Kuwait and therefore “devour” its smaller neighbor with a covering from some regional players.

Thus, it is prudent for Qatar to devise strategies that stand a good chance of enhancing its sovereignty and survivability. The 2008 declaration of Qatar’s National Vision could be comprehended in the context of the strategies which provide a good opportunity to strengthen the role of Qatar in the region. The National Vision “aims at transforming Qatar into an advanced country by 2030, capable of sustaining its own development and providing for a high standard of living for all of its people for generations to come.”

### 3.4 Qatar’s National Vision 2030

Qatar’s National Vision belongs to the government, the private sector, civil society and to all Qatari citizens. I call on all to work hard and utilize your expertise to help achieve the goals of the Vision and to advance our nation’s development. In this way, we will build a bright future for the people of Qatar.

Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, July 2008 (Qatar Vision 2030, p. 4)

In 2008, the Qatari government specified that Qatar had to balance five key challenges in order to remain true to its values. These five main challenges, as stated in National Vision 2030, include the following.

#### 3.4.1 Modernization and Preservation of Traditions

The pressures of competitiveness and modern working patterns may contradict with the traditional relations based upon trust and personal connections and produce difficulties and tensions for family life. Furthermore, accompanying economic and social progress entails greater freedom and wider selections which can potentially create challenges to deep-rooted social values highly cherished by society. However, it is always possible to combine values and culture with modernism and modern life styles.



### **3.4.2 The Needs of This Generation and the Needs of Future Generations**

Qatar meets the needs of this generation with simultaneously considering the needs of future generations. Through the process of intergenerational justice, Qatar aims to secure the rights of future generations by compensating for depletion of non-renewable resources via creation of new sources of renewable wealth. The National Vision aims to select the route that creates a balance between the interests of the current generation with those of future generations.

### **3.4.3 Managed Growth and Uncontrolled Expansion**

While Qatar is expanding its economy activities, this growth and expansion should be conducted at a pace that is in accordance with the realistic expectations of sustainable improvements in livelihoods and quality of life so as not to restrain the Qatari economy and derail the country from its well-defined goals.

### **3.4.4 The Size and the Quality of the Expatriate Labor Force and the Selected Path of Development**

Currently, Qatar is experiencing a noticeable increase in its population due to the rising government expenditure, urban development, and large-scale foreign investment. Since the compositions of populations exert a significant impact on the nature of the society, the country needs to decide on the quality of labor force and the size of the population. As such, the National Vision assesses the outcomes of recruiting expatriate workforces in regard to their housing and public service needs and cultural rights and weighs the potential negative effects this might have on Qatari national identity.

### **3.4.5 Economic Growth, Social Development, and Environmental Management**

The National Vision also purports to make sure that economic development and the environment are not sacrificed for the sake of the other. Thus, Qatar should direct its future development path so as to make it in accordance with the requirement and needs of protecting and conserving the environment. If

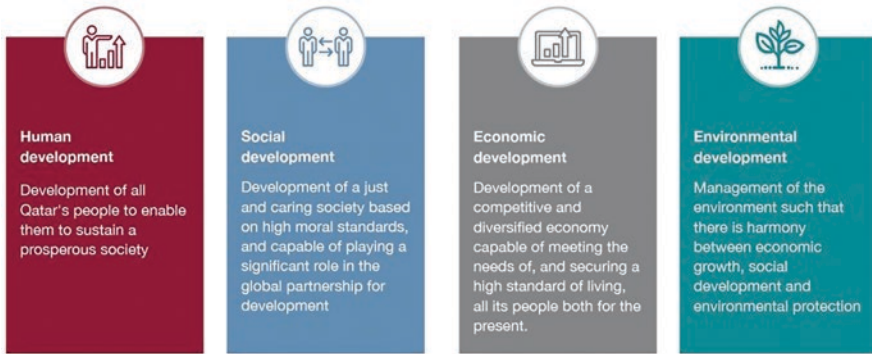
there are environmental costs for economic growth, investments should be made on technologies that assist in improving the environment.

Qatar's National Vision for 2030 was approved under Emiri Decree No. 44 in 2008. One of the most important major goals of the national development strategy is to develop a general framework for the growth of Qatar and to diversify its economy, reducing its exclusive dependence on the oil and gas sector. The vision illustrates in detail the goals of Qatar in various fields and levels as follows:

- The continued development of world-class infrastructure, to ensure that Qatar will continue to be a favorite destination for visitors and investors from the region and the whole world.
- A comprehensive world-class education system and healthcare system whose services are accessible to the whole population.
- To provide a prosperous way of life for all Qatari citizens and to provide opportunities to those who need them most, such as women, people with limited physical capabilities, or young people who need empowerment to play an active role in their country, supporting their government, governmental institutions, and the private sector.
- Increasing the effective participation of Qataris in the labor force by providing tools and opportunities for citizens to contribute to the economy and get rewarding jobs.
- Preserve Qatar's national culture, in terms of promoting the tolerant nature of Qatari society, and embrace the Islamic values of justice, solidarity, and social and charitable work as well as supporting inherited customs and traditions. The national development strategy also prioritizes the preservation of the national architectural character and the traditional Qatari lifestyle.

### 3.5 The Pillars of the National Vision 2030

The Qatari Government Communications Office, on its website, clarifies that the National Vision foresees development through four interconnected pillars of human development, social development, economic development, and environmental development (see Fig. 3.1).



**Fig. 3.1** Four pillars of National Vision 2030 (<https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/about-qatar/national-vision2030/>)

### 3.5.1 Human Development

Education is one of the basic pillars of social progress. The state shall ensure, foster and endeavor to spread it.

Permanent Constitution

The first pillar of the National Vision is human development. The National Vision asserts that Qatar's natural resources will eventually run out, consequently, the future of the country is in the hands of Qatari people who should function successfully in future's knowledge-based and extremely competitive world. To this end, Qatar aims to advance and optimize its educational and health system. This is going to be operationalized through offering world-class educational system that presents Qatari people with first-rare educations. Moreover, Qatar is going to turn itself to a center for intellectual activity and scientific research in order to support human development. Also, the world-class healthcare system should be achieved.

### 3.5.2 Social Development

The family is the basis of the society. A Qatari family is founded on religion, ethics, and patriotism. The law shall regulate adequate means to protect the family, support its structure, strengthen its ties, and protect maternity, childhood, and old age.

Permanent Constitution

Social development is considered as the second pillar of the program for 2030. The National Vision 2030 specifies that Qatar wants to foster and develop the social aspects of its society by nurturing citizens who are able to deal with the needs of the age they are in both effectively and flexibly. The vision also aspires to create strong and coherent Qatari family that relishes support, care, and social protection. Women play an important role in the Qatar's plan for development, and they are integral parties involved in economic and political decision-making. Surely, a sound social structure will help Qatar to preserve its national heritage, enhance Islamic and Arab values, establish a secure society, and empower its citizens to actively take part in all endeavors needed for the development of the country. Moreover, Qatar aims to foster benevolence, tolerance, and friendly dialogue and cultural exchange with people from other cultures within the Arab and Islamic world. Additionally, Qatar is committed to its responsibility to contribute to peace and international security around the world.

### 3.5.3 Economic Development

The State shall guarantee freedom of economic enterprise on the basis of social justice and balanced cooperation between private and public activity in order to achieve socio-economic development, increase in production, achieve public welfare, raise standard of living, and provide job opportunities in accordance with the provision of the law.

Permanent Constitution

The third pillar of the National Vision focuses on economic development by pinpointing that economy is the foundation for prosperity and steady development. It also specifies that natural resources should be consumed in a way that future generations possess sufficient means to meet their aspirations. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to manage these resources and keep a balance between production and reserves. The National Vision emphasizes that hydrocarbon resources should be utilized to ensure secure development for all Qatari citizens. Particularly, it mentions that "Converting these natural assets into financial wealth provides a means to invest in world-class infrastructure; build efficient delivery mechanisms for public services; create a highly skilled and productive labor force; and support the development of entrepreneurship and innovation capabilities" (National Vision, 2030, p. 24). Of course, the vision has considered some strategies to achieve these goals,

empowering the private sector, training and supporting entrepreneurs, and providing financial and non-financial support mechanisms.

Of course, Qatari government aims to do this through “a pathway that delivers prosperity yet avoids economic imbalances and stresses” (National Vision, 2030, p. 25). In so doing, the economic development should be aware of all the risks that may hinder or deter economic development. As such, it seems reasonable for the system to ensure low inflation rates, sound financial policy, and a safe and efficient financial system to pave the way for economic stability and growth. The National Vision has envisaged that coordination with Gulf Cooperation Council countries and with other Arab and regional economic organizations to start financial ties, trade, and investment can significantly help achieve these defined goals. The vision has also considered some strategies for reducing dependence on oil and gas and diversifying economy. Some of these strategies are (1) having a knowledge-based economy featured by a transparent and accountable government creativity and innovation, excellence in education, entrepreneurship, the efficient delivery of public services, and a world-class infrastructure, (2) developing and designing economic activities in which Qatar can provide the human needs or technical expertise, and (3) expanding services and industries with competitive advantages resultant from hydrocarbon industries.

### 3.5.4 Environmental Development

The State shall preserve the environment and its natural balance in order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development for all generations.

Permanent Constitution

We need to care for our natural environment for it was entrusted to us by God to use with responsibility and respect for the benefit of human kind. If we nurture our environment, it will nurture us.

Mozah bint Nasser Al-Misnid

The fourth pillar of the National Vision 2030 is environmental development. The vision aims to plan for preserving and protecting the nature in Qatar. Thus, any economic and developmental pattern will be conducted by taking environmental protection into consideration. The National Vision 2030 (p. 30) specifies that “the environmental pillar will be increasingly important as Qatar is forced to deal with local environmental issues, such as the impact of diminishing water and hydrocarbon resources, and the effects of

pollution and environmental degradation, as well as international environmental issues such as the potential impact of global warming on water levels in Qatar and thereby on coastal urban development.” Moreover, the vision aims to raise the population’s awareness about the importance of protecting nature, to enforce necessary legal enactments that protect all elements of the nature and environment, and to work with effective and sophisticated institutions that motivate citizens to use environmentally friendly technologies.

### 3.6 The Operationalization of the National Vision 2030

The former Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, in a speech at a seminar on Qatar’s National Strategy, held in Doha on October 28 and 29, 2008, asserted that:

Achievement of the National Vision is a collective responsibility that will be motivated and led by the state, in partnership with the private sector, civil society, and academia. At all levels, we are all responsible for the formation and implementation of a National Strategy.

The General Secretariat for Development Planning website states that Qatar’s National Vision will choose the developmental path that carefully balances the needs of the current generation with the needs of future generations. It also opts for the developmental requirements and, at the same time, seeks to preserve the traditions and characteristics that distinguish the country from the others and maintain and promote these traditions.

More importantly, this strategy is developed in a collaborative effort at the level of Qatar as a whole, as it involved all groups of Qatari society. It can be called “a strategy for Qatar ... made in Qatar which is developed by people of Qatar, for the people of Qatar.” The national development strategy was prepared according to a consultative mechanism, with large-scale participation from all segments of society in order for the national strategy to reflect the aspirations and dreams of all Qataris.

The national development strategy is the vehicle that will take it there, ensuring unparalleled standards of living and allowing all Qataris—men, women, and youth—to fulfill their potential and realize their dreams and ambitions. The national development strategy will bring tangible benefits to all Qataris, which will be felt in their everyday lives and on every level, from enhancing the economic environment for businesses, investors, and job

seekers, presenting better opportunities for education, more holistic health-care, and more efficient government services.

