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THE EMERGENCE OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AS A GLOBAL SOFT POWER: STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

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United Arab Emirates University

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Government and Society

**THE EMERGENCE OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AS A GLOBAL
SOFT POWER: STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES**

Amira Ali Alhashmi

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Governance and Public Policy

Under the Supervision of Dr. Osman Antwi-Boateng

November 2019

Declaration of Original Work

I, Amira Ali Alhashmi, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*The Emergence of United Arab Emirates as a Global Soft Power: Strategies and Challenges*", hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Osman Antwi-Boateng, in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

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Date: _____

15 / 1 / 2020

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Copy 1 of 4

Abstract

The thesis focuses on how the United Arab Emirates is emerging as a global soft power by examining the elements of its soft power. This is accomplished via in-depth interviews with UAE based foreign diplomats and academics and Emirati diplomats and academics. This is supplemented with primary and secondary data from government, international agencies and media sources. The UAE has excelled in many facets of governance, accomplished a lot in a relatively short period and pursued domestic and foreign policies that have made it a role model for other countries. These accomplishments enable the UAE to exercise soft power influence in places where these accomplishments are respected and appreciated. The UAE's soft power tools under political values allow it to position itself as a role model in the world, including its success in the following areas: governance and leadership model, economic development and security and stability. Its cultural attractions include the following: embrace of the norm of tolerance; educational institutions, hosting of international events, image as a cultural hub and multiculturalism. In terms of foreign policy, the UAE's attraction is evident in the following areas: Support for major international organizations and multilateral efforts; international philanthropy, humanitarian assistance and efforts in conflict resolution. In spite of the above soft power tools, there are challenges that the UAE needs to be cognizant of in order to derive the maximum benefits from its numerous soft power tools.

First, unlike hard power resources, which tend to be concentrated in the hands of government, soft power resources are widely diffused among public and private actors which can create conflicting agendas. The revolution in communications technology means that today almost anyone can, in effect, act as an emissary for their country through interactions with people overseas. The dilemma is that the messages and images conveyed by a myriad of non-state actors will not necessarily correspond to that envisaged by the government. The challenge therefore is to harness the creativity of private groups and individuals whilst transmitting a reasonably coherent message. Second, soft power is costly and in the case of the UAE, most of the UAE's soft power attractions such as international philanthropy, investments in tourism, aviation and infrastructure etc. require heavy investments and are difficult to sustain in the long run. Third, a successful soft power strategy abroad rests on domestic

support. Hence, countries cannot assume that grandiose projects designed to dazzle foreign observers will resonate or be appreciated at home. Fourth, although a global media reach helps in the projection of a country's image, the UAE lacks such a platform and thus remains vulnerable to false global narratives. Fifth, the UAE's creeping use of hard power in places such as Yemen, could negatively affect its good image. Sixth, the acceptance of Western cultural projects could expose the UAE to accusations of cultural appropriation and lack of cultural authenticity, thereby defeating its intended purpose. The research recommends the development of uniform strategies for soft power at the state level and the opening of an interactive government media platform where ordinary citizens could partake in the formulation of strategies, in order to reduce openness concerns. It is recommended that the Soft Power Council should be institutionalized, following the model of the Federal National Council, with some members appointed and others elected. Moving forward, the UAE needs to create a comprehensive concept of soft power that does not contradict its customs/traditions and the international concept of soft power, in order to yield optimal outcomes.

Keywords: UAE, soft power, hard power, smart power, diplomacy, foreign policy, challenges, opportunity.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

بروز دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة كقوة عالمية ناعمة: الاستراتيجيات والتحديات

المخلص

تركز الأطروحة على كيفية ظهور دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة كقوة عالمية ناعمة من خلال دراسة عناصر قوتها الناعمة. يتم تحقيق ذلك من خلال مقابلات متعمقة مع الدبلوماسيين والأكاديميين الأجانب المقيمين في الإمارات العربية المتحدة والدبلوماسيين والأكاديميين الإماراتيين. وتستكمل هذه مع البيانات الأولية والثانوية من الحكومة والوكالات الدولية ومصادر وسائل الإعلام. لقد تفوقت دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة في العديد من جوانب الحكم، وحققت الكثير في فترة قصيرة نسبياً وتبعت سياسات محلية ودولية جعلت منها نموذجاً يحتذى به بالنسبة للدول الأخرى. تمكن هذه الإنجازات دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة من ممارسة تأثير القوة الناعمة في الأماكن التي يتم فيها احترام هذه الإنجازات وتقديرها. أدوات القوة الناعمة في الإمارات العربية المتحدة في ظل القيم السياسية تسمح لها بوضع نفسها كنموذج يحتذى به في العالم، بما في ذلك نجاحها في المجالات التالية: نموذج الحكم والقيادة، والتنمية الاقتصادية والأمن والاستقرار. تشمل معالمها الثقافية ما يلي: تبني قاعدة التسامح؛ المؤسسات التعليمية، استضافة الفعاليات الدولية، كمحور ثقافي ومتعدد الثقافات. فيما يتعلق بالسياسة الخارجية، فإن جاذبية الإمارات العربية المتحدة واضحة في المجالات التالية: دعم المنظمات الدولية الكبرى والجهود المتعددة الأطراف؛ الأعمال الخيرية الدولية، المساعدات الإنسانية والجهود المبذولة لحل النزاعات. على الرغم من أدوات القوة الناعمة المذكورة أعلاه، هناك تحديات تحتاج دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة إلى إدراكها من أجل الحصول على أقصى استفادة من أدوات القوة الناعمة العديدة.

أولاً، على عكس موارد القوة الصلبة، التي تميل إلى التركيز في المؤسسات الحكومية، تنتشر موارد القوة الناعمة على نطاق واسع بين الجهات الفاعلة العامة والخاصة التي يمكن أن تخلق أجنداث متضاربة. إن ثورة تكنولوجيا الاتصالات تعني أنه يمكن لأي شخص تقريباً، أن يعمل مبعوثاً لبلدهم من خلال التفاعلات مع الأشخاص في الخارج. المعضلة هي أن الرسائل والصور التي نقلها عدد لا يحصى من الجهات الفاعلة من غير الدول لن تتوافق بالضرورة مع تلك التي تتصورها الحكومة. وبالتالي فإن التحدي يكمن في تسخير إبداع المجموعات الخاصة والأفراد أثناء نقل رسالة متماسكة إلى حد معقول. ثانياً، القوة الناعمة مكلفة، وفي حالة دولة

الإمارات العربية المتحدة، فإن معظم مجالات الجذب في الإمارات من حيث القوة الناعمة مثل الأعمال الخيرية الدولية، والاستثمارات في السياحة، والطيران، والبنية التحتية، إلخ، تتطلب استثمارات ضخمة ويصعب تحملها على المدى الطويل. ثالثاً، تعتمد استراتيجية القوة الناجحة في الخارج على الدعم المحلي. وبالتالي، لا يمكن للبلدان أن تفترض أن المشروعات الضخمة المصممة لإبهار المراقبين الأجانب سوف يتردد صداها أو موضع تقدير في الداخل. رابعاً، على الرغم من أن الوصول إلى وسائل الإعلام العالمية يساعد في إبراز صورة البلد، فإن الإمارات تفتقر إلى مثل هذا المنصة وبالتالي تظل عرضة للروايات الكاذبة. خامساً، يمكن أن يؤثر الاستخدام للقوة الصلبة في أماكن مثل اليمن، سلباً على صورتها الجيدة. سادساً، إن قبول المشاريع الثقافية الغربية يمكن أن يعرض دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة لاتهامات بالتملك الثقافي وانعدام الأصالة الثقافية، وبالتالي التغلب على الغرض المقصود منه. يوصي البحث بتطوير استراتيجيات موحدة للقوة الناعمة على مستوى الإمارة، وفتح منصة إعلامية حكومية تفاعلية حيث يمكن للمواطنين العاديين المشاركة في صياغة الاستراتيجيات، من أجل الحد من مخاوف الانفتاح. يوصى بإضفاء الطابع المؤسسي على مجلس القوة الناعمة، على غرار نموذج المجلس الوطني الاتحادي، مع تعيين بعض الأعضاء وانتخاب أعضاء آخرين. للمضي قدماً، تحتاج دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة إلى إنشاء مفهوم شامل للقوة الناعمة لا يتعارض مع عاداتها / تقاليدها والمفهوم الدولي للقوة الناعمة، من أجل تحقيق نتائج مثالية.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: الإمارات، القوة الناعمة، القوة الصلبة، القوة الذكية، الدبلوماسية، السياسة الخارجية، التحديات، الفرص.

