

## Patterns and Trends of Qatar's Foreign Policy and Its Impact on Iran (2011-2023)

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This article examines the patterns and trends of Qatar's foreign policy and its impact on Iran. And it is trying to answer the question: What are the most important models of Qatar's foreign policy and its effect on relations with Iran?

**Method:** The research method in this article is descriptive-analytical, and the library method and the study of sites were mainly used to collect information.

**Findings:** During the last decade, Qatar has emerged as an active actor in the Middle East and North Africa region. Based on the findings of this research, Qatar has tried to adopt four models, which are: emphasis on Islamic identity and media diplomacy. In the Islamic world, compliance with global capitalism and economic interdependence, paying attention to the structure of the international system (security, defense, and scientific-educational), intelligent balance, and active mediation. On the other hand, these policies have caused Iran to review its relations with Qatar when necessary.

**Conclusion:** Qatar's foreign policy has seen significant changes from 2011 to 2023, which have had significant effects on the country's relations with Iran. This period of time includes events such as the Arab Spring, the diplomatic crisis in the Persian Gulf, and changes in regional and international policies that have played an important role in the formation and evolution of relations between the two countries. Independence, soft diplomacy, and strategic investments have been among the important patterns of Qatar's foreign policy that have helped to strengthen the country's relations with Iran. However, regional crises and changes in international politics have also created challenges for these relations. In general, Qatar's foreign policies in this period have been able to maintain a complex balance in relations with Iran and exploit these relations as a tool to increase its regional influence.

**Key Words:** Qatar, Foreign Policy Patterns, Capitalism, Smart Balance, Active Mediation, Iran.

**Article type:** Research

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## **Introduction**

The State of Qatar is a small Arab kingdom in the Persian Gulf that uses its vast financial resources to exert regional influence, often independently of the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In mid-1971, when the treaty with Britain expired, the nine sheikhdoms had not yet agreed on the terms of the union, and Qatar declared its independence on 3 September 1971. In June 1995, Qatar's Crown Prince Hamad bin Khalifa deposed his father, Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, in a bloodless coup and took his place (Prasanta, 2017: 244-45). Since 2013, his father has been succeeded by Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. Like his father, he was educated in the UK. The long-term development plan for the country has largely been implemented under the reign of the monarch, including the hosting of the 2022 World Cup.

This small state with a small population and no military force has not been able to prevent security threats. Therefore, Emir Khalifa Al Thani, the first ruler of Qatar, remained in the alliance and dependent on Saudi Arabia. Simultaneously with the emergence of this state, two important characteristics were also formed; the discovery of gas and oil fields and the launch of the Al Jazeera Canal. Emir Hamad has played a prominent role in shaping the state's foreign policy since coming to power. He came to power after a soft coup against his father in 1995 (Naier, 2021:43).

The importance of this research is also largely due to Qatar's position in the region and the international system and its importance to Iran. As it has been able to play a role as one of the most important players in the region in recent years. Research question; what are the patterns and trends of Qatar's foreign policy and what impact do they have on its relations with Iran? Research hypothesis; Based on the findings of this study, it is assumed that Qatar has tried to adopt four models, which are: emphasis on Islamic identity and media diplomacy in the Islamic world, adherence to global capitalism and economic interdependence, attention to the structure of the international system (security-defense and scientific-educational), intelligent balance and active mediation. On the other hand, these policies have caused Iran to review its relations with Qatar in accordance with them at some time.

## **Methodology**

The statistical population in this research includes all documents, records, and information related to Qatar's foreign policy in the time frame of 2011 to 2023. This statistical population can include the following: official documents, news and media sources, scientific and research sources, statistics, and data. Also, considering the nature of the research, which is descriptive-analytical, the statistical sample in this research is selected purposefully and based on specific criteria. These criteria can include the following: the importance of the source, the relevance to the topic, the time coverage, and the diversity of sources. The research tool in this study is valid library resources and internet sites. Also, the research method in this study is as

follows: data collection: In this stage, resources related to the research topic are collected through library and internet searches. Resource evaluation: The collected resources are evaluated in terms of validity, relevance to the topic, and time coverage. Data analysis: The data obtained from various sources are analyzed using content analysis methods and qualitative analysis. Interpretation of findings: The findings obtained from data analysis are interpreted according to the theoretical framework of the research. Report writing: The research results are presented in the form of a structured scientific report and in accordance with the principles of scientific writing.