Returning to the previously discussed process of building the national brand, it is noted that the case of Qatar represents a rare model in the Arab region in terms of practical application and even professional to the theory of nation branding, as well as the principles, terms, and conditions for the ideal branding. The beginning was in 2008, when the Qatari Supreme Will determined to ratify Qatar's Vision for 2030. This vision reflects the political will and strategic vision of Qatar's political leadership. In a further step toward the formulation of this vision, the government of Qatar called on all governmental parties, the private sector, and civil society to form working groups identifying their missions as follows:

- *Working Group I:* Qatar's National Strategy, issues and challenges
- *Working Group II:* The formulation of national strategies, stakeholder participation and capacity building, best practices and lessons learned from international experiences
- *Working Group III:* National strategies based on results, setting goals, monitoring and evaluation, best practices, and lessons that can be learned from international experiences

The General Secretariat for Development Planning adopted a thoughtful and detailed framework to produce a national development strategy, based on cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders, allowing the collection of ideas and suggestions from these entities and including them within the recommendations of the strategy. Practically, periodic meetings and workshops were held in which various sectors of society participated introducing their views, opinions, and suggestions in their respective competence regarding the national development strategy. At the same time, there were a variety of other channels enabling continuous and active dialogue and communication between the General Secretariat for Development Planning and citizens and residents of Qatar, as well as all stakeholders.

Regarding the case of Qatar, after about 13 years of ratifying the National Vision 2030, with the detailed analysis and the guidance of theoretical rules of Qatar's nation branding, as well as the elements and tools that were employed to ensure the comprehensiveness of the process horizontally and vertically, the elements and tools were overlapped and intertwined compatibly

and integrally in an ideal process of building a distinctive and sustainable nation brand for Qatar. Overall, this chapter presented an overview of the status of Qatar and its status in the region. Moreover, this chapter discussed different geographical, demographical, economical, and political characteristics of Qatar. The next chapter discusses the Qatar nation brand in regard to different profiles.

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# 4

## Creating Nation Brand: The Model of Qatar

**Abstract** In this chapter, the authors argue that Qatar established its nation brand by simultaneously improving different qualities needed for creating a nation brand. In so doing, the chapter presents information about different aspects of Qatari nation brand and Qatar’s political activities. Also, different aspects of nation branding such as Qatar’s economic profile, different humanitarian activities performed by Qatar, and this state’s endeavors to promote sport and tourism in the country are described in detail in this chapter.

**By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:**

- Know about different aspects of Qatari nation brand
- Learn about Qatar’s political activities
- Develop an understanding of Qatar’s economic profile
- Identify different humanitarian activities performed by Qatar
- Learn about Qatar’s endeavors to promote sport and tourism in the country

### 4.1 The Political Profile

There are two types of strategies often employed by small countries as a way to gain more support in the international arena: public diplomacy and “(nation) brand.” These strategies are consistent in terms of being based on specialization, as a nation creates its national brand, and public diplomacy brings this brand to the world. In the case of a small country like Qatar, public

diplomacy with its channels and (nation) brand with its elements employ strategic tools in order to achieve a presence in the international arena and create a “defense system.”

The model Qatar provides at the level of public diplomacy through “soft” activity in the global community is to adopt a “mediator role” in regional conflicts and then reap the benefits of this role, converting it into diplomatic gains that enhance its role in a turbulent region.

By playing the role of mediator, Doha’s role emerged on the international scene. Its diplomatic efforts exceeded in size Qatar’s geographic area and its limited population. Thus, Qatar succeeded in the role of mediator in Lebanon where Saudi Arabia, Egypt, France, and the Arab League had failed. Moreover, Qatari diplomacy was active in the Palestinian arena, as Qatar has assumed the role of mediator between the Palestinian factions. Besides, Qatar had the most prominent presence in the Darfur conflict in Sudan, the struggle for power in Somalia, and the conflict between the Houthis and the government in Yemen. Qatari diplomacy also played a significant role in the Horn of Africa and in the struggle for power and legitimacy in Libya.

According to Prof. Iyad Al-’Orfi, the Qatari role in handling these crises is based on key pillars that give power and prestige to this role:

1. Qatar has vibrant and distinctive relationships with key players at the local, Arab, regional, and international levels.
2. Economic power—Qatar’s economy is now the most open among Arab economies and the best model in the region, and the rapid growth it achieved enabled it to become one of the richest countries in the world.
3. The media platform—the Al Jazeera network: Qatar’s positive image in Arab minds is associated with achieving the Arab media’s leading project, as Al Jazeera has become a source of news for foreign channels, news agencies, and newspapers.

In applying this model, Qatar managed to walk along the tightrope stretched over the regional and international fault lines in the Middle East. In Iraq, it maintains a balanced distance from all factions and forces, and it maintains relations with Iran and Syria while remaining a US ally and a major host of US military bases in the region. Qatar also keeps close links with Hamas and Hezbollah while maintaining a peaceful relationship with Israel. And, it maintained relations with Iran in spite of all the reservations and concerns expressed by the other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council about Iran’s ambitions and policies in the region.

In June 2009, the US Ambassador to Qatar Joseph Le Baron attempted to explain Qatar's policy in the following terms:

I think of Qatar as occupying a space in the middle of the ideological spectrum in the Islamic world, with the goal of having doors open to it across that ideological spectrum. They have the resources to accomplish that vision, and that's rare. By all accounts, Qatar's balancing strategy toward its relationship with the United States and regional powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia is likely to persist, which may continue to place Doha and Washington on opposing sides of some important issues, even amid close cooperation on others.

#### **4.1.1 Qatar Financial Supports to Other Countries**

Oil-rich and gas-rich Qatar employed "aid diplomacy" as a way not only to ensure influence but also to lever its public diplomacy and to promote its mediation in conflicts. These aids were also employed as a tool of public diplomacy to facilitate winning friends and to soften the positions of opponents. There are many examples of this, such as financial aid and aid in-kind made by Qatar to the besieged Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the 2008 war, the assistance provided for the reconstruction of villages destroyed by the Israeli aggression on southern Lebanon in the summer of 2006, and the humanitarian, economic, and logistical assistance provided to the National Transitional Council in Libya in 2011. There are other tools employed by Qatar in the context of public diplomacy efforts, such as entering into partnerships with regional bodies, international conferences, and important events, such as hosting the Doha Round of World Trade Organization in 2001 and the summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference in 2003.

#### **4.1.2 Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD)**

Under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, and the Chairman of Qatar Fund for development, H.E. Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Chairman of Qatar Fund for development, Qatar released a report of its supports for development around the world in 2018.

In 2019, in a speech on the delivery of this fund to different humanitarian agencies, The Director General of Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), H.E. Khalifa bin Jassim Al-Kuwari, stated that:

Qatar Fund for Development provided financial aid and effectively responded to humanitarian and development assistance in many countries. From 2015 till May 2019, the total aid amounted to QR 8.15 billion, which equates to US\$2.24 billion, an annual growth rate of 19%. In 2018 alone, the Fund's assistance reached more than 2.1 billion riyals or US\$585 million, including US\$206.7 million in humanitarian aid and US\$378.6 million in development assistance. This aid was distributed geographically among 70 countries around the world. The total value of aid to Arab countries amounted to US\$451.8 million, whereas the aid to Africa totaled to US\$64 million, Asia US\$28.5 million and US\$17.9 was disbursed in aid to North and South America. In terms of international and multilateral organizations, the amount of assistance provided for core funding has reached US\$20.1 million.

(Source: [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int))

In this book, since we are going to bring examples for Qatar's political activities, we only present the available information on QFFD in 2018 and before. Up to 2018, the fund assisted in finishing 55 humanitarian projects and 65 development projects. The exact sum paid for these projects was \$585.39 million. The fund was allotted to different sectors including education, healthcare, economic, relief, budget, and infrastructure ones. The statistics showed that the highest amounts were allotted to infrastructure, education, and relief sectors, with amounts being invested on healthcare and economic development as well (<https://qatarfund.org.qa/en/>, 2020).

Moreover, the QFFD was distributed among different countries and organizations around the world. The available information from Qatar fund (2018) indicates that more than \$20 million was given to different countries in five continents in 2018. This fund was also used to create different agreements including 28 country-based partnership, nine local partnerships, and ten international partnerships. Of the total amount in 2018, 65% was allotted to developmental aids, and 35% was allocated to humanitarian aids. In regard to the development portions, more than 90% was devoted to promote education and infrastructure in the receiving countries.

#### **4.1.2.1 Qatar Financial Supports to During COVID-19**

Even during the outbreak of COVID-19, the Qatar played an active role in helping less developed countries and world organizations involved in dealing with the pandemic. In August 2020, the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a report on different governmental and non-governmental aids it

provided to different countries or agencies. On page five of the report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned that:

The State of Qatar foreign aid, to combat the Corona pandemic, amounted to nearly 50 million US dollars, that benefited to 32 countries, across the five continents, around the world. In addition to many field hospitals donated by the Ministry of Defense, the State also provided 150 million US Dollars financial support to the Gaza Strip, a part of which will go to assist the health Sector, cope with the effects of the Corona crisis.

International organizations, humanitarian and civil societies associations, also got their share of this Aid, as Qatar allocated 20 million US dollars to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), out of its belief in the urgency of confirming international support and political commitment, to ensure speeding up research and clinical testing, leading to vaccine and cure medication, and eradicating this virus, for all the people, around the world.

The State also announced the allocation of 10 million US Dollars for the World Health Organization (WHO), to support rapid access to provide equipment for the test, treatment and the provision of the adequate vaccine for “Covid-19”, to save lives, and make it available to all world citizens, leaving no one behind.

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August, 2020)

Qatar also provided governmental aid to 32 countries during this period. These include countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia, Algeria, and other countries. In addition to delivering aids to the governments, Qatar financially supported many institution and charity organizations in different countries during the COVID-19 period. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the following statement about these aids:

Institutions, charitable organizations and private sector companies were, also, prompt in providing aid around the world, and, extend necessary assistance to help mitigate the dangers caused by the coronavirus outbreak. Foreign aid provided by charitable associations, organizations and the private sector, in the State of Qatar, amounted to approximately 39 million US Dollars, donated to 66 countries, around the world. These aids consisted of medical, relief and financial assistance, provided through its offices around the world. In coordination with Qatar diplomatic missions, in the host countries, Institutions and private companies, such as, Qatar Charity, Qatar Red Crescent Society, Al Majida Group, “Baladna Food Industries” Qatar National Bank and Qatar Airways spared no means, and no effort to carry out this noble duty.

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August, 2020)

Prof. Iyad Al-'Orfi describes the diplomacy of Qatar with the following words:

In dealing with crises, Qatari diplomacy depends on two basic pillars, namely: rationality and pragmatism as a strategic approach to international relations, which allows Qatar to be at the same distance from the various political, regional, and international parties so it can get their confidence. Then, Qatar can invest in these privileged relationships in good offices and bring views together in order to facilitate the resolution of crises and serve peace and stability. At the international diplomatic level, Qatar adopts the policy of a balanced approach towards the U.S. and the West in general, as well as other international forces and groups, whether in Asia, Latin America, or Africa. In its adopted foreign policy and active diplomacy towards the current regional and international divide, the government of Qatar seeks to present itself to the Arab world and the region as a prominent and neutral party and mediator that is respected by everyone, as well as seeking political accumulation.