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Dedication

To my beloved parents and family

Table of Contents

Title	i
Declaration of Original Work	ii
Copyright	iii
Approval of the Master Thesis	iv
Abstract	vi
Title and Abstract (in Arabic)	viii
Acknowledgements	x
Dedication	xi
Table of Contents	xii
List of Tables.....	xiv
List of Figures	xv
List of Abbreviations.....	xvi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3 Purpose of the Research	3
1.4 Research Objectives.....	3
1.5 Theoretical Framework.....	4
1.5.1 Soft Power Theory	4
1.5.2 Soft Power Concept	5
1.5.3 The Tools of Soft Power	11
1.6 Methodology.....	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review	19
2.1 Introduction.....	19
2.2 Soft Power through Islamic Civilization	19
2.3 Soft Power in GCC/UAE.....	21
2.4 The Evolution of UAE’s Foreign Policy	26
2.5 Soft Power throughout the World.....	28
2.5.1 Great Powers States (US, Russia, France, Great Britain, China)	29
2.5.2 Middle countries: India, Saudi Arabia and Brazil	35

2.5.3 Small Country: Qatar, Jamaica, Singapore and Scandinavian countries	37
Chapter 3: Soft Power in the UAE	40
3.1 UAE Foreign Policy	40
3.2 UAE Foreign Policy Towards GCC	41
3.3 UAE Relations with GCC States	42
3.4 UAE Foreign Policy in the MENA.....	43
3.4.1 MENA/Arab League	43
3.5 UAE Foreign Policy at the International Level	45
3.5.1 UAE Relations with Iran.....	46
3.5.2 UAE Relations with Great Power: US, Russia and China.....	47
3.5.3 UAE Relations with South Asian Countries: India.....	48
3.5.4 UAE Relations with South Asian Countries: Pakistan	50
3.5.5 UAE Relations with Latin America	52
3.5.6 UAE Relations with Africa	52
3.5.7 UAE Relations with International Organizations i.e. UN, European Union	53
3.6 Economic relations between the countries of the Union and the UAE.....	54
Chapter 4: UAE Future Challenges (Analysis and Findings)	58
4.1 Interview Analysis and Evaluation.....	58
4.2 Results and Discussion	62
4.3 Research Findings.....	63
4.3.1 Institutionalization of Soft Power	63
4.3.2 The Soft Power Tools of the United Arab Emirates	65
4.3.3 Political Values	66
4.3.4 Culture.....	69
4.3.5 Cultural Hub and Multiculturalism	77
4.4 Foreign Policy.....	83
4.4.1 Philanthropy and Foreign Aid.....	84
4.4.2 Peace Keeping Contributions.....	85
4.4.3 Conflict Resolution	87
4.4.4 Muslim States' Coalition	87
4.4.5 Multilateral Organization Membership.....	87
4.4.6 Diplomatic Missions	89
4.5 The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)	89
4.6 UAE Soft Power Future Challenges	91
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	98
References	105

List of Tables

Table 1: The UAE and its member organizations	57
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List of Figures

Figure 1: Soft power	9
Figure 2: Soft power tools.....	38
Figure 3: Interview outcomes.....	61

List of Abbreviations

EDA	Emirates Diplomatic Academy
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Council Cooperation
UN	United Nation
UAE	United Arab Emirates
US/USA	United States of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

The end of the Second World War left behind huge destruction and havoc, which needed decades to rebuild the infrastructure of affected war ravage countries. Moreover, the dramatic increase in use of hard power after the Cold War, made leaders realize that hard power comes with major human and material damage, prompting them to find new alternatives with rapid acceleration of efforts to deploy a power that can have the same influence of the old power of “hard power” with less cost.

Thus, in the 21st century, the international mood shifted to another concept of power as it was time for the emergence of another type of power named “soft power.” The shift from “hard power” to “soft power” was a tacit acknowledgement of the failures of hard power as the primary foreign policy tool and the need to explore other avenues of exerting international influence at a lower cost.

Indeed, power is the most important concept in the international sphere. Nye, the originator of the concept of “soft-power” and the first scholar to introduce the concept in the late 1980s. Nye defined power as the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes you want. With several ways, as if you can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want. Thus, soft power is getting others to want the outcomes you want by co-opting people rather than coercing them (Nye, 1990). In addition, Nye (1990) considered the "second face of power" that indirectly allows you to obtain the outcomes you want.

A country's soft power, according to Nye, rests on three resources: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority) (Nye, 2011).

Today, economic, education and technological growth have become more significant in the international relations, while the old factors such as population size, geography and raw materials have become somehow less important. Nevertheless, we cannot still deny the great influence of hard power even though its utility has waned.

UAE as part of the global community built a strong base of soft power formed by Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan, the founder of the UAE union, adopted indirectly the soft power methodology and succeeded to use it as an instrument in the foreign policy.

This research proposal aims to tackle and point out the issues around the emergence of United Arab Emirates as a global soft power and examine the soft strategies utilizes by the country in achieving its foreign policies and its attendant challenges. The research also proposes policies to avert any potential challenges associated with UAE's use of soft power as a tool of foreign policy.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the past decade, the UAE government has streamlined its foreign policy by adopting a clear vision of international cooperation backed by clear strategies in all spheres of economic, diplomatic and cultural relations with the rest of the world. These strategies have put the UAE on the path of being one of the major Soft Powers in the world.

Although several scholars and researchers have written extensively about the different types of power in international relations including soft power and how countries utilize it, little has been written about the UAE in this regard. Thus, this research attempts to fill in the vacuum left in the research about how small middle level powers such as the UAE are utilizing soft power as a foreign policy tool. The research attempts to identify and analyze the strategies adopted by the UAE to achieve its foreign policy objectives that can be classified as soft power tools and its attendant challenges as well as offer policy recommendations to address any identified challenges.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The importance of this research lies with the rise of the UAE as a regional and global economic force in a relatively short period of time as an independent State and how it marshals its accomplishments for regional and international influence via soft power. Thus, the research seeks to highlight the tools of soft power influence utilized by the UAE in its foreign policy. In addition, the research seeks to identify the challenges that the UAE could face in the future in its use of soft power and how to avert any potential pitfalls.

1.4 Research Objectives

The following below are the research objectives that this research seeks to accomplish:

- Identify UAE's regional and international foreign policy interests/objectives
- Classify and evaluate the current soft power strategies of the UAE
 - Identify the challenges the UAE faces in its use of soft power

- Propose recommendations to assist the UAE to overcome any potential challenges in the use of Soft power.