## **Results**

This research examines the patterns and trends of Qatar's foreign policy from 2011 to 2023 and its impact on the country's relations with Iran. The main objective of the research is to investigate the patterns of Qatar's foreign policy and its impact on bilateral relations in the political, economic, and cultural-educational spheres. Methodology This research uses a descriptive-analytical method and uses library resources and internet sites to gather information. The main question of the research is what are the most important patterns of Qatar's foreign policy and what is their impact on its relations with Iran? Findings Based on the research findings, Qatar has followed four main patterns in its foreign policy: Emphasis on Islamic identity and media diplomacy in the Islamic world: Qatar has used media such as Al Jazeera to promote its views in the Islamic world and has played an active role in regional developments. Following global capitalism and economic interdependence: By adopting a free economic approach, Qatar has engaged in extensive interaction with various countries of the world and through this, has created economic interdependence. Attention to the structure of the international system (security-defense and scientific-educational): Qatar has strengthened military and security relations with Western countries to ensure its security, and in the scientific and educational fields, it has attracted prestigious international universities to develop these sectors. Smart balancing and active mediation: By establishing balanced relations with various countries and playing the role of mediator in regional conflicts, Qatar has tried to increase its influence in the region. Conclusion In the years 2011 to 2023, relying on its 2030 vision, Qatar implemented its foreign policy based on the four patterns mentioned. Using smart power (a combination of soft and hard power), this country has been able to be recognized as an influential actor at the regional and international levels. Some important points mentioned in the research the impact of the media: Al Jazeera network has acted as a powerful tool in Qatar's foreign policy and has helped this country to advance its goals. Economic relations: By creating economic interdependence with various countries, including Iran, Qatar has tried to secure its interests. The role of mediator: By playing the role of mediator in regional conflicts, Qatar has sought to increase its influence and credibility in the international arena. Impact on Iran: Qatar's foreign policies have also forced Iran to react and adapt its relations with this country. By providing a comprehensive analysis of Qatar's foreign policy and its impact on relations with Iran, this research can help to better understand regional developments and international relations.

## Conclusions

**Conclusion:** Contemporary politics is marked by numerous struggles, sometimes geographic and political, and sometimes over wealth and influence. For instance, the hegemonic struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran has provided an unprecedented role for Qatar's foreign policy in mediating and resolving disputes. In this respect, this small country on the map has had a significant impact on the map of international politics.

**Research Focus:** This research, in order to better understand Qatar's foreign policy, has tried to extract patterns in this regard. Thus, the main question of the research is based on the most important patterns of Qatar's foreign policy, and based on it, the findings of this research have been four patterns, which include: emphasizing Islamic identity and media diplomacy in the Islamic world, following global capitalism and economic interdependence, paying attention to the structure of the international system (security-defense and scientific-educational), smart balancing and active mediation. Furthermore, it has been attempted to examine the impact of these patterns on this country's relations with Iran. However, the results obtained in this research are close to answering the main question (the research hypothesis), which is as follows:

**Emphasis on Islamic Identity and Media Diplomacy:** This is one of the patterns that the government has tried to move towards attracting regional and international audiences based on one of its most important arms, Al Jazeera. As mentioned in the conceptual framework of the research, the media tool forms the cornerstone of soft power in the field of foreign policy, to which the leaders of Qatar have constantly resorted in the past two decades.

**Following Global Capitalism and Economic Interdependence, Attention to the Structure of the International System:** These are two other patterns that are evident in the economic, political, and cultural-educational fields of Qatar's foreign policy.

**Smart Balancing and Active Mediation:** However, the most important pattern of Qatar's foreign policy in recent years has been smart balancing and active mediation. Part of this approach should be seen within the framework of this country's soft power, and another part in the realm of hard power (as mentioned in the theoretical framework, smart power can cover both theories). Undoubtedly, the foreign policy of soft power accelerated after the rise of Emir Tamim and has been strengthened as an influential regional power.

**Impact on Iran:** Regarding the impact of Qatar's foreign policy patterns on Iran, it should also be added; Just as Qatar considers itself bound to follow global capitalism and economic interdependence and pay attention to the structure of the international system, and tries to keep pace with global policies, the Iranian government should also, by understanding this issue, advance its foreign policy in accordance with Qatar's patterns. As mentioned above, Qatar has friendly relations with Iran and Hamas, and in return, these relations with the United States and Israel are also closely established in the political, security, and economic fields. If Iran wants to maintain its relations with this small country in all fields, it should, without considering this country's relations with other regional and international actors, identify the most important capacities and move towards them.

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