The role of Qatar's public diplomacy can be understood in light of Qatar's keenness to expand its sphere of influence and to increase international awareness of its importance. Generally speaking, Qatar's public diplomacy is based on a number of solid foundations, including:

1. Adhering to the rights of sovereignty of the state, non-interference in internal affairs, and refraining from axis policy.
2. Adhering to the rules of international legality and coping with international changes and developments or adapting to them.
3. Adopting the philosophy of "pragmatic diplomacy" and accepting consequences of contributing to the regulation of peace and rejecting to resort to force in solving conflicts.
4. Qatari diplomacy is characterized as follows:
5. Proactive and brave, taking stands before others (such as the stance toward the revolutions of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria).
6. Not being linked to any ideological authority that would limit its activities or extension.
7. Not seeking to monopolize everything.
8. Depending on the tools and methods of "soft power" and not employing threats, ambitions, or agendas to exert influence.

Soft power means employing tools of persuasion and attraction rather than pressure and intimidation in international affairs management and using public diplomacy tools, as well as employing educational, cultural, and creative dimensions, or using economic aid and scholarships in managing public

diplomacy. As we elaborated in this subsection, Qatar used public diplomacy and financial supports to develop its influence in the regions.

## 4.2 The Media Profile

There is no doubt that the keyword in this profile is the Al Jazeera Network, which has been, since its inception in 1996, a unique case in the space of the Arab media, with all the problems and questions, sympathy and criticism, popularity, and anger it has raised. Al Jazeera's presence is not restricted only to broadcasting and screens watched by viewers; it goes beyond this, as Al Jazeera transformed from being just a media channel broadcasting news and events into an integrated network of several media, research, and training organizations.

Al Jazeera has become a brand name that strongly exists competing with the most important and famous brands such as Coca Cola or Nokia; as in 2005, Al Jazeera was ranked fifth among the most important and most famous brands in terms of power and influence. In the media sector, Al Jazeera assumes a status that is no less than the international networks CNN, Sky, or BBC. The influence of this media network grew after the launch of Al Jazeera English, Al Jazeera Sports channels, Al Jazeera Children's Channel, Al Jazeera Mubasher Channel, and Al Jazeera Documentary Channel. Moreover, Al Jazeera has expanded the scope of its activities. It is now no longer like a traditional TV network, as it created powerful and influential affiliates such as annual festivals, the Al Jazeera Training Center, Human Rights Department, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, [aljazeera.net](http://aljazeera.net) in Arabic and English, and others. In addition, there are seminars and conferences organized by the Al Jazeera network and its affiliates throughout the year, either alone or in collaboration with other partners.

The statistics shows that Al Jazeera has at least 140 million viewers in the Arab and international world. The viewers might select one of the following channels to watch from Al Jazeera network:

1. Al Jazeera Satellite Channel (Arabic)
2. Al Jazeera English
3. Al Jazeera Documentary
4. Al Jazeera Mubasher (Live)
5. Al Jazeera Media Training and Development Centre
6. Al Jazeera Centre for Studies
7. Al Jazeera Mobile

8. Al [Jazeera.net](#) (the Arabic website)
9. Al Jazeera English Online (the English website, AJ+ <https://www.ajplus.net>)
10. Al Jazeera Center for Public Liberties and Human Rights

In addition to the mentioned channels, beIN Sports MENA is a former subsidiary of Al Jazeera Media Network, which was previously named as Al Jazeera Sport. There are more than 11 Arabic and English channels for in the beIN Sports group.

The latest statistics has indicated that Al Jazeera has at least 40 million viewers in the Arab world, who come from different countries. The viewers include those in Arab countries and the Arab people who are not living in the Arab world and watch it on satellite. Research has shown that Al Jazeera viewers are from different age groups and both genders (Arab audience: [www.allied-media.com](http://www.allied-media.com), 2021). Furthermore, the data shows that Arab audience earned an income equivalent to \$15,000, the second largest group earned between \$15,000 and \$35,000 (Arab audience, source: [www.allied-media.com](http://www.allied-media.com), 2021). Moreover, the survey results have indicated that while the majority of the audience live in the cities, Al Jazeera has audiences in suburban and rural areas as well. The statistics also show that the majority of the Al Jazeera viewers have at least a high school degree. Moreover, the available data show that most Al Jazeera viewers are married. These viewers are mainly from the Muslim world.

Finally, the statistics show that the audience come from different counties around the world. However, the majority of the audience come from the Arab counties in the Middle East. The available data show that the network has an outstanding place in terms of viewership in the Arab world. In the next section, we will elaborate on the political stance and influence of Al Jazeera.

#### 4.2.1 The Policy of Al Jazeera

The policy of Al Jazeera as a satellite channel and its affiliates does not conflict with the process of creating the (nation) brand for the country of origin. Al Jazeera seems to be an effective tool to support the traditional and public diplomacy of the state of Qatar. While Qatar's official diplomacy gathers the conflicting parties of a certain case in closed rooms, playing the role of mediator, Al Jazeera gathers the same parties on air for another type of dialogue, in which they say what it not said in closed rooms to be broadcast to millions of viewers around the world. At the same time, the Al Jazeera brand name



cannot be separated in the minds of people from its place of origin, i.e., Qatar, just as Coca Cola cannot be separated from the United States and Mercedes cannot be separated from Germany and many other examples that reflect the close ties between the brand name and the country of origin. In this regard, it is assured that the country of origin and the brand are sharing benefits especially in promoting and influencing one another.

Among some US diplomatic documents published by WikiLeaks, *The Guardian* newspaper uncovered that the United States believes that Qatar is using Al Jazeera as a bargaining chip in foreign policy negotiations to help push its agenda on the international stage. The newspaper quoted a classified cable from the US Ambassador to Qatar, Joseph LeBaron, saying that the Al Jazeera channel is used as a bargaining chip in Qatar's relations with neighboring Iran, who shares a gas field with Qatar, and with other players who play tough with LeBaron such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and Syria. In his diplomatic cable, LeBaron said that:

The regional Al Jazeera Arabic news channel will continue to be an instrument of Qatari influence, and continue to be an expression, however uncoordinated, of the nation's foreign policy. Qatar will continue to use Al Jazeera as a bargaining tool to repair relationships with other countries, particularly those soured by Al Jazeera's broadcasts, including the United States. Al Jazeera's ability to influence public opinion throughout the region is a substantial source of leverage for Qatar, one which it is unlikely to relinquish. Moreover, the network can also be used as a chip to improve relations. For example, Al Jazeera's more favorable coverage of Saudi Arabia's royal family has facilitated Qatari-Saudi reconciliation over the past year.

At the level of Qatari public diplomacy, the importance of the Al Jazeera network is in the direct or indirect relationship network created by Al Jazeera and its institutions with individuals and community organizations across the world. And, this beneficial relationship is very necessary and essential in the process of creating the (nation) brand. This relationship and the surrounding situation can be summarized in the following hypothesis: suppose that Al Jazeera suddenly disappeared from existence, there is no doubt that some people would be angry, others would be happy, some would feel that the media landscape lacks something, some people would lose, others would win, etc. The end result is that everyone would be interested and affected as a stakeholder (whether negative or positive). This is exactly what is meant by the beneficial relationship. This situation is similar to the behavior of public diplomacy that keeps the ball rolling with all parties, attending all meetings

and events, and if it is absent for any reason, this absence will be questionable or a reason to move events or feelings.

Accordingly, the Al Jazeera media network with all its institutions is an important tool in the arsenal of defense for the steadfastness and stability of the state of Qatar in the face of conflicting powers in the Gulf region. If it was possible for these powers to infringe the sovereignty of Qatar in the past, before the founding of the Al Jazeera, this now has become impossible with the presence of Al Jazeera, which broadcasts images and news live to millions of viewers around the world.

It is not an exaggeration to take a step forward to describe Al Jazeera as ordinance a tool in Qatar's shield of defense. It is even noted that the role of Al Jazeera sometimes takes the position of attack when it is difficult for Qatari public diplomacy to achieve its goal in a certain case and when Qatari diplomacy feels that some regional powers are trying to marginalize or exclude the Qatari role, particularly if traditional diplomacy is not able to directly confront them. In this case, the Al Jazeera channel becomes the most powerful tool to confront and influence the target public opinion in order to drive them to apply pressure on their government to change its stance on a certain issue. This is exactly the role of public diplomacy and the spearhead of its tools, i.e., the media.

Creating the national brand also requires presence in all international media and under multiple titles and formats that deal with other aspects of the Qatari national brand. Thus, the Qatari effort on the media profile is not confined only to the Al Jazeera network, but it also goes beyond that to being present in various mass media around the world.

Here, it is worth mentioning that a survey conducted by John Mark King of East Tennessee State University, who performed a content analysis of mentions of Qatar published in more than 70 major newspapers in 18 nations from 2006 to 2007. The survey concluded that there were 706 mentions of Qatar in these newspapers. The survey includes newspapers from North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, the Middle East (including Israel), and Africa. The survey showed that the impression was positive toward Qatar and that the information on the geography of Qatar and its people appeared more than other topics such as terrorism and war.

In 1998, Qatar abolished the Ministry of Information, and in 2007, it co-founded the Doha Centre for Media Freedom, a private institution for public benefit with the French organization Reporters Without Borders. It aims to protect the media system as is consistent with international standards; conduct media research; create a database to serve media segments; create a memorial to be an international database to immortalize figures, leaders, and

victims of free media; and provide assistance to media professionals who are exposed to abuses in the performance of their jobs, especially in a state of crisis. In January 2008, the Doha Centre for Media Freedom signed a protocol of cooperation with the Reporters Without Borders organization. It could be argued that the aim of this center is to build communication with journalists across the world and creating strong beneficial relations with them. The importance of this seems to be logical in light of knowledge of the importance of the media and media workers in covering and following up public diplomacy initiatives and the accumulative output of this in the final product of the process of creating the national brand.

Qatar has shown that it has some ambitious and delicate plans for media. For example, the country started the Qatar Media City project in 2017 and with the start of the blockade. The Qatar Media City will give services to TV channels, publications, and the social media. An interesting line of development in Qatar Media City is the attention paid to social media so that social media influencers and bloggers will have studios so that they access whatever facilities they need to produce content for free. Another significant policy for Qatar Media City is to make Qatar a hub of freedom of speech and freedom of expression. As HE Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al Thani said:

Well see, our attraction point is that we will have no editorial limits. We will have a code of ethics. Now this code of ethics to simply explain it to you, is that we trust that those media outlets that come here, are responsible—responsible for what they say and their actions. We will not have any limitations on that sort. And the code of ethics is basically built on responsible media.

[www.gco.gov.qa](http://www.gco.gov.qa)

Media specialists believe that the Qatar Media City will be a major advancement in Qatar's media activities and expect it to significantly promote Qatar influence in the region.

### 4.3 The Economic Profile

Hydrocarbon resources, particularly natural gas, are at the top of the economic profile, as they are the dynamic resources that provide sufficient funds for Qatar to finance all of its developmental, political, and economic plans. Moreover, these resources allow Qatar to fund its activities building its national(nation) brand, including providing support for public diplomacy efforts, the Al Jazeera network, and other tools that are used in parallel profiles.