Many scholars such as Nye (2004 & 2011), Fan (2008) and Antwi-Boateng (2013) etc. have written extensively about soft power and its role in foreign policy. The existing research covers the theoretical as well as policy debates about the use of soft power and its challenges in international relations. In addition, most of the existing literature focuses on the use of soft power by great powers or bigger countries such as the U.S, China and India to neglect of smaller or middle power states. Thus, my research seeks to contribute towards the empirical/practicable application of soft power in international relations by nontraditional powers such as the UAE.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Soft Power Theory

The concept of soft power has become very popular among major scholars and elites, as evidenced by its speedy growth in academic discourse and strategic literature. Despite the fact that the term is considered as a “Western” concept, soft power dates back to as early as the seventh century and is originally attributed to the Chinese philosopher Lao Tsu (Whyte, 2015). In fact, ancient empires such as the Greeks and Romans often exercised soft power in many ways; some methods included marriages and agreements in order to build good relations among nations and minimize rivalries and conflicts. For example, Cleopatra married Julius Caesar to unite his country. Although they claimed it was love at first sight, the union was not purely altruistic as there was a strategic agenda to maintain peace among the two sides (History, 2009).

This was evidenced by the fact that Cleopatra took advantage of this marriage to convince Julius Caesar to reclaim the crown after Julius killed her brother and husband, Ptolemy XIII .On the other hand, Julius Caesar saw his marriage with Cleopatra as a union between two countries, which yielded great financial benefit to him as well as the strategic geopolitical role Egypt played, which helped him in his battles against his enemies (History, 2009).

In 1939, British realist became cognizant of the soft power concept as well when he distinguished international power in three categories: military, economic and the power of opinion. The last one is the manner and ability of countries to condition opinions of other nations; this arguably implies that the powers of attraction (or even persuasion) are responsible for nurturing and conditioning public opinion (Palit, 2010: 3).

1.5.2 Soft Power Concept

The soft power concept was coined to by Nye, who introduced it in the late 1980s and has often been associated with the classic definition. For Nye (1990), soft power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes you want. In addition, Nye elaborates the different ways one can achieve this: “you can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want. This soft power – getting others to want the outcomes you want – co-opts people rather than coerces them. Although Nye has a huge credibility and his definition of the term is widely used, the nature of power is still a debatable topic.

Unlike Nye (2008) defined soft power or co-optive as the capacity to persuade others to do what one wants, without linking the definition to behavioral outcomes. Nye (2002), on the other hand, built his concept as a behavior outcome, or as he calls it “relational power concept” on the multiple faces of power.

Nye depicts soft power as a combination of second and third faces of power together from the different layers of power studied by Dahl (1961), Bachrach and Baratz (1962) and Lukes (2005). Lukes (2005) described 'three faces of power' (also called the 'three dimensions of power'); the basic principle is that power and its consequent effectiveness of a group is based on three distinct aspects. This theory claims that power exercised in three ways: decision-making power, non-decision-making power and ideological power.

In 2011, Nye expanded his definition into “the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes; for this to be successful, legitimacy is central for soft power. Many scholars agree with Nye (2004) by studying soft power as a behavior influence outcomes (Arndt, 2005; Chong, 2005; Gray, 2011; Schneider, 2005).

Hard power refers to using military or economic coercion to get others to change their position (Nye, 2004). This form of political power is often aggressive (coercion), and is most effective when imposed by one political body upon another of lesser military and/or economic power. Soft power, on the other hand, contrasts with the approach of hard power by focusing on diplomacy, integration and culture.

Scholars addressing this topic have different perspective and views, dividing the published literature among soft, hard and smart power, with each having their own explanation on the effectiveness and usefulness of such capabilities. Some scholars argue that soft power is more effective, in some cases can reinforces, and in other cases can be interferes with hard power, but in any case, soft power does not depend on hard power (Nye, 2004). Others see's soft power it depends on how much money you will spend on it and related the money with having an effective soft power. If you want "soft power" effectiveness, you would have to spend more money (Schneider, 2005).

Due to technology and global information space, Chong (2005) argue that global information has essential role to improve the capacity and effectiveness of the soft power, unlike hard power, and it has less hard power support.

Smart power is a new term that refers to the combination of both hard and soft power (Nye, 2003). Strategic and International Studies defined smart power as "an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand one's influence and establish legitimacy of one's action in international relations". The origin of the term "smart power" is still under debate and coined by Nye. According to Crocker et al. (2007), smart power "involves the strategic use of diplomacy, persuasion, capacity building, and the projection of power and influence in ways that are cost-effective and have political and social legitimacy", essentially the engagement of both military force and all forms of diplomacy. In other words, smart power takes on the capacity of an actor to combine elements of hard and soft power in ways that the actor's goals are advanced effectively and efficiently (Wilson, 2008: 120).

The term was used explicitly in talking about an optimal U.S. foreign policy in 2009 by both President Barack Obama, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; it became a core principle of Obama's foreign policy strategy. The term generated significant attention, especially among scholars and addressing policies on power. Yet, scholars continue to study the differences between smart and soft power and the tools and resources that each power utilizes. According to Whiton (2013) in his book "Smart Power: Between Diplomacy and War" smart power is "the many financial, cultural, rhetorical, economic, espionage-related, and military actions that states can take short of general war to influence political outcomes abroad". Whiton sees that it is necessary to involve a revival of political warfare, which is the non-violent push of ideas, people, facts, and events with which our adversaries would rather not contend.

Like any kind of purposeful action, soft power has its own source of influence and instruments used; scholars debate on the nature of these sources and instruments but agree on the broad principle, while there is more studies dedicated to hard power and is more generally accepted. Hard power resources are straightforward and simple. Historically, hard power has been measured by certain criteria such as population size, territory, natural resources, military force and social stability (Armitage & Joseph, 2008).

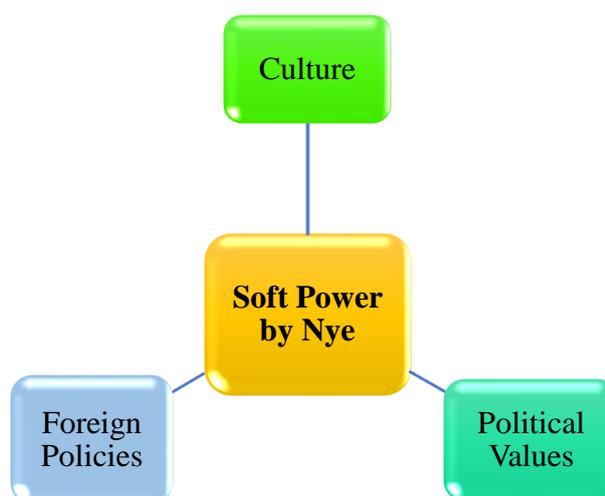


Figure 1: Soft power
Resource: (Nye, 2004)

However, the most commonly applied in country-focused case studies are the ones proposed by Nye (2004) that is illustrated in Figure 1: culture, political values and foreign policies. According to Nye (2008), soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources:

1. Its culture (in places where it is attractive to others),
2. Its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad),
3. Foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)

After soft power gained prominence in literature and international relations, many scholars, academics and politicians wrote and argued about its meanings and utility. While some, such as Layne (2010) and Fan (2008) agreed with Nye's definition of soft power as "getting others to want the outcomes that you want," others such as Kurlantzick (2006), Ferguson (2004) and Lock (2010) disagreed with Nye.

Moreover, the likes of Vuving (2009), Breslin (2011), Viotti and Kauppi (2013) sought to further develop the concept of soft power in a broader sense.

Joshua Kurlantzick is a scholar who added to the concept further by arguing, “Soft power has changed” over time. In the dynamic sense, he argued that soft power “means anything outside of the military and security realm, including not only popular culture and public diplomacy but also more coercive economic and diplomatic levers like aid and investment and participation in multilateral organizations”. The soft power vision of Kurlantzick is more exhaustive as it addresses the components that he added to the definition such as the inclusion of economic factors. The contemporary academic and the traditional expositions appear to agree on the larger scope of soft power. Hence, this research is anchored in his definition while borrowing Nye’s emphasis on the power of attraction (Kurlantzick, 2007: 6 and Palit, 2010: 4).

As the concept of soft power gained prominence, it increasingly became a point of reference in academia, the media and among policy-making establishments and has been included as part of the foreign policy strategies of not only the US, but also in the European Union (EU), Japan, Australia, China and the Middle East (Kugiel, 2012: 353).

In response to neorealism, which emphasizes the importance of the military and economics as the real power, proponents of soft power argue that the old form of power has evolved, and soft power has become equally important as hard power. In addition, skeptics of soft power disagree and argue that popularity is ephemeral and should not be a guide for foreign policy in any case (Kugiel, 2012: 353).

In addition, the dynamics of the post-Cold War era, whereby the world has been transformed, largely due to globalization, popularization of communication technologies and the emergence of new non-state actors, made the utility of soft power in the conduct of international relations more profound. Indeed, “‘Soft’ or ‘co-optive power’ rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others to do what you want rather than coerce them (sticks) or influence them (carrots) to do what you want” (Nye, 2004: 2).

1.5.3 The Tools of Soft Power

Soft power relies on mutual attraction, meaning that the attractor uses tools to get this soft power to attract others, and for any kind of powers, there are tools to achieve the desired goals. There are at least three general soft power tools from which both power and its “softness” are derived. They are “benignity, beauty, and brilliance” (Vuving, 2009: 8).

The first tool is benignity, which means kindness or tolerance toward others. We cannot confine the meaning to a specific form but the meaning is to do good and gentle things to serve others. For example, when someone is generous to others, they should do well to others; when they recognize the value or significance of others the behavior would be non-threatening or non-confrontational. The promise of benignity lies in its kindness or an action of being nice; kind people attract others because they are unlikely to hurt them and they are likely to take others’ interests seriously (Vuving, 2009: 9).

The benign utility as a soft power tool in international relations increases the credibility and trustworthiness of countries. For example, according to a 2016 report

by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UAE spends more on aid per capita to develop other countries than any other nation on earth; in addition, the UAE is one of the biggest financial sponsors to refugees from war torn zones (OECD, 2017).

The second tool is brilliance, which means that a country has great skills or intelligence that comes in different forms. In international relations, brilliance can come in the form of a strong military or in the form of a wealthy and vibrant economy, a rich and radiant culture, or a peaceful and well-run society. A country with huge capabilities such as advanced technology is a “brilliant” country. Being successful means that grooming capabilities, which is strong evidence for capability. Successful people have always been an attraction to others, largely because of their ability to solve problems so well and have the ability to overcome challenges in a capable manner (Vuving, 2009: 10).

UAE and the GCC states are great examples of “brilliance” in the midst of a turbulent region, remaining as the last bastion of political and economic stability in the Middle East, as evidenced by the endurance and output of their monarchical and traditional forms of governance. This system of governance has succeeded in maintaining stability, security and development and welfare to the citizens of GCC member states.

The UAE has become a model to study because of its rapid economic development in a relatively short time frame since its independence in 1971 compared to most Arab countries and developing countries that have had statehood for far longer and yet to achieve the economic and developmental feats of the country. The more successful a person or a country is at doing something, learning from that person or

country becomes an effective and safe way for those who are doing a similar job; therefore, brilliance garners acceptance and admiration. As a result, it can lead to many possibilities (either positive or negative) such as imitation, or emulation and respect, or fear and reverence. In international relations, a country's achievement represents a model that many other countries may adopt either in part or in whole. In addition, being accepted, admired and respected can create a solid ground against enemies and generate more understanding and cooperation (Vuving, 2009: 10).

The third tool is "Beauty" which is defined as "the quality or aggregate of qualities in a person or thing that gives pleasure to the senses or pleasurably exalts the mind or spirit or: a particularly graceful, ornamental, or excellent quality" (Webster, 2018). In international politics, "beauty" means the echo that makes actors closer to each other out of common ideals, values, causes, or visions. It allows garnering a feeling of safety and security, hope and self-extension, identity and community, and vindication and praise. Beauty can be achieved when jointly pursuing common ideals, values, causes, or visions are implemented. Unlike opposite values and causes that allows either party to find its counterpart as ugly; common values and causes provide a motivation towards the perception that the other regime is beautiful, which encourages confidence, friendship and cooperation. All these are descriptions that translate beauty to soft power, encouraging others to follow the guidance and example (Vuving, 2009: 12).

1.6 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative case methodology to answer the following research questions:

- What are the soft power tools/elements of UAE foreign policy?
- What are the challenges associated with the UAE's use of soft power in foreign policy?

The purpose of using qualitative research methodology is to gain an in-depth understanding about the problem of interest. Exploring how the UAE uses soft power in its foreign policy and its attendant challenges is a novel research that has not been researched extensively and can only be thoroughly accomplished via a case study. Case studies are one of the best ways to stimulate new research and have several strengths as a research tool. First, a case study can be completed, and if the findings are valuable to provide new and detailed information about a topic. Second, there has been a great deal of research done that wouldn't have been possible without case studies, which are useful to build on and focus the case study on bridging the gaps. Third, case studies have the ability to give greater insights into phenomena that cannot be learned in any other way. Fourth, a case study method is responsible for intensive study of a unit; providing the opportunity to investigate and explore events thoroughly and deeply. This also enables researchers to conduct very detailed and in-depth study of a person, event or phenomena, especially with subjects that cannot be physically or ethically recreated. Another strength of case study is that they allow a lot of details to be collected that would not normally be easily obtained by other research design making it a lot richer and of greater depth than what can be found through other experimental designs.

Within the case study, experiments can be conducted, to help researchers adapt ideas and produce novel hypotheses that can be used for later testing (Balkh, 2018).

While conducting this qualitative research, several tools were used. First, primary data was gathered through in-depth interviews with two sets of foreign policy experts and scholars. The first category of interviewees were made up of Emirati foreign policy practitioners such as diplomats and bureaucrats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as international relations academics, scholars and UAE think-tanks and universities. The second category of interviewees were made up of UAE-based expatriate foreign policy experts and academics familiar with the UAE's foreign policies and practices. Also, to eliminate bias and ensure reliability of the data collected, the expats interviewed were from different geographic locations of the world domiciled in the UAE. The goal was to gain a diverse view on their perspective on UAE's soft power, and how this soft power impacts its bilateral relations with other nations and how it influenced the respondents' perception of the UAE.

The research relied on interviews because of the high professional caliber of the interview subjects. Elite interviews offer several advantages for researchers by giving researchers information that could not necessarily be obtained through official documents of the government or through the media (GCSE, 2018). The second advantage is that although most politicians are far from being specialized in the internal workings of government policy, they carry important information to producers and policymakers in the government. In addition, the only politicians who are interviewed are able to give real insights and thus considering their own actions within the policy framework (GCSE, 2018).

Furthermore, interviews provide an opportunity to meet subject matter experts or relevant people to the topic face-to-face, which can be helpful in obtaining detailed information about the research topic with follow up questions and further dialogue.

The assumption is that the elite are experts in their fields, leading to interviews being an opportunity for an interview to discover information and learn a new personal vision of the person being interviewed. As Ethridge says, this research method in the hands of a skilled researcher can produce very detailed information, not least that follow-up questions can clarify ambiguous responses, investigate new trends, and get information from unaddressed topics (Ethridge, 1990: 193 and GCSE, 2018).

Furthermore, meeting subject matter experts through elite interviews can lead to an institutional relationship and thus help to access other important and required data sources such as official papers and government officials / representatives or corrupt documents, which is not particularly possible in other forms of research. However, access to such vital information by elites is possible because they have access to such information, be it in a company, government or community (GCSE, 2018). However, this does not mean that confidential information is disclosed.

In the selection of candidates for interviews, the research utilized the purposive selection mechanism by deliberately targeting specific people because they have the expertise and knowledge to address the questions pertinent to the research.