For this profile, it is important to pay attention to the unique and smart “how” of employing natural wealth and resources in the process of creating the national (nation) brand of Qatar, by highlighting the beneficial relationship between Qatari gas and all people around the world. This is shown obviously in a smart (TV) commercial: a Japanese child is playing an electrical guitar, and suddenly the musical instrument stops working because the child’s father unplugged it, turning it off. This advertisement shows that the child could not practice his hobby (playing guitar), unless his family enjoys the benefits of Qatari gas. Analyzing this commercial, which is broadcast on many international TV channels, shows very important results concerning its content, especially when asking the viewer very provocatively: Now, imagine the world without Qatari gas?

This smart message goes beyond the fact that this natural wealth is an instrument of pressure, facility, or even blackmailing at the international relations level, turning it into a bridge for a beneficial relationship between the source and the consumer. Perhaps this leads us also to understand the relationship that Qatar is seeking to build between Qatar’s natural gas and its national (nation) brand, making people think all the gas that is consumed around the world comes from Qatar and that Qatar takes credit for their ability to use this natural resource and its outputs. Thus, the existence of this state is necessary for big companies just as it is necessary for this Japanese child.

The other side of this economically beneficial relationship is the smart distribution of Qatar’s foreign investment portfolio. For years, Qatar has been seeking to diversify foreign investments away from the oil and gas industry by channeling its sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority, to buy assets in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere. These investments range between service, financial, banking, and real estate sectors, along with agriculture and industry.

This distribution is described as being “smart” because of the vertical and horizontal distribution of these investments, as they include major companies such as those investing in gas and petrochemical ventures (China and Indonesia) and touristic and real estate ventures (Canary Wharf and One Hyde Park in London) and entering into business partnerships with overseas banks such as the British (Barclays). They also include specific projects such as purchasing the famous Harrods stores in London and around the world, as well as projects directly related to ordinary people, i.e., buying shares in companies, car factories, and retail outlets, such as Qatar Holding’s acquisition of Harrods stores for \$2.2 billion, which is visited by 15 million people yearly.

Also, in Britain, Qatar is the most prominent investor in the Sainsbury’s supermarket chain and operates in the retail industry by owning about a

quarter of the company's shares. In addition, Qatar is the largest investor in Song Bird Estates, which owns the business district of Canary Wharf in the British capital.

Qatari Diar owns some famous buildings in London such as the US embassy. Also, the Barwa Real Estate Company, which is 45% owned by Qatari Diar, owns the famous Park House building on Oxford Street. The real estate company Qatar Holding raised its share in the British Song Bird Estates by purchasing 28.5 million new stocks, raising its share to \$27.7 million. Song Bird is one of the largest real estate companies in Britain owning and operating Canary Wharf, the famous financial center of London.

In the industrial sector, Qatar is the third largest investor in Volkswagen, owning 17% of the German company that includes some international brands of cars. The Qatar Investment Authority also increased its share in the German company Porsche to \$7 billion; thus, the share of the Qatar Investment Authority in the company reaches 17%. Qatar Holding lifted its ownership of the German construction group HOCHTIEF, which is one of the largest general construction companies in Europe. Furthermore, Qatar Holding purchased a 6.2% share of Iberdrola, a Spanish private multinational electric utility company, for \$3 billion. In the financial services sector, Qatar dominates more than 15% of the London Stock Exchange, as well as about a 6% share of the British bank Barclays. Qatar is also one of Credit Suisse's largest shareholders, now holding more than 10% of the Swiss banking group.

In the sector of tourism and hospitality, Qatar purchased a tourist resort in Switzerland in a region that rises 600 m above sea level for 300 million Swiss francs, i.e., \$289 million, to renovate it in a new look by early 2014. Qatar also bought a significant stake in Vermont, the international hotel chain from the Kingdom Holding Company run by the Saudi Prince Al Waleed bin Talal. Qatar Holding also purchased the Four Seasons Giza Hotel, the largest hotel in Cairo, Egypt, as well as the commercial attaché First Mall for \$250 million. Qatari Diar acquired the Le Royal Monceau Hotel in France, a work of art hotel, the Raffles Hotel in Singapore, and the MAIA resort in the Seychelles.

Concerning the field of agricultural investment, in 2010, Qatar Holding invested \$2.8 billion in the IPO of the Agricultural Bank of China. Hassad Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Qatar Investment Authority, has an Australia-based investment of \$412 million. This investment is in the sector of agriculture and animal husbandry and seeks in the first stage to produce 150 thousand sheep per year, along with 50 thousand tons of wheat for export to the Qatari market. Interestingly, the agriculture sector witnessed a huge progress after the blockade. According to a report published by Laura Wellesley (2019, [chathamhouse.org](http://chathamhouse.org)), Qatar's domestic food production grew fourfold

during the blockade. For example, the rate of vegetable imports decreased 85–60% during the blockade. Also, the most important progress was made in the dairy industry and Baladna, Qatar's principal dairy producer, played a remarkable role in decreasing the amount of dairy imports (Castelier & Pouré, 2018). In addition, significant advancements were made in the field of water management. Many countries adopted to the so-called “circular” practices to achieve more efficient resource use, which led to significant progress in successful management of water supplies.

Qatari investments also include the entertainment and cinema industry. In 2011, Filmyard Holdings, a joint venture investment group that includes the Qatar Investment Authority, purchased Miramax from Walt Disney for \$663 million. Qatar Holding also signed a title sponsorship deal with the United Kingdom's British Champions Series. Under this agreement, Qatar Holding will be the official partner of the Derby Race held every year in London, as well as the St. Leger Race, the Guineas Race, and others.

Qatari investments do not only focus on the traditional mature investment destinations; they also go to emerging markets in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Indian subcontinent. In total, according to Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al Thani, the former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Qatar plans to invest between \$30 and 35 billion abroad in 2011, and the value of Qatar's foreign investments during 2010 had reached \$20 billion.

On the other hand, Qatar is interested in attracting foreign investment. The well-known *American Chronicle* newspaper published a lengthy report on the best parts of the world now attracting international investment. The report said that Qatar is at the top of these countries. The report pointed out that the ability of Qatar's economy to maintain its status and effectiveness is one of the most significant factors that have made Qatar the best place to attract international investments, especially in light of the recovery of the collapsed real estate sector in European countries and neighboring countries, as well as the recovery of the oil sector and liquefied gas projects. Foreign investment in Qatar reached 5.1% of Qatar's GDP in 2010. Arab social security institutions confirmed Qatar's continuous ability to attract direct investments in 2011, estimating them at no less than \$9 billion. Thus, Qatar comes second to Saudi Arabia in the Arab world in this regard. According to the previous report, Qatar offers the foreign private sector opportunities to contribute to the implementation of investment plans valued at \$125 billion in the next 5 years.

### 4.3.1 Qatar's Economy During the Economic and Political Crises

In June 2019, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published a report in which different aspects of Qatar economy during the political rift in the region and decline in hydrocarbon prices. In this subsection, we will report the key findings of the analysis performed by IMF. These findings were:

1. Qatar's economy has successfully absorbed the shocks from 2014 to 2016 drop in hydrocarbon prices and the 2017 diplomatic rift. The country could keep it ties with the world successfully and built new trade relations. Qatar successfully continued and finished many major infrastructure projects in preparation for World Cup 2020. Qatar also strengthened its policy framework, including fiscal policy and institutions, financial regulation and supervision, and macro-prudential policies. IMF reported that high-frequency economic indicators pointed to a stronger economy for Qatar.
2. Qatar is advancing a comprehensive structural reform agenda to respond to the identified economic challenges. In so doing, Qatar implemented a structural reform to widen the geographical structure of trade and financial transactions, advance the business environment, augment domestic food production, encourage special economic zones, and permit majority foreign ownership of companies. Qatar has also implemented a visa-free program to improve the status of tourism.
3. The findings of IMF also showed that Qatar improved the economic activated and successfully kept the inflation rate subdued. Non-hydrocarbon growth moderated to 4.3% during the third quarter of 2018. The IMF results also indicated that Qatar witnessed a growth in its GDP from 2017 to 2020.
4. Qatar's fiscal position in getting stronger. As stated in IMF report "The central government's fiscal position is estimated at a surplus of 2.3% of GDP in 2018 from a deficit of 6.6% of GDP in 2017" which shows that Qatar's fiscal position got even stronger after the rift in the region and the siege by some Arab countries.
5. The report indicated that liquidity conditions have enhanced and the growth of private-sector credit has augmented. Specifically, the report mentioned that "The recovery in non-resident deposits (by 23% y-o-y by December 2018) and foreign bank funding (up by 23%) helped banks increase private sector credit by 13% y-o-y by December 2018" (p. 13).
6. Qatar external position has improved, and Qatar's banking system remains healthy which is a proof for strong capitalization and high-quality asset.



7. Macro-financial prospects remain favorable and fiscal consolidation has continued. Moreover, the yearly budget rightly continues with the prudent fiscal policy.

All in all, the results of financial reports indicate that Qatari economy has remained prosperous and flourishing during the political rift in the region and Qatar has successfully improved in several domains during the period.

## 4.4 The Humanitarian Profile

For this profile, there is a dynamic collection of Qatari civil society's initiatives and charities, representing the humanitarian side of the Qatari people. We should not overlook the fact that "the people" is a key element of the "national(nation) brand"; thus, it should be introduced and represented to other people in the best and most noble way: serving humanity, helping the needy, and relieving the afflicted.

Such initiatives also provide other essential features in building the "national(nation) brand," such as hospitality and generosity of ethics. Once again, these community-based initiatives reach all parts of the world, regardless of religious, racial, or ethnic barriers. They provide assistance to the people of Gaza; just as they provided it to those affected in the Asian tsunami, hurricane Katrina, the Australian flooding of 2011, and the Japanese earthquake of 2011, as well as providing ships for thousands of displaced people by the armed conflict in Libya in 2011. In 2020, Qatar financed more than \$530 million for humanitarian activities around the world.

What is important is that these humanitarian efforts and aid are distributed by Qataris wearing traditional Qatari clothes, carrying boxes and equipment labeled as "the state of Qatar," transported in aircraft carrying the logo of Qatar Airways, the oryx, which has become a symbol of the state, and the word "Qatar" in bold. Among the most important humanitarian relief organizations operating in the state of Qatar are as follows.

### 4.4.1 Reach Out to Asia (ROTA)

A non-profit organization seeking to build the future by allowing access to education at different levels to all the world's youth. The organization, which was established in 2005, seeks to extract the energies of youth to enhance the prospects for the development of society.



ROTA makes every effort at the domestic level to empower young people and improve the lives of disadvantaged social groups within Qatar by organizing youth conferences, training programs, and global volunteer trips. ROTA's various activities fall under the following broad headings: support, development, contact, and action.

- **Support:** ROTA supports activities in Asia and the Middle East by providing technical, financial, and moral assistance.
- **Development:** ROTA develops the local education sector's infrastructure, capacities, and programs.
- **Contact:** ROTA links schools and universities in Qatar to the educational institutions in developing countries in order for these institutions to share educational information and knowledge, as well as learning resources.
- **Action:** ROTA provides relief aid in emergency situations, whether natural or manmade. It also focuses on increasing access to education facilities in crisis situations.

#### **4.4.2 Sheikh Eid Charity Association**

By the end of 2010, Sheikh Eid Charity announced that it had carried out tens of thousands of charitable and relief projects in the past 3 years, at a cost of more than 530 million riyals. The foundation built 239 education institutions around the world. It also drilled 3304 wells within 3 years, an average of close to three wells per day. These wells have helped rural and pastoral communities, saving them from drought, and allowing them to take care of their livestock and to resume a normal life, especially in poorer communities like Somalia and across the Sahel in Africa. In this regard, the foundation's projects conducted humanitarian action that saved thousands of children from the risk of hunger, homelessness, and behavioral deviation.