This method symbolizes a range of different non-probabilistic sampling techniques, known as judicial, selective or subjective sampling. Sampling depends on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to the choice of units (i.e. persons, situations / organizations, events, parts of data) to be studied. Typically, the sample being examined is very small, especially when compared to potential sampling techniques.

The main purpose of using objective sampling is to focus on specific properties of importance, which enables to answer the research questions. Targeted sampling is one of the most cost-effective and time-efficient sampling methods. Targeted sampling may be the only appropriate method available if there are only a limited number of primary data sources that can contribute to the study. There are several types of targeted sampling that help researchers achieve their main objectives (GCSE, 2018).

A total of twenty people participated in the research and were interviewed. This total number was made up of 10 Emiratis and 10 expatriates. All participants were purposively selected because of their expertise in UAE foreign policy and presence in the UAE. Second, the research was supplemented by primary data collected from government and international sources. For contextualization purposes, the aforementioned data was supplemented with secondary data collected from published academic works and current sources addressing soft power in general and its application in the UAE.

After completing the interviews and collecting the data, the research validated the interviews by randomly emailing the interview transcripts to about half of the research participants for the confirmation and approval of their responses. At the end of this process, 10 out of 20 interviewees responded and validated their responses. The process of validation is necessary for the following reasons:

- To confirm that analysis is authentic and has accurately captured the complexity of participants' responses from their perspective, and that the researchers have adequately guarded against their own biases and distortions.
- To reconstruct and equalize the researcher-participant power relationship (Buchbinder, 2011: 2)

- To enhance reciprocity, equality and openness, which in turn may allow the communication of more abundant in-depth data ((Buchbinder, 2011: 14).

The research community has always emphasized the value of respecting the rights of research participants to prevent any harm to them (Siegle, 2017). Therefore, this research took several steps to ensure it is ethically compliant in the course of the research. The first step in ethical compliance was before the beginning of interviews when the research proposal and interview questions were submitted to the University's Research Ethical Review Board for approval. The second ethical step was during the conduct of the interviews where interviewees were given the option of anonymity in order to encourage them to speak freely and objectively without fear of future retribution. In addition, a confidentiality agreement was signed between the researcher and the interviewees and each was given a copy of the agreement for future reference. As a result of this confidential agreements, all quotations and views of interviewees used in this research are anonymously attributed to designated pseudonyms with a corresponding numerical number such as: Emirati Expert and Emirati Academic on one hand and officials from the government on the other.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Power has been an important aspect of human civilization since time immemorial. It remains one of the critical subjects in political science, including the sphere of international relations. There are numerous definitions of power; Weber (1947) provides one of the most influential definitions of power used in social science, defined as the probability of one actor within a social relationship to be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance. According to Weber (1947), power is a zero-sum game and is an attribute that derives from the qualities, resources and capabilities of one subject. Power in social science and politics is defined as the ability to influence or outright control the behavior of people (Greiner & Schein, 1989). Another definition of power is offered by Nye, who defines it to have an ability to affect others to achieve the outcomes one wants; Nye (1990) splits power into two forms: hard power and soft power. Hard power has been used for a long time, which is the use of military and economic means to influence the behavior or interests of other political bodies (Copeland, 2010). After the Cold War, the world witnessed the emergence of a new term of power, which contradicts with hard power and called ‘soft power’.

2.2 Soft Power through Islamic Civilization

The beginning of the golden age of Islam that comes with the Umayyad Caliphate, the largest Islamic empire witnessed by the Umayyad state in the world. The caliphate was influenced by the Koranic statutes and the most important hadiths, stressing the importance of knowledge. During this period, the Muslim world became the world's cultural and intellectual center of science, philosophy, and medicine, where

the Umayyads established knowledge and spread Islam in various regions of the East and the West.

The Umayyads launched the first Islamic currency, the Umayyad Dinar, and established the first naval fleet. The House of Wisdom was built in Baghdad, a place both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate, collect, and create knowledge from the whole world and translated into Arabic. Islamic civilization was characterized by its multicultural society in terms of languages, customs, traditions and religion. During the expansion of Muslims in the surrounding countries, they encompassed vast territories with peoples of different religions and cultures. Thus, the Islamic Empire not only consisted of Muslims from three continents, "Arabs, Persians, Turks, Africans, Indians and other Asians", but also included all three heavenly religions Jews, Christians and other believes. As result, to describe a historical stage in which Islamic civilization was advanced, extending from the mid-eighth century to the fourteenth and fifteenth century AD. During this period, the engineers, scientists and traders of the Muslim world contributed significantly to the fields of art, agriculture, economy, industry, literature, navigation, philosophy, science, technology and astronomy, by preserving and building on previous contributions and by adding many of their inventions and innovations.

Muslim philosophers, poets, artists, scholars and princes created a unique culture that in turn influenced societies on all continents during the two centuries following the death of the prophet of Islam, bookmaking spread widely in all Islamic civilization, and Islamic civilization revolved around books. Libraries were distributed throughout the Islamic world, and there were a different type of libraries: royal libraries, public libraries and private libraries. And in that time, trade in books and the

profession of copying was popular and was acquired by all classes of the Muslim community who were accepting an unprecedented turnout (Gregorian, 2003: 26-38).

Even before Islam, Mecca was the center of trade in the Arabian Peninsula and the Prophet Muhammad was a merchant. The Hajj season to Mecca became a point for the exchange of ideas and goods and it impact a lot of people from different countries and content, it was a soft power source in that time which was The impact of Arab traders on Arab-African trade routes and Arab-Asian trade has been enormous. In addition, the Muslim merchants played an important role in spreading Islam, spreading their messages to various regions around the world. Key areas included: Persia, Mesopotamia, Central Asia and North Africa. The Sufis also had a major impact in spreading Islam to areas such as East Africa, Anatolia (including Turkey), South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia (Gregorian, 2003: 26-38).

2.3 Soft Power in GCC/UAE

The identification of soft power got most of the world competing in the past decade to effectively possess as much soft power as possible. One of the most successful regions to gain soft power has been the GGC, most notably the United Arab Emirates. Despite the fact that the UAE is a very young country, it has been able to rapidly attain soft power, with globally recognized brand city, playing a significant role on affecting the whole world (MOFAIC, 2017).

The UAE was founded forty-six years ago, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder and first president of the United Arab Emirates, practiced soft power methodology in internal or external issues by making the UAE's Union succeed

and achieving a harmonious and peaceful relation with its neighboring states (MOFAIC, 2017).

Furthermore, HH Sheikh Zayed dedicated himself to build a strong development model to serve the citizens and achieve prosperity for the nation. During his rule, he built a strong base of soft power, indirectly adopted a soft power methodology and succeeded to use it as an instrument in the UAE's foreign policy. The UAE's foreign policy depends on a set of principles that includes an underlying belief in justice, international dealings between states, and principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other states. The country is also an avid and active supporter of international institutions promoting cooperation, such as the United Nations (UN) (MOFAIC, 2017).

Through its support for such bodies, UAE reinforces the rule of international law, supports the implementation of internationally agreed conventions and protects the interests of small and powerless countries. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed continued his father's approach to foreign policy, especially in light of regional and global events in the last decade such as the Arab Spring, emergence of terrorist organizations and regional conflicts, to name a few (MOFAIC, 2017).

Saberi et al. (2018a) have acknowledged the great progress that the United Arab Emirates has made since 1971 and how this has enhanced the image of the country. It has emerged as a modern, progressive Islamic state and regional power. The country's progress, backed by a combination of successful investments, strategies and policies, has contributed to a strong international brand that has attracted large foreign investment, international tourists and a reputation as a great place to work and live (Saberi et al., 2018a: 47-48).