In the field of relief, the Sheikh Eid Charity Association accomplished 1104 relief projects, an average of 368 projects per year in the past 3 years. Through these years, the foundation made efforts to provide rapid and effective support for hundreds of thousands of people who have found themselves victims of various types of natural disasters. In the health field, the foundation contributed to the construction of 25 health centers throughout the world.

### 4.4.3 Qatar Charity

Qatar Charity is a non-governmental organization, founded in 1992 for the development of Qatari society and other needy communities. It works in the fields of sustainable development, poverty reduction, disaster relief, and emergency response.

Qatar Charity endeavors to serve all needy people and communities regardless of their color, sex, religion, race, or nationality. It has been in a consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1997. It has also been a member of the General Founding Conference of the Arab Network for NGOs in Cairo since 1999 and is one of the largest charities in the Gulf.

Qatar Charity works in different countries around the world and its activities cover many countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa, including Qatar, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, Bahrain, Sudan, Somalia, Chad, Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, and Sri Lanka.

The main foci in the field of relief are shelter, food and non-food aid, water, healthcare, educational services, and income-generating activities. In the field of education and culture, the focus is on basic education, literacy, training and vocational rehabilitation, and youth work.

### 4.4.4 Qatar Authority for Charitable Activities (QACA)

QACA is a national government agency based in Doha, the capital of Qatar. It was established by Law No. 13 in 2004 and aims to develop, support, and promote charitable and humanitarian work, supervising and controlling them within the framework of the general policy of the state of Qatar. At the global level, at the end of 2010, the state of Qatar in cooperation with the United Nations launched the Consolidated Humanitarian Appeal of 2011 to raise about \$7.4 billion to provide humanitarian assistance to some 50 million people in 28 countries around the world.

The Assistant Foreign Minister for Follow Up Affairs, Mr. Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Rumaihi, the representative of the state of Qatar at this event, said that launching this humanitarian appeal from Doha reflected Qatar's and the international community's keenness on the necessity of joint work, coordination, and intensifying efforts to alleviate humanitarian catastrophes and disasters around the world that result in millions of victims.

Qatar managed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 before the deadline that was set by the United Nations. Qatari humanitarian and developmental assistance is a key element of the state policy in the field of international cooperation. The total aid and development assistance provided by the state of Qatar in the period from 2005 to 2009 amounted to about \$2 billion, benefiting about 106 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas, and other parts of the world.

Qatar's former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al Thani, launched a state initiative in conjunction with the Institute of World Peace. The initiative aims to create a force for humanitarian operations that will provide a framework for the cooperation of countries willing to contribute under the umbrella of the United Nations. The "HOPEFOR" initiative is described as a humanitarian force deployed in areas affected by disasters in the exact same way as the United Nations' peacekeeping forces are deployed in areas of armed conflict. The 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the draft resolution submitted by the state of Qatar entitled "Improving the Effectiveness and Coordination of Military and Civil Defense Assets for Natural Disaster Response," under agenda item (69 a) of the UN General Assembly entitled "Strengthening the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations."

#### 4.4.5 Qatar Fund for Development

As we noted earlier in this chapter, Qatar also allotted budgets for development in other countries through its QFFD program. This fund was allotted to humanitarian projects around the world and was allocated to developing education in different regions and countries. For example, Qatar spent \$1.3 million for school construction in Tirana, which benefited more than 800 teachers and students.

Also, Qatar constructed a new fully equipped, multi-facility, 58-classroom school in Kazakhstan's Akimat of Astana city. The budget spent on this project was more than \$12.7 million, which benefited more than 1200 students. Moreover, one of the biggest Qatari projects was facilitating access to education for students in Mali. Qatar contributed \$40 million to accomplish the "Education Above All (EAA)" projects in Mali by providing the government with a concessional loan of \$24.5 million and an amount of \$15.5 million as a grant in association with EAA. In addition, Qatar contributed \$5 million to develop an institute for Palestinian studies. Additionally, in 2015, Qatar signed a 3-year contract with the Unite Lebanon Youth Project for \$1.5

million to deliver scholarships for 42 Palestinian students to study at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU).

Qatar also helped to develop housing and infrastructure at different countries as a part of its QFFD program. It constructed the H. H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Hospital for the Rehabilitation and Artificial Limbs in Qaza as a part of its program to develop education and infrastructure in this region.

Qatar also assisted in road construction in Sultanate of Oman and participated in rebuilding projects in Somali by constructing two roads for a total amount of \$165 million. In Sudan, Qatar assisted in reconstruction of ten villages in Darfur's five states for about \$70 millions. It also spent \$2 million for training public health in Sudan. Qatar also aided the wounded people in truck bombings in Somalia as a part of humanitarian activities.

The data released in May 2021 shows that Qatar spent funds for humanitarian projects in Sudan, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Syria. Moreover, in 2020, the Emir of Qatar donated more than \$100 million to support small island developing countries and the underdeveloped countries which were combating the effects of climate change. Qatar's endeavors are not limited to these, and they financed different projects to support green job opportunities, food industry, and agriculture in GCC counties as well. Qatar also builds healthcare centers in Mogadishu, Ethiopia, and Gaza.

#### 4.4.6 The Civil Society and Institutions Profile

In the process of building a "national brand," there is no doubt that the role of the individual is very important, especially when it is polished and organized in the framework of civil society's organizations and formations. Civil society is defined as the overall political, economic, social, and cultural institutions that operate in their different fields in relative independence from the state's authority and the private sector. Civil society organizations consist of bodies called secondary organizations such as NGOs, trade and labor unions, businesses, chambers of commerce and industry, charitable foundations, civic associations, voluntary bodies, human rights associations, women's rights associations, sports clubs, consumer protection associations, and similar voluntary organizations.

Despite the differences in the names and forms of civil society organizations, they share some essential characteristics, such as being private, non-profit, independent, and voluntary organizations. The main tasks and functions of civil society organizations are as follows:

- Bringing order and discipline to society.
- Achieving democracy by providing channels of voluntary participation in the public sphere and in the political sphere. Also, civil society's organizations and associations are tools for individual initiatives expressing free will and active participation stemming from volunteering, and not the compulsory mobilization imposed by the state to pretend having popularity and support.
- Social and political upbringing, developing the values of loyalty, belonging, cooperation, solidarity, willingness to take responsibility, the initiative to take action, as well as attention to and enthusiasm for public affairs.
- Meeting the particular needs and the protection of fundamental human rights.
- Providing services and helping the needy.
- Achieving social solidarity.
- Overall development.

These functions integrate with each other. Civil society's protection of the rights and interests of individuals and groups does not conflict with being a tool for organizing and maintaining the stability and unity of the society as a whole. And, its defending of the special interests of particular groups does not prevent it from being committed to issues of general interest to all or providing assistance to vulnerable and needy groups. Standing against the state in the case of aggression on freedom does not conflict with helping it in the implementation of development plans and programs, etc. As these functions are integrated with state functions, it could be said that there is what seems to be a sharing of economic and social responsibilities between the government and civil society.

Given the growing importance of civil society organizations, Qatari society was concerned with establishing such organizations, so the number of civil society institutions, bodies, and organizations in Qatar reached more than 20 professional, charitable, cultural, and social organizations in 2010. The programs offered by these institutions are varied, and the base of beneficiaries of their activities and programs was expanded to include all segments of society, domestically and internationally, such as cultural institutions and associations, including the Qatar Fine Arts Society, the Qatar Photographic Society, the Qatar-Japan Friendship Association, the Al-Balagh Cultural Society, and Islam Online, as well as charitable societies and institutions, including the Qatar Red Crescent Society, the Qatar Charitable Society, the Sheikh Eid bin Mohammed Al Thani Charity organization, the Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah

Al Thani Foundation for Humanitarian Services, and the Sheikh Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani Charitable Foundation.

Professional institutions and associations include the Association of Physicians of Qatar, the Qatar Society of Petroleum Engineers, the Qatar Society of Engineers, the Qatari Lawyers Association, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Qatar, and the Gulf Heart Association. Social institutions and associations include the Reach Out to Asia Foundation (ROTA), the Silatech Foundation, the Social Development Center, and the Young Arab Leaders Association. Institutions and associations that serve particular groups include the Qatar Society for Rehabilitation of Special Needs, the Qatar National Cancer Society, and the Qatar Diabetes Association.

Qatar's national interest in human rights is reflected in the establishment of several institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in the full sense of the concept. At the governmental level, many departments concerned with human rights have been established within the ministries of the state, for example, but not limited to, the Office of Human Rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Interior, and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. Private institutions have been established as a public utility, such as the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking (QFCHT) and the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children. At the non-governmental level, the National Commission for Human Rights was established, as well as many civil society organizations concerned with human rights and development. In May 2008, in conjunction with the sixth Doha Interfaith Conference, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue was inaugurated. It was founded after the recommendations of the fifth Doha Interfaith Conference, held in May 2007. The center aims to disseminate and promote the culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

In May 2007, Qatar hosted the Second Forum on Democracy and Political Reform in the Arab World, which resulted in establishing the Arab Foundation for Democracy, the first of its kind in the Arab world, based in Doha. The foundation aims to encourage the region to promote a culture of democracy. It is worth mentioning that Qatar has donated \$10 million in support of the work of the foundation. The foundation issued its first report on the state of democracy in the Arab countries in 2008. This report was based on 17 national reports.

## 4.5 The Cultural Profile

The most prominent active cultural institution in Qatar is the Qatar Foundation, which for years has focused on academic and cultural dimensions, employing both in the framework of creating the “national brand” (nation brand). Thus, the Qatar Foundation put educational and academic activity as a top priority by investing heavily in higher education and attracting international universities to open branches and programs in Doha. This was shown most specifically in the “Education City” complex, which now hosts Weill Cornell Medical College (2002), Georgetown University (2005), local branches of Texas A&M University (2003), Carnegie Mellon University (2004), Virginia Commonwealth University and School of the Arts in Qatar (1997), and the Qatar Science and Technology Park (opened in March 2009). Therefore, the Qatar Foundation’s Education City is the largest complex of American universities outside the United States.

Education City is distinguished by the fact that it attracts Qatari students, students from neighboring countries in the Middle East and South Asia, as well as other foreign students living in Qatar or the Gulf states. The Qatar Foundation provides integrated programs, starting from pre-school to high school up to university faculties and then to the post-graduate level. This unique experience provides contact and exchange of experiences and expertise among a diverse mix of students from various cultural and social backgrounds. Without a doubt, Education City is essentially a tool in the process of creating the “national(nation) brand,” and it influences young people of the new future generation, whether Qataris or their peers coming from Gulf, Arab, Islamic, or Western countries.

On the cultural side, the Qatar Foundation, founded in 1995, sponsors the Doha Debates, which began for the first time in 2004 in the form of a television series and soon turned into a monthly forum to discuss political and cultural issues affecting the Middle East. The majority of participants in these discussions are Qatari university students, as well as students from universities in the Middle East and the Islamic world. The British Broadcasting Company, the BBC, broadcasts the Doha Debates regularly, and they are watched by nearly 300 million viewers all over the world.

Outside the Education City, the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) aims to achieve its objectives via the integration of learning and teaching with scientific research through adopting an interdisciplinary approach. The Doha Institute aims to follow the objectives of space for intellectual independence,



critical awareness and intellectual responsibility, commitment to academic standards, and Arab contribution to knowledge production.

The culture profile is also interested in attracting political and intellectual leaders in the world by attracting international research centers such as the Brookings Center and establishing new centers such as the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha. The Doha Brookings Center conducts research and programs in the following areas:

1. Governance issues, such as the analysis of constitutions and laws of media and society.
2. Humanitarian development and economic issues, such as the analysis of policies in the field of education, health, environment, business, energy, and the economy.
3. International affairs issues, such as the analysis of security frameworks, political and military conflicts, and other contemporary issues.

The Doha Brookings Center also conducts independent political research on social, economic, and geopolitical issues, engaging states and communities with a Muslim majority, including relations with the United States. The center receives advice and guidance concerning research and programs from the International Board of Advisors headed by Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani; the co-chair, Strobe Talbott, President of the Brookings Institution; and the membership of Madeleine Albright, Samuel Berger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Edward Dgerjian, and others.

The Brookings Doha Center is the research platform of the Brookings Institution in the region and is open to all points of view. The agenda of the center includes interrelated essentials, such as calling for dialogue on public policy with political leaders, businessmen, and intellectual leaders from the region and the United States; hosting visiting scholars occupying prestigious positions in academia and public policy to write analytical research; and inviting the media to publish Brookings analyses. The Brookings Doha Center, in cooperation with the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contributes to the design and organization of the annual US-Islamic World Forum, which brings together prominent leaders in the fields of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society for necessary dialogue and debate.

Alongside the American Brookings Center, the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha was established in 2010, headed by the Arab thinker Dr. Azmi Bishara. On its website, the center identifies itself as an independent research institute and think tank for the study of history and social sciences, with particular emphasis on the applied social sciences.



Through its academic and research activities, the center strives to foster communication between Arab intellectuals and specialists in the social sciences and humanities in general; to build synergies between them and their societal and national concerns; and to network with Arab and international research centers and think tanks. These intellectual exchanges and interactions will be channeled through the process of research and critique, as well as the development of epistemological and conceptual tools and knowledge-building mechanisms. While committed to advancing the Arab nation's causes, it does so by means of edification. It is not only based on the premise that progress does not contradict Arab culture and identity but also on the fact that progress is not possible without the advancement of society and all its constituent groups while respecting its historical circumstances, culture, and language.

The introduction of the center states, It is common knowledge that an American orientation has long dominated political science discourse and methodology, especially in the field of so-called "Middle East Studies." This represents an intellectual expression of the political, economic, and media hegemony exercised and maintained by US think tanks and intellectual institutions, whose research programs are driven by the general policy needs and interests of the United States. Such intellectual compliance is secured not only by the agency of donor agendas and orientations but also by the pervasive use of specific intellectual, terminological, and conceptual tools. Moreover, by catering primarily to a market of US policy and decision-makers, US think tanks are often prone to oversimplification—reductionism and selective observation at best and distortion of facts and reconfirmation of their assumptions at worst. From here emerged the idea of establishing an Arab research institution whose work, activity, and output focus on exposing and contesting the research produced by Western think tanks in the Arab world, as well as research about the Arab world.

The center examines geostrategic, political, economic, and social issues. Thus, by providing a credible, politically independent, and professional Arab alternative which pursues objective, original research, it would challenge the mainstream insofar as it is critical, controversial, and provocative in its approach.

Once again, the vertical and horizontal presence is repeated in the aspect of culture. Examining the two models of centers for research and studies previously mentioned and their ideas and thinkers, correlating them to the educational (the Qatar Foundation), leads to the conclusion that the cultural activity in the framework of "national (nation) brand" creation extends vertically: from the students and learners to the academic content, intellectual caliber, and training expertise. And, it extends horizontally: from the extreme of

the Western schools of thought (see the list of participants at the Brookings Institution) to the extreme of Arab nationalist thought (see the list of management and fellowship of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, headed by the Arab Intellectual Dr. Azmi Bishara) extending through Islamic thought by adopting the International Union for Muslim Scholars and its president, Dr. Yusuf Al Qaradawi. This presence and extension through intellectual mainstreams is perfectly consistent with the former Qatari Prime Minister's description when he noted the "contributions from men of science and thought in realizing this vision."

Concerning the profile of culture in Qatar, there is significant interest in museums and a focus on heritage as a key component in the system of elements that create the "national(nation) brand" and an important tool that represents several aspects of the Qatari character, as well as customs, traditions, and values through which the people of Qatar view others. Since early 2000, the state of Qatar has established and updated a number of public and specialized museums including the National Museum of Qatar, the Museum of Arms and Armours, the Heritage Collection Museum, the Museum of Photography, and the Arab Museum of Modern Art. The most important one is the Museum of Islamic Art, which was inaugurated in 2008. Given these projects, it could be concluded that the recently formed state of Qatar (compared to neighboring countries—Iran and Saudi Arabia) is seeking to find its roots extended in its Arab and Islamic heritage, in hope that these roots would:

1. Be factor of strengthening its presence and protection.
2. Provide a global dimension by highlighting its contribution to the heritage of mankind and human thought.
3. Confirm the legitimacy of the state of Qatar, as well as its originality and extension in history, thus overcoming the "weakness" associated with the geographic and demographic limitations.

We cannot talk about the dynamic aspect of culture without mentioning Bloomsbury-Qatar Foundation Publishing (BQFP), a unique joint venture between the Qatar Foundation and the British publisher Bloomsbury. BQFP publishes literary works, as well as references, academic, and educational books. The works are in Classical Arabic and in English with high-quality translations and are distributed to an Arabic and English readership of all ages. BQFP provides a diversity of literary culture from Qatar and the region, focusing on the development of Arab culture through international literature. BQFP's adoption of the program of practical workshops for creative writing is characterized by discovering and developing emerging literary talent. BQFP

also provides educational grant programs in Doha as Bloomsbury does in London, allowing the learners to take advantage of a unique experience in publishing skills. In cooperation with local and international institutions, BQFP organized the annual celebration of World Book Day, a global event to celebrate books, in order to encourage Qataris of all ages to enjoy reading.

On the cultural side also, a dynamic emerging music group, the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, was founded to develop culture and society in Qatar and the region. Formed in 2008, the band plays Eastern and Western pieces of music and is composed of 101 players from 30 countries. Led by the Maestro Lorin Maazel, the group plays musical works of great international composers like Beethoven. The group has the great artist Marcel Khalife as its resident composer. He composed two concertos, “Arabian Concerto” and “Salute.” The orchestra has gained global attention and fame, playing in Washington, Paris, and Italy. The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra has developed a program for school bands as a part of its mission to expand musical awareness of classical, oriental, and Western music. The Qatar Music Academy (QMA) is a new addition to the Qatar Foundation, aiming to produce professional musicians able to play both Western and Arab music. Opened in January 2011, QMA’s overall ambition is to increase the appreciation of music within the Qatari community.

## 4.6 The Sports Profile

This profile is crowned by the victory achieved by Qatar to host the World Cup in 2022. However, before going into receiving the honor of the first Arab and Islamic country to organize the World Cup, it is worth mentioning that Qatar paved the way for the World Cup with some achievements at the level of organizing other international sports events, Qatar’s success in hosting the 15th Asian Olympic Games in 2006. Doha was the first city in the region and the second in West Asia to host the Asian Games. The following list presents the major sport events in Qatar in the past two decades:

- 2004—Asian Handball Championships
- 2004—ITTF World Team Table Tennis Championships
- 2005—Asian Basketball Championships
- 2005—World Weightlifting Championships
- 2005—West Asian Games
- 2006—Asian Sailing Championships
- 2006—Asian Games

- 2008—Asian Indoor Athletics Championships
- 2008—Asian Youth Wrestling Championships
- 2008—Asian Optimist Sailing Championships
- 2009—Asian Fencing Championships
- 2009—FIVB Club World Championships
- 2009—ISF World Gymnasiade
- 2010—IAAF World Indoor Championships
- 2010—ISAF World Junior 470 Sailing C'ships
- 2011—Asian Football Cup
- 2011—Arab Games
- 2012—Asian Shooting Championships
- 2014—FINA Short Course World Championships
- 2015—IHF Handball World Championships
- 2015—Doha 2015 IPC Athletics World Championships
- 2015—World Amateur Boxing Championships
- 2015—World Robot Olympiad
- 2016—UCI Road Cycling World Championships
- 2018—FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships
- 2019—IAAF World Championships
- 2019—FIFA Club World Cup
- 2020—AFC Champions League
- 2022—FIFA World Cup

Qatar has also organized many international sporting events, such as the Qatar Masters Golf Championship, the Qatar Open Tennis Tournament, and the Qatar Squash International Tournament. Before making the bid for hosting the 2022 World Cup, Qatar implemented a number of sports infrastructure and facilities projects, including the inauguration of Qatar's Academy of Sports Excellence (Aspire) for young athletic hopefuls, offering them world-class training by experts and trainers from all over the world.

Qatar was also supported in the bid for the World Cup by the acquisition of sports rights from the largest paid television network in the Arab region, ART, which owned the exclusive rights to broadcast the matches of the World Cups of 2010 and 2014 in the Arab East and North Africa. After this historic deal at the level of the Arab media, the Al Jazeera network had the rights to broadcast World Cup matches and most of the European tournaments and leagues to millions of viewers across the Arab world.

The World Cup bid was the most prominent event in the sports profile, as it brought the Qatari effort to a global level, providing the “(nation) brand” with unprecedented space. Amazingly, the bid to host the 2022 World Cup was inspired by the Qatari strategy to create a national brand relying on the

elements of power in this national brand as it managed to overcome the weakness of climate or “hot weather” and formulate a “cool” mental image of Qatar by having the visual materials attached to the bid focus on scenes and clips showing the sea, beach, water sports and activities, as well as trees and flags flying through the air along the Doha Corniche.

The bright and cool colors were also employed in the media and illustrative materials attached to the bid. More importantly, Qatar provided a bid that includes modern sports facilities equipped with air conditioning systems that are capable of moderating the temperature of the stadiums and stands. Because football is a popular sport, the bid file highlighted the national brand of the Qatari people. The attached visual materials included photographs that show the people’s love for football and eagerness to host the World Cup, highlighting the tendency of hospitality and welcoming guests inherent in the Arab character. Thus, the bid file presented Qatar as a tourist destination with “cool weather and (warm) feelings.”

The bid file included other aspects related to health facilities, tourist destinations, hotel facilities, and other infrastructure in Qatar. More recently, Qatari investments in the sports sector expanded to include the partnership deal between the Al Jazeera Sports Channel and Canal Plus to broadcast French Football League matches in the local market between the years 2012 and 2016 for €510 million, of which the Qatari channel would pay €90 million, noting that it also recently acquired the rights to broadcast internationally as of 2012–2013.

The government-owned Qatar Sports Investment Company, established in 2005 by the Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, purchased 70% of the French club Paris Saint-Germain, while the former American owner, the Colony Capital company, kept 30% share of the club. The Saint-Germain deal was just one in a series of deals by Qatar. It was preceded by buying the Spanish Primera Liga football club Málaga CF by Sheikh Abdullah Al Thani, a member of the ruling family.