They added that in spite of its small size and recent beginnings, it has managed to take advantage of its vast oil and gas resources in one of the most competitive emerging economies in the world. The country's rapid development has attracted the attention of academics and practitioners. Abu Dhabi and Dubai each consider what is called “immediate cities” created through accelerated urbanization and progressive economic development. By adopting a model based on the creation of a diverse group of economic free zones, Abu Dhabi and Dubai attracted multinational companies, international experts, and tourists from all over the world. Although oil and gas revenues represent the bulk of the economic income of the United Arab Emirates, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and Dubai pursue a strategy of economic diversification and innovation to support economic growth and development (Saber et al., 2018a: 47-48).

In Lirong Ma's research titled “The Rise of GCC's Soft Power and China's Humanities Diplomacy” pointed out that the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, actively participate in regional and international affairs, and play an increasingly important role in global governance (Ma, 2018: 58).

The rise of the core Gulf Cooperation Council countries adds many uncertainties to the social transformations in the Arab countries, which reflects the fact that the core countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council greatly increase their political influence. UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have begun to emerge as “major states” in the Arab world and play an important role in the recent drama of political changes in the Middle East. The three countries have actively participated over the past few years, in many events such as the military intervention in Bahrain, the overthrow of Qaddafi's regime, the leadership in the transfer of Yemen's government power, the efforts to

internationalize the Syrian crisis, and the responses towards Iranian nuclear issue (Ma, 2018: 59).

According to Salisbury (2018), since the 1960s, the perception of the Gulf States towards aid and other forms of foreign aid has evolved, with each country taking a different approach. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have been historic leaders in the region in ODA and other forms of aid, but in the 1990s the UAE, and finally Qatar, joined them. Salisbury mentioned that in 2018, the Gulf States have developed extensive experience in development and providing aid, and in the use of foreign aid as a tool of soft power in relatively stable contexts and in the fragile and failed country contexts including Afghanistan and Somalia, and finally Yemen. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries are likely to become increasingly influential, and to have a growing influence on how money is spent at the country level (Salisbury, 2018: 10).

In an article by Janardhan (2019) titled “The UAE evolves into a ‘smart’ power” that Author argues that the UAE has become an exceptional case study in international relations and diplomacy and could be one of the smallest countries that can exercise so-called “smart” power because of:

Firstly, a shift in the global economic situation and national security needs an unstable regional environment and a deliberate attempt to carve out a distinct identity in a region that has seen the rise of other competing players (Janardhan, 2019).

Secondly, the effect of economic security features meant moving away from a foreign security policy largely centered between the United States and Europe, and slowly turning its gaze on to Asia, Africa, and even South America. We see the UAE pursuing a "diverse" foreign policy with different strategic partners (Janardhan, 2019).

This can be categorized as "multi-track diplomacy", "multi-factor engagement", or "multi-budget strategy". The fact that diplomatic communication in the United Arab Emirates does not hold all of its eggs in one basket anymore is embodied in the "Look East" policy. This includes strategic partnerships with China, India, Japan and South Korea, among others, and takes a comprehensive shape by integrating cooperation in the fields of space, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and security as well (Janardhan, 2019).

Third, in terms of being a consumer of security, and allowing many countries to establish military bases in the country, the United Arab Emirates is gradually but surely evolving into a role of providing security (Janardhan, 2019).

In an article titled, "Power play: The United Arab Emirates' New Approach to Geopolitics," Dr. Justin Gibbins, pointed to smart power as well. Dr. Gibbins believes that three separate but related "smart power" strategies adopted by the UAE to form a "multilateralist" identity. The first is institutional smart power: The UAE belongs to several multilateral organizations including the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and the Non-Aligned Movement, to name a few (Gibbins, 2017).

Second is smart economic power: The UAE succeeded in diversifying its economy, and managed to have a burgeoning non-oil trade and has well-established patterns of economic interdependency with Saudi Arabia, China, India, the US, and Germany. Finally, smart power is lodged within a vigorous network of diplomatic influence. With cultural and religious commonalities helping to bind close neighbors and strategic interests forging diplomatic agreements further afield, the UAE's policy of diplomacy building has been extensive and consistent (Gibbins, 2017).

As the Emirati Minister of Foreign Affairs stated in his address to the 71st United Nations Assembly in September 2016: “The past few years have shown that solutions based on crisis management are ineffective. Therefore, joint international efforts must focus on finding fundamental solutions for these conflicts.” As such, “smart power” strategy is shaped by a hard/soft fusion as this multilateralism creates networks that cover a range of hard and soft policy areas (Gibbins, 2017).

Dr. Gibbins mentioned that the United Arab Emirates has been adept at developing broad and deep political, military, economic and diplomatic ties with other countries. However, the increased dependence on hard power can destabilize these relations, and thus its stance may be weakened when dealing with regional opponents such as Iran. Global dilemmas - whether military conflicts, environmental degradation, global terrorism or the gap between the poor and the rich - make unilateral reactions at best insufficient and at worst destructive (Gibbins, 2017).

2.4 The Evolution of UAE’s Foreign Policy

In 2010, the Arab Spring started in Tunisia, with a domino effect across numerous Arab nations, with the people seeking to overthrow oppressive regimes in their countries (History, 2018). The effects of this phenomenon continue to have an effect today, with the Middle East and North Africa home to pockets of conflict-ridden nations. The UAE’s role in this development is motivated by three major factors: threat from Iran, combatting war on terror, the unknown repercussions of the Arab Spring on the country’s stability, emergence of terrorist organizations and the withdrawal of significant US presence in the region.

UAE Policy toward Iran as a threat: Although Iran occupied the three island that UAE rightfully own as recognized by the United Nations and international law, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan was keen to maintain a good relationship with its neighbours and practice diplomacy with Iran. Economy ties between the two countries are strategic to both economies; despite not verifying the extent of trade by either side, experts estimated in late 2010 that trade between Iran and Dubai reached around \$26 billion, and decreased to \$16 billion because of the sanctions (EPC, 2018).

At the same time, Iran's nuclear program and their aggressive actions towards other Arab Gulf states increased tensions in the region. The threat of Iran is largely seen from regional states as Iran is trying to increase its influence and attempting to spread Iranian ideology and geopolitical project under the regional chaos brought about by the Arab Spring (Hubbard, 2016).

Nevertheless, UAE maintained a neighborly relationship with Iran, but in January 2016, a group of armed Iranians stormed the Saudi embassy in Mashhad. Tehran had a slow response towards the incident and it was a clear violation of international conventions in the protection of diplomats. Moreover, the incident led to severing ties between the GCC and Iran, proving it to be a blow to Iranian diplomacy, which was last straw for the UAE and GCC in having diplomatic relations with Iran (Hubbard, 2016).

War on terror: The UAE contributed and exerted massive effort in fighting terrorism, which primarily began after the 9/11 attacks. The conflicts following the Arab Spring was the next wave of breeding terrorism in the MENA region, subsequently destabilizing many countries in the region. Therefore, the UAE had to be

more involved with the international efforts through alliances and agreements on how to fight terrorism.

The repercussion of the Arab Spring: The Arab Spring's effects spilled to the UAE and the GCC in both positive and negative ways. The drop in economic stability in conflict-ridden countries transferred some of the economic activity to its neighbouring GCC neighbors, but challenges arose in terms of security and the threat of religious extremism and sectarianism.

Terrorist organizations: In the past decade, the world witnessed the emergence of terrorist groups, especially in the MENA region, with groups like ISIS, Hezbollah and Alnasrah. The UAE national security has been keen to protect citizens and adopted many security and awareness initiatives to make people aware of the dangers of these groups. Therefore, the UAE has tightened security campaigns at airports and issued a list that categorizes groups that are considered extremist or terrorist organizations.

The US in the Middle East (Obama's presidency): The US retreat in the Middle East led to the emergence of Iran as a regional threat and Russia's increased presence. Consequently, tension increased in the region and established new alliances.