The non-profit Qatar Foundation has signed a sponsorship contract with FC Barcelona. The Qatar Sports Investment Company and Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development entered a new global partnership with FC Barcelona until 2016 that is worth €166 million. Observers believe that the goal Qatar is attempting to achieve through its government or civil sports companies is to strengthen its presence on the world international map, especially after gaining the honor of hosting the 2022 World Cup for the first time in the history of the region, as well as to transfer the global expertise and capacity of Qatar.

In the newspaper *L’Equipe*, Pascal Boniface, a French specialist in geopolitics, analyzed the role of sports in the context of Qatari public diplomacy,

saying that “Qatar chose sports diplomacy to exist on the map... in a geopolitically troubled region, and soft power, image, and attraction are key factors... Today, it is difficult for any country that may have bad intentions towards Qatar to take a step as long as Qatar has the vision and clarity it has now ... It is turning into a small superpower because it plays a diplomatic role that surpasses the potential of its population. To be a major player in global sports will cause it to be a major player in global diplomacy.” The French newspaper *L'Equipe* quoted Sheikh Khalid Al Thani as saying that “Qatar is interested in sports recognized by the International Olympic Committee. The goal is to be recognized as an integrated country, not only as a source of gas and oil. We need to have the trust of the world, and this could be achieved through good organization of global sporting events.”

Moreover, Qatar has shown its interest in sports by constructing world-class stadiums and its excellent sporting facilities. Normally, many outstanding football clubs in the world spent part of their training season in Qatar to get ready for their national and international competitions. Many people believe that Qatar's investment in building world-class stadiums for World Cup 2022 and discussions about the excellence of the facilities for the event has introduced Qatar as a country interested in developing sportsmanship, peace, and joy around the world. Below, we have included some photos of these newly built stadiums.

As can be seen, the name and façade of the stadiums have been chosen so that they promote Qatari and Arabic culture during the World Cup 2020.

## 4.7 The Touristic Profile

The tools Qatar uses to develop tourism in order to contribute to the process of creating the national brand are diverse. There are many projects for the development of infrastructure and hotel capacity. Qatar is also interested in business tourism, conferences, and exhibitions and other tools that seek to attract the world's attention to know more about Qatar and its potential. Although tourism in Qatar faces intense competition from neighboring countries and the region, tourism remains a supportive and essential tool in reinforcing other profiles by providing the necessary facilities to host sports events, as well as political, economic, and cultural conferences, etc.

Qatar Airways remains the most prominent entity in the touristic profile. Within a few years, the national airway, which was re-launched in 1997, succeeded in becoming a world-class airway that in early 2011 flew to over 100 destinations across the world.

In 2011, Skytrax World ranked Qatar Airways the third best airline in the world, according to a poll that included about 18 million passengers from around the world. According to the same poll, Qatar Airways was also named Best Business Class Catering and Best Airline in the Middle East for the fifth year in a row. By the year 2021, Qatar Airways will be reaching more than 130 destinations worldwide with a modern fleet of over 120 last-generation aircraft. Based on international air transport rating organization Skytrax, Qatar Airways has won the following prizes during the past few years:

- Airline of the Year (five times)
- World's Best Business Class
- Best Business Class Seat
- Best Airline in the Middle East

In parallel with the development of the national airways, Qatar has been working since 1995 to establish a new international airport according to modern standards and facilities. In January 2005 the first phase of the project started, scheduled for completion in 2011. After the first phase completed, the new airport will serve up to 24 million passengers a year. This number reached over 50 million passengers yearly after the completion of construction operations in 2015.

What Qatar Airways does is no less relevant and influential to people of all backgrounds, nationalities, and languages than the other elements interacting in the process of creating the “national brand” of the state of Qatar. The role of Qatar Airways is as follows:

1. Transferring the largest possible number of passengers to, from, and across Doha to all parts of the world.
2. Conveying the “national brand” and all aspects of it to the world, including touristic, cultural, anthropological aspects, etc.
3. Contributing to charitable and civil society initiatives through participation in humanitarian campaigns led by public diplomacy or civil society institutions.
4. Promoting tourism in Qatar through organizing attractive programs to convince travelers to stay for a few nights in Doha on their indirect flights.

Since 2006, Qatar Airways' logo, which is shown on the tail and wings of its planes, has been significantly redesigned. The word “Qatar” and the oryx logo that symbolizes Qatar became bigger. This could be interpreted as an advertisement that travels the world day and night, crossing countries and



continents, to introduce Qatar to the peoples of the earth. There is no doubt that the investments of Qatar Airways in advertising in international media and initiatives of supporting athletic, artistic, cultural, and humanitarian events across the world all contribute to establishing the national brand of Qatar.

In addition to Qatar Airways, Qatar has tried to introduce and publicize its tourism attractions as well. Some of these tourism attractions include Katara Cultural Village, Souq Waqif, The Pearl Qatar, Doha Corniche, Aspire Park, and Museum of Islamic Art. The data from [www.worlddata.info](http://www.worlddata.info) indicates that Qatar is becoming more and more popular as a tourism destination.

Moreover, the number of visitors to Qatar is increasing exponentially, which shows that the Qatar's policies for attracting tourism have been successful. The data presented in the reports by WorldData website also show that Qatar's revenues from tourism have increased even during the economic crises in the world and after the siege by Saudi Arabia and its allied Arab counties ([www.worlddata.info](http://www.worlddata.info)). In summary, the results show that establishing and promoting tourism policies have been successful and have played an important role in establishing Qatar's national brand.

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# 5

## The Blockade, Social Media, and National Identity

**Abstract** This chapter elaborates on the links between the blockade of Qatar and its relationship with Qatari nationals' psychological well-being and their sense of national identity. To this end, the chapter reviews the research on various psychological and attitudinal effects of the blockade on Qatari people. Moreover, it presents the research on how the development of a sense of national identity influenced Qataris' well-being during the blockade. Finally, the chapter presents the results of research on the use of social media before and after the blockade and how social media were used to show national identity and support for the government after the blockade.

### **By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:**

- Develop an understanding of recent research on the Qatar blockade
- Learn about the psychological and attitudinal effects of the blockade
- Understand how development of a sense of national identity influenced Qataris' well-being during the blockade
- The main social networking applications used in Qatar by Qataris and Non-Qataris
- The use of social media before and after the blockade and how social media were used to support the government after the blockade

## 5.1 Qatar Blockade, Well-Being and Social Identity

After the inception of the blockade in 2017, the Qatari National Human Rights Committee (QNHRC) reported that the blockade and the closure of borders created a sense of fear and risks of adverse psychological outcomes and led to damages between Arab cultures and societies in the region. After the blockade, the researchers aimed to examine the social-psychological effects of the siege of Qatar on Qatari people. An important line of research in this regard was to examine the effects of the blockade on Qatari people's self-esteem, well-being, and identity. There are some studies on well-being and mental health of Qatari migrant and non-migrant people. Researchers such as Schoenbach et al. (2018) reported that mental health problems are rather frequent among Qatari young people. Moreover, Al-Attiyah and Nasser (2016) found that Qatari women were higher in terms of life satisfaction than men. Furthermore, Abdel-Khalek (2013) reported that there were positive relationships between religiosity, mental health, and subjective well-being among Qatari men.

However, until recently, there was a lack of high-quality research on mental health, self-esteem, and identity among young adult citizens in Qatar (Al-Rashid et al., 2021; Amin et al., 2021). Moreover, there was a dearth of studies on the effects of the blockade on such psychological characteristics among Qatari people. Recently, some researchers have used the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to examine Qatari nationals' sense of identity and its associations with their psychological health and functioning. To address this gap, Amin et al. (2021), in a large-scale study, investigated the psychological, socio-political, and identity-related outcomes of the blockade. Using self-report data, they examined the relationship between self-esteem, national identity, perceived threat, and well-being among 1410 secondary school student in Qatar. They found that self-esteem and perceived threat significantly negatively predicted well-being while self-esteem positively predicted. Amin et al. (2021) reported that national identity did not predict well-being significantly. Amin et al. concluded that young Qataris, showing lower levels of threat and higher levels of self-esteem, had stronger levels of overall well-being.

Moreover, Al-Rashid et al. (2021) examined the effect of the blockade of Qatar on sense of belonging to the national identity among Qatari people. They also investigated the role of national identity in Qataris' attitudes toward the blockade and their perceived threat, self-esteem, and psychological

well-being and reported that participants' degree of belonging to the Qatari national identity was the highest when compared to their level of belonging to the Arab or the Gulf identity. Moreover, their results showed that Qatari national identity was positively correlated with negative attitudes toward the blockade, perceived threat, self-esteem, and psychological well-being. Al-Rashid et al. (2021) found that Qatari national identity functioned as a mediator both between negative attitudes toward the blockade and psychological well-being and between perceived threat and self-esteem.

## 5.2 The Attitudes of Qatari People About the Blockade

Al-Sayed et al. (2017) in a large-scale study aimed to examine Qatari people's attitudes toward the economic, political, and social developments that were resulted from the blockade. They reported their findings in regard to five main domains including the legal, political, economic, human development, and social implications. Prior to going through these five key aspects, it is important to note that Al-Sayed et al. (2017) believed that the decision to blockade Qatar was made only by the leaders of the blockading countries and the people of these countries not only were against such an act but also were surprised by such a decision. The results of the survey administered by Al-Sayed et al. showed several interesting results about the Qataris beliefs about the blockade and the political situation wherein they were. Their findings indicated that democratic participation in the parliamentary elections would not allow political conflicts to arise rapidly (62% of the respondents agreed with this idea). It is worth mentioning that recently, in October 2021, Qatar held its first Shura Council elections through which 30 individuals elected directly by people. The participation rate in the elections in terms of candidacy and voting indicates that Qatari people have become more interested in political affairs after the blockade. Al-Sayed et al. (2017) reported that the percentage of interest in political issues moved from 49% to 90% after the blockade. Moreover, the results indicated that 78% of the participants considered the blockade as the most important issue for Qatar during the blockade. Furthermore, the results showed that Qatari people are highly aware of the relationship with neighbors and Gulf Corporation Council (GCC). Al-Sayed et al. reported that the participants believed that Qatar should aim to be independent from the regional powers and showed a lack of confidence in the regional environment. Also, the participants had differing views about the

role of Qatar in the crisis and its responsibility. While some believed that Qatari government should try to normalize the ties with the countries, some other believed that Qatari government is not responsible for the situation.

The results related to the role of Qatar and Al Jazeera network indicated that 92% of the participants believed that Qatar should continue support for Gaza people. Moreover, a majority of the participants (58%) stated that Al Jazeera plays a significant role in pursuing Qatar's political interests. Additionally, they believed that a major shift has happened in people's beliefs about their allies. The survey showed that the participants rated UAE (66%) and Saudi Arabia (11%) as the most threatening and Iran (1%) as the least threatening regional powers to Qatar. They also rated Turkey and Kuwait as their biggest allies. Moreover, 92% were very satisfied with how Qatar managed the political crisis successfully.

In terms of economy, the results by Al-Sayed et al. reported that around 80% of Qatari people were not worried about the economic issues during the blockade since they did not face any economic challenges and issues in the market. Interestingly, 96% had positive attitudes toward the future of the business and commerce in the country, and 87% believed that the family financial situation would be better off even with the blockade. Of course, some investors who had businesses in the blockading countries reported that there were some damages to their investments. Instead, 77% of the participants reported that they had good investment opportunities inside Qatar. In addition, in terms of availability and price of products, the results of Al-Sayed et al. (2017) showed that participants had access to high-quality products. Qatari citizens also expressed that they had negative attitudes toward products from blockading countries, with 82% reporting that they did not buy products from those countries. Overall, the results showed positive attitudes toward the local market and the economy of Qatar.

With respect to the social implications, the survey study by Al-Sayed et al. (2017) reported interesting findings. While there have been some political tensions between the Arab states in the region, the political conflicts did not affect communication between the citizens who have many familial and kinship ties. However, the blockade of Qatar was the first to affect communication between people. Al-Sayed et al. reported that 75% of Qatar citizens had relatives in the blockading countries, with the majority of the participants saying that they could not meet their relatives in the blockading countries. Thus, the blockade negatively influenced the cohesion among Qataris and their relatives in the blockading countries. Moreover, 73% of the participants expressed that they would not travel to blockading countries for tourism

purposes after it ends. This was because they wanted to show their support for the government's policies and decisions.

Finally, in regard to human development, Al-Sayed et al. reported that Qatar pursued its human development objectives. Al-Sayed et al. (2017) believed Qatarization policy setting unrealistic targets due to the percentage of Qataris in the labor market. However, they mentioned that the diversification policy of educational opportunities can positively contribute to having qualified working Qataris.

### 5.3 Social Media in Qatar: Communication During the Blockade

The use of social media is very prevalent among Qatari people. Qataris use different social media such as Flickr, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. Based on the available information, there are around 2.87 million social media users in Qatar, which is almost 98% of the population in January 2021 ([datareportal.com](http://datareportal.com), 2021). The country has 4.67 million mobile connections which is 160.6% of the total population ([datareportal.com](http://datareportal.com), 2021).

The information made available by Qatari Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in 2015 shows that most people in Qatar are familiar with social media. El Gazzar (2015) reported that Facebook has more 400,000 registered users from Qatar. Moreover, El Gazzar reports from Gulfaslo that Qatar has the fourth highest percentage of Facebook use in the Arab world. Based on Dubai School of Government (2013), 34% of Qatari people have Facebook accounts and 13% have LinkedIn accounts. Of course, the data show that non-Qatari residents are more aware of social networks such as Facebook and use it more than the Qatari ones. The data by Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (2015) shows that people in Qatar were aware of different social networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, BBM, and Instagram. The results also indicated that WhatsApp and Facebook were the most used social networks in Qatar.

Moreover, the data of the usage and awareness of social media for Qatar citizens is lower than that of the whole population including non-Qatari residents (Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, 2015). The numbers have gone under significant changes since 2015 so that, based on the information presented by [Statcounter.com](http://Statcounter.com), 66.21% of people had Facebook accounts in September 2021. The statistics also show that Twitter is the second favorable social networking application in Qatar with 16.96%. The other

most used social networks are Pinterest (5.81%), YouTube (5.3%), Instagram (4.19%), and LinkedIn (0.78%). In terms of messaging applications, available data from Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (2015) shows that WhatsApp is the most widely used application in Qatar with a rate of 96% in the country.

Research studies on communication pattern of Qatari citizens before or during the blockade are not numerous. In this section, we first review the studies on the communication strategies in Qatar before the blockade and then present the findings of a qualitative study on political culture in Qatar and how it influenced the use of media during the blockade. El Gazzar (2015) investigated the use of social media in Qatar and highlighted the importance and significance of social networking in today's world and the role that it plays in dissemination of ideas and information. El Gazzar noted that the use of social media in the time of crisis becomes very remarkable and provides some examples of how social media are used in the time of crisis in Qatar.

Akkas and Camden (2020), in an interesting study, examined the effect of recent developments in Qatari state-society relations and national identity on the political culture of Qatar. They argue that there exists a gap in the literature on mass political culture and its associations with national identity in Arab countries in the region and contend for a study that apply a methodology that integrate theory and qualitative case study of the public opinion. To this end, they used qualitative methodology and interview tools to explore the attitudes and ideas of Qatari citizens. The participants of their study were college-educated female people whose age ranged from 20 to 35. With the results of thematic analysis about the set of political orientations within Qatari society with respect to the political culture, Akkas and Camden first highlight the role of oil and wealth and its role in the construction of the political system of the country. However, they argue that the state and society are not separated in Qatar. Rather, the state is embedded in the society and the society influences the state in some subtle ways. In other words, in Qatar, the state structure has evolved out of the tribal tradition of the society. The tribal tradition makes people to consider the leader as an equal and someone like them and not as a political person. Akkas and Camden believe that this kind of state-society relationship is in line with the notion of political culture (Almond & Verba, 1963) because in Qatar the Emir is considered the first leader among equal leaders and the state believes in elite decision-making. They also report that majlis and online forms are important venues for decision-making and sharing ideas and sometimes the Emir recognizes a family by participating in

their majlis. Interestingly, the results of Akkas and Camden (2020) showed that currently most Qatari people talk about the blockade and its effect in al-majaalis. Some participants also believed that Qatari women have also found to share their ideas online. During the blockade, in major cities of Qatar, there were banners in the entrance of buildings with a space for Qataris or expatriates to express their support for the Emir of Qatar. Online platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, were also used by Qatari citizens to use hashtags to express their solidarity and support for the ruling family and the Emir of Qatar. Akkas and Camden (2020) also consider Majlis Al-Shura or the Advisory Board as another indication for political expression in Qatar. In 2017, four women were appointed for Al-Shura which indicates that this majlis is composed of different groups. Moreover, a majority of participants in this study proposed that the blockade of Qatar would potentially have positive influences on civil engagement in Qatar.

Overall, social networks received higher attention and are used more during the blockade, and Qatari people used social networks, beside other more traditional ones such as banners, to express their support and respect for the Emir of Qatar and his decisions.

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# 6

## Conclusion

**Abstract** This chapter presents the final remarks about the study. It evaluates the extent to which the use of nation branding and soft power assisted Qatar to respond to the shock and awe of the blockade. It also states that the process of nation branding helped the state of Qatar to create a protective shield of strategic tools that made it difficult for other countries to attack this small state and to incorporate the elements of soft power to maintain its role in the region and internationally.

**By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:**

- Know our concluding remarks about the study
- Learn about our evaluation of establishment of nation branding in Qatar
- Understand how Qatar used nation branding to deal with the regional crises/threats

### 6.1 Concluding Remarks

In order to protect its national identity and preserve its political sovereignty, Qatar has employed public diplomacy channels and nation branding as some strategic tools to establish a soft “defensive deterrence system” first and to achieve presence and status in the international arena. Soft power means the employment of tools of persuasion and co-optation and avoidance of pressure and intimidation methods in the management of international relations. This may include public diplomacy tools and the employment of cultural,

educational, and creative dimensions or the application of economic aid and scholarships in the management of foreign relations. By adopting this model in building soft power, Qatar has diversified public diplomacy channels and soft power tools and distributed them on several interfaces in a harmonious practical framework that translates all the goals stated in Qatar Vision 2030.

Along the soft power fronts, Qatar has provided itself with a “shield” of strategic tools, with which it has become difficult for Qatar’s lands or sovereignty to be exposed to any danger of occupation, nibbling, annexation, or penetration in the shadows of the world. The capabilities of Qatar’s “soft power” have emerged during the 2017 crisis as the campaign did not receive any Arab or international support. In fact, many international platforms deplored and denounced the demands of the blockading countries who demanded the closure of Al Jazeera. However, the international community rejected the unjustified blockade of the channel.

During the crisis that besieged Qatar in 2017, Qatari diplomacy was able to confront the “demonization” propaganda, by strengthening the activity of its traditional diplomacy with public diplomacy. The various governmental and private sectors of Qatar moved to launch projects and initiatives that confirm that the blockade did not affect Qatar’s vision and steps toward the future on the one hand and enhance Qatar’s global role on the other. The most prominent of them was the announcement by Qatar Petroleum to raise the production capacity of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Qatar from 77 million tons to 100 million tons annually by doubling and developing the southern sector of the North Field. The economists described this as enhancing Qatar’s position globally and making it an important figure in international energy organizations. In the same context, Qatar Airways announced the launch of new destinations and the purchase of more of the latest aircraft, and the company launched an advertising campaign—in what looked like an attempt to influence American public opinion, after Washington’s official position on the crisis was characterized by ambiguity and contradiction. The US Department of State emphasized Qatar Airways’ contributions to supporting the US economy by highlighting its investments in the US economy through the purchase of 332 aircraft manufactured in the United States with an estimated value of \$91.8 billion. This provided 123,000 jobs directly in the US market and transferred 3.1 million visitors to the US annually, which helped support the US economy with an additional USD4 billion in 2016 alone. The Qatar Airways TV ad has garnered more than 8 million views on social media platforms. In the same context, Mwan Qatar (Qatar Ports) announced the inauguration of five new marine lines with the start of the expansion of Hamad Sea Port.

Al Jazeera was also active in mobilizing the world to confront the demands of the four countries to close Al Jazeera channels and some other media outlets including the Al-Araby Al-Jadeed newspaper and website. The demand was described by the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, as “ridiculous” and was condemned by the International Federation of Journalists. The international human rights organization, Human Rights Watch, considered the demand to close Al Jazeera not to be a punishment for Qatar but rather a punishment for millions of Arabs in the region by depriving them of important media coverage.

A quick analysis reveals that the 13 demands raised by the four countries against Qatar aimed to dismantle the soft power system that Qatar built since 1996. Moreover, the components of the Qatari “national character” combined with the arsenal of soft power that Qatar accumulated during the past two decades assisted Qatar in confronting the crisis by refuting the allegations of the four countries by strengthening the image and global reputation of the State of Qatar and its role in achieving peace around the world. While traditional diplomacy managed the chapters of the crisis on the basis of the constants of Qatar’s foreign policy based on good neighborliness, non-interference in internal affairs, and resolving disputes through dialogue, without compromising national sovereignty, the arsenal of soft power began to mobilize the balance it accumulated during these two decades to support traditional diplomacy and mobilize organizations. This significantly helped Qatar to confront the inhuman blockade and the propaganda discourse that attempts to “demonize Qatar” while emphasizing its pivotal role in fighting terrorism within the international coalition. If the crisis that Qatar faced with its neighbors was a test of Qatar’s soft capabilities, then it can be claimed that Qatari soft power succeeded in facing the crisis and the blockade. In view of the vital and effective role played by the national feature and the soft power system in protecting Qatar and its political entity during the crisis, it seems that the Qatari policy makers have become more interested in them. This means that Qatar will pay more attention and development to soft power in the future. This is evident in the call of the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, in his first speech after the outbreak of the crisis, to “develop our educational, research and media institutions and all our soft power sources at the international level, and in interaction with the best Qatari, Arab and foreign experiences” (Government Communications Office, 2017).

By being engaged in the process of nation branding, the state of Qatar achieved two main results. First, Qatar created a protective shield of strategic tools for itself. These tools made it difficult for other countries to attack this small state without arousing the attention of the world. Second is

incorporating elements of soft power with the support of major powers, which helped Qatar to maintain its role in the region and internationally. These roles were acknowledged internationally during the crisis that resulted from the American withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. Afghanistan's recent crisis "provided Qatar with an opportunity to strengthen its position within the international community by virtue of playing the role of mediator and facilitator between the West and the Taliban. Qatar's access and ties to both Washington and Taliban and its reputation as a neutral broker played an important role in its emergence as an important actor in Afghanistan" ([www.vifindia.org](http://www.vifindia.org)).

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