All the aforementioned transformations and developments in the region led to the increased adoption of soft power, positioning the UAE as a nation with economic means but also openness to the world.

2.5 Soft Power throughout the World

Many countries exercised soft power indirectly without a named strategy before the coining of the term, seen through the agreements, cultural exchange and "marriages between kingdom and knowledge" (Nye, 2004).

2.5.1 Great Powers States (US, Russia, France, Great Britain, China)

During the Cold War, the United States and the USSR were in great competition to influence the rest of the world to follow their ideology and join their blocs. The Soviet Union developed, launched and engaged many nations with campaigns to promote the appeal of its communist regime. In 1945, the communist system became very attractive and popular for many Europeans and in colonized areas around the world because of its opposition to European imperialism (Nye, 2009).

In addition, the Soviet's "Russia now" employed a substantially large public diplomacy program that included promoting their high culture, coupled with broadcasting and disseminating disinformation about the West. The actions went further to sponsoring nuclear protests, peace movements and youth organizations that were in direct opposition of capitalism (History, 2009). Nevertheless, in regards to soft power, the closed Soviet system and the lack of popular culture hindered the ability of the Soviet Union to compete with the United States.

After the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union 1990, the United States became the sole dominant player in the international sphere as a superpower (History, 2009). In a short period, United States used its resources to spread its culture, especially through its wide-reaching and effective media, using films, music and pop culture to promote the American way of life.

Moreover, the US proved to have the ultimate soft power influence over the world. According to Joffe (2006) who coined the phrase that the U.S. "rules over an empire on which the sun never sets". This was not achieved through coercion or by occupation, but rather achieved global hegemony with an effective utilization of soft power. This can, in part, be seen in the dominant status the US holds for winning the

most Noble Prizes laureates with 254 times, while the United Kingdom comes second with 93 and China with 9 laureates only (History, 2009)

Moreover, the educational sector has been topped by the US as well, with some of the highest-ranking universities found there. According to Shanghai Ranking, there are 17 US-universities in the top 20 of the world, while China's best university ranks at 151. The US succeeded to utilize three effective ways to influence the world; they pioneered the technological sector by flooding the global market, positioning it at the forefront with products like Apple, Microsoft and Cisco (Shanghai Ranking, 2019). Perhaps more importantly has been the effect of the American media, through Hollywood, which infiltrated nearly every household with satellite. This widespread influence is similarly seen in the food culture, with American restaurants having popularity and a presence all over the world, especially the signature burger (Schrot, 2014: 4)

Chinese scholars have longed showed a huge affection to the concept of soft power; ever since Nye's book 'Bound to Lead', in which the term was coined for the first time, which was later published in Chinese (Ding, 2010). Furthermore, the Hu administration showed a grand interest in the notion of soft power. In 2007 President Hu gave a speech at the 17th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress and said:

“Culture has become a more and more important source of national cohesion and Creativity and a factor of growing significance in the competition in overall national strength... We must enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country to better guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests” (Nagao, 2016).

Recently, China has accentuated on improving the effectiveness of its soft power and invests heavily in supporting programs to boost the country's public image. Additionally, the Chinese government has committed itself to enhancing its attractiveness abroad; Beijing is developing an international media network and establishing cultural centers around the world (Albert, 2018). In addition, the China's traditions, values, language and culture are increasingly gaining influence and growing in exposure over the world. Despite China's efforts, and as a strong international player as the most populous country in the world with the second largest economy, China still lacks influence through soft power. The funds China steers toward its soft power campaign are hard to pinpoint due to the country's limited transparency but experts place estimates in the billions of dollars. U.S. Sinologist David Shambaugh of George Washington University says that China spends approximately \$10 billion a year on soft power campaigns (Albert, 2018)

Beijing has implemented aid programs that typically focuses on South-South partnerships in the developing world as part of its soft power approach; comes without conditionality; is predominantly bilateral; and includes not only grants and interest-free and concessional loans, but also other forms of official government funding. In addition, the Chinese Government has conducted a number of training programs in support of public health, agriculture and governance. China's aid programs, though growing, are a fraction of what large donors such as the United States, EU institutions and Japan offer.

Indeed, china initiative "Belt and Road" or BRI, was described by Beijing leaders as a means of soft power and a recall for stimulating regional contacts. China's initiative seeks to combine the economic belt of the Silk Road through an extensive

network of railways, roads, pipelines, ports and telecommunications infrastructure that will promote economic integration from China, through Asia, the Middle East, Africa, to Europe and beyond.

In the same context, China financed part of international projects, contributing \$50 billion to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank when it was established, and half of the bank's initial capital. Beijing also pledged \$40 billion to the Silk Road Fund, \$25 billion to the Silk Road, and another \$41 billion to the new development bank (created by the BRIC countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) (Albert, 2018)

In 2004, China opened the first “Confucius Institute” in Seoul, South Korea, and now there are more than five hundred institutes found around the world. The centers are non-profit organizations by the Chinese Ministry of Education belong to cultural associations such as the British Councils of the United Kingdom, the French-French Alliance. The centers offer Mandarin language courses, cooking classes, calligraphy, and celebrations in China's national holidays (Albert, 2018).

The Confucius Institute is supplemented by training programs in Africa; the Chinese government focuses not only on public awareness but also in training future generations of African leaders, as well as university presidents and officials, known “people to people” contact program (Xue, 2012: 34).

In fact, China's investment in African nations began in 2000 after the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC); since then China has significantly increased its flow of funds into Africa in the last 15 years. Member states are China, African nations that have diplomatic ties with Beijing, and the

commission of the African Union (FOCAC, 2006). The trade between Africa and China increased by approximately 32 times from pre-FOCAC 1999 (US\$ 6.5 billion) to 2013 (US\$ 210 billion) (China Data Online, 2001, 2014). In addition, China became Africa's largest trade partner in 2009 (Information Office of the State Council, 2013).

Moreover, the United Kingdom (UK) has had a strong soft power since the British colonization, its prior empire playing an instrumental role in gaining soft power over other nations. British influence across the world is evident in the past century, and continues to play a role in the country's strategy. The House of Lords releases a report in 2014 showing UK's soft power, influence strategy and the recommended changes in response to the developments in the international landscape, which are seen in the diagram below.

UK media, culture and diplomacy has been spread all over the world, with some of the most popular and credible news outlets in the world stemming from there, such as: The Financial Times, The Independent, The Observer, The Times and The Economist. British media is broadcasted internationally, notably the BBC World Service and BBC World News. British film and literature also have international appeal, and British theatre helps make London one of the most visited cities in the world (BBC, 2018).

Globally, UK education system has been used equally with the American education system and Schools and universities in Britain are popular destinations for students of other nations. Moreover, many countries around the world use the British form of democracy and government known as the Westminster system, London is the headquarters for four of the world's six largest law firms and the center of international finance where foreign participants in financial markets come to deal with one another

In 2015, according to the soft power 30 rank, UK was ranked as the top soft power influencer, coming first in Portland Group, Comres and Facebook report; it also ranked number one in the Monocle survey of global soft power of 2012. In 2017 according to the lowy global diplomacy, UK had the seventh largest diplomatic network in the world.

France is one of the most countries that has a great soft power, especially through the promotion of its culture that has been admired in many parts of the world; so much so that Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States is famously quoted as saying "Every man has two countries, his own and France". The very term "culture" comes from France and the French language is often named as a diplomacy language, where most of the kings and princes used French as a second language. The luxury brand fashion comes mostly from Paris the fashion capital. Fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier said" Clothes are... a kind of ambassador that speaks visually, and effectively represents the French savoir-faire."

Paris has long been represented with luxury, art, elites and elegance and France succeeded to brand its capital as a symbol of love, fashion, and art .Few countries could compare to being associated with luxury, culinary arts and culture as France, and this is the basis of their strength. In 2017, France ranked as the world's top 'soft power' according to researchers for the Soft Power 30, topping both the US and the UK. In the same year, according to the lowy global diplomacy index 2017, France had the third largest diplomatic network in the world.

2.5.2 Middle countries: India, Saudi Arabia and Brazil

The middle power also utilized soft power, especially after the increased popularity of the term. In the case of India, since the InduNimna civilization, culture, religion, economy and politics were used as a means of soft power. Moreover, the Indian culture is very old and rich with traditions, where Indian civilization is home to a diverse range of over a dozen languages and a multitude of religions. The Indian culture has a long history of civilizational and cultural links with countries across the world such as Iran, Rome and South East Asia, which helped India build a positive image and make use of soft power for its benefit.

Meanwhile, India is one of the successful countries that applied soft power within the region, and registered as the fastest growth among all the major democracies of the world, representing the fourth largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) .The large population of India means a widespread of Indians around the world, serving as ambassadors of the culture and indirectly reinforcing the soft power of the country.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is sacred to Muslims of all sects, gathering in Mecca each year for the holy pilgrimage. As Saudi Arabia is home to the most holy sites for Muslims (the holy cities of Makkah and Medina), Saudi Arabia has become the destination of over two millions of pilgrims during the annual hajj (pilgrimage) season, and many more visitors year around. Saudi Arabia is also the host to a plethora of Islamic religious organizations; it is a prolific donor to Muslim charities and causes all over the world. Saudi Arabia emerged as a natural candidate for a regional and international leadership role in the post-war period. The country has common borders

with seven Arab neighbors of different cultures, including the hotbeds of political turmoil in the north and south (Gallarotti, 2010).

Saudi Arabia is the center of four important worlds: the Middle East, the Arab world, the Muslim world, and global world of energy. No doubt, this core position in these networks has endowed Saudi Arabia with hard power (i.e., power over material resources) in the latter half of the 20th century. The foreign policy of Saudi Arabia became more balanced with a vigorous quest for soft power in its most important networks of international relations, ultimately a quest for cosmopolitan or smart power (Gallarotti, 2010).

Economically, Saudi Arabia is considered an "energy superpower" with the largest Arab economy in the Arab world, and has the world's second-largest proven petroleum reserves. The country is the largest exporter of petroleum and also has the fifth-largest proven natural gas reserves.

Besides the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a major player in the region, the Turkish Republic comes as a great player representing the Ottoman civilization and protector of Muslims. According to the Soft Power30 (2017), Turkish soft power reflected in its geography, culture and history, but these assets have returned to recent fluctuations. Turkey also performs strongly in the sub-index, with impressive diplomatic network defying the current challenges witnessed in the region.

In South America, Brazil has a big influence on the other countries in the continent and now is becoming one of the biggest economies in the world, rising to be in the top ten internationally and Brazil has started to make a name for itself on the international stage (Centracchio, 2016).

Brazil's diverse and rich culture is famous for its music, spices, clothes distinctive colors, and the home to football talent, all of which made it a great soft power.

2.5.3 Small Country: Qatar, Jamaica, Singapore and Scandinavian countries

On the other hand, any country regardless of its size and population can use soft power, and there are some very successful small countries that rank high in their effective use of soft power such as Qatar, Jamaica, Singapore and the Scandinavian countries. Qatar has applied intensively active diplomacy in regional conflicts, invests strategically in shares of international companies, controls the most influential Arab news channel – Al-Jazeera – and succeeded to be awarded hosting rights to the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup 2022 (Younas, 2017; Antwi-Boateng, 2013).

Similarly, Jamaica is small country with a population of only 2.7 million; regardless, it applied soft power in a very attractive way that spread Jamaica influence all over the world by achieve prosperity through the appeal of its culture – from its dialect, music, and dance to its food (Johnson, 2013).

Singapore is one the most open and globalized country in the world, with its total trade amounting to three and a half times the size of its gross domestic product (GDP) (OEC, 2017). This is one of the reasons that the World Bank ranked Singapore as the easiest country in the world to do business in. The Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Singapore as the third most competitive city in the world after New York and London (Mahbubani, 2014).

Scandinavian countries dominate the soft power rank, where soft power 30 ranked Sweden 9th, Denmark 17th and Norway 12th in the SP rank in 2017. Scandinavian countries are characterized as unique with a very good government structure and high political elite.

To understand how countries utilize soft power, Nye (2011) singles out four main channels through which states can use their soft power, notably “public diplomacy, broadcasting, exchanges, and assistance” (Figure 2).

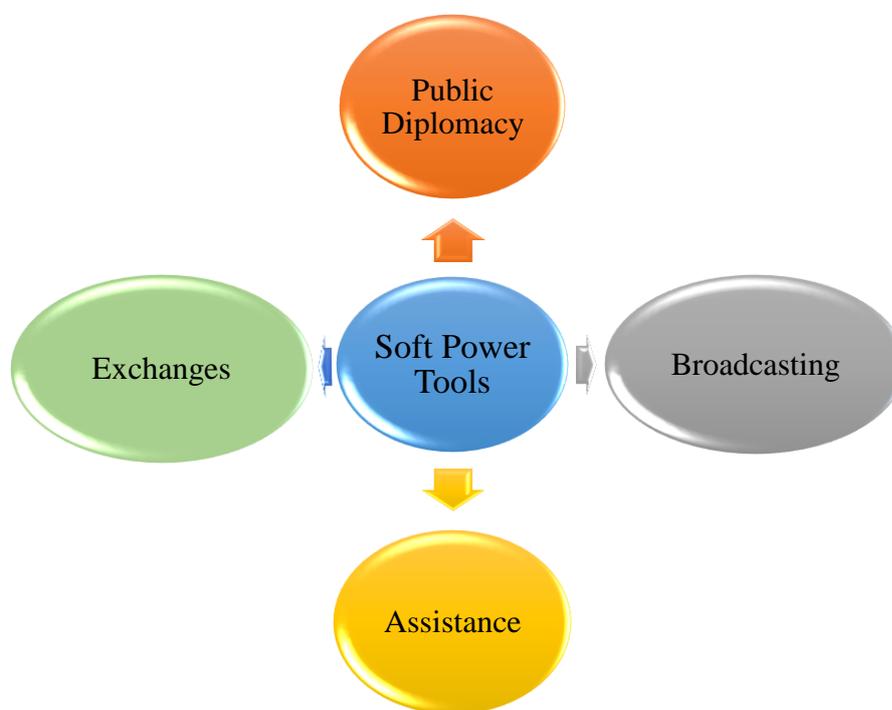


Figure 2: Soft power tools

Scholars and leaders debated the definition and scope of soft power term when it was first introduced. Soft power did balance and distribute powers (soft or hard). Example: Qatar is one of the small countries in Arab gulf, with a very small population count around 2,696,404 and yet scores high in regards to soft power (Worldometers, 2018) despite having no significant military. Qatar now is one of the most well-known

country over the world, mainly through a uniquely strong soft power in a turbulent region across. The political stability of Qatar is derived of its military alliance with the United States and effective income redistribution policies a progressive higher education system that has significantly enhanced Qatar's standing Middle East (Antwi-Boateng, 2013 P: 50).

Despite debate on the different aspects of soft power, most scholars agree that soft power has its limitations and may change from time to time. In addition, soft power needs to be exercised for a very long time to see the result and might not achieve the intended outcome. Most scholars agree that soft power is very costly (Baumann, 2017). Bauman argues that soft power is still not clear of how he would categorize this form of power. More importantly: The contrast with hard power helps us to see what soft power is not but we are still missing a more informative account of what it is and how it works. Hard power has its own set of tools and instruments used, with a high probability of achieving the intended goal.

Soft power is not a new reality, but a new word describing a very efficient form of power. There are limits to what soft power could achieve; in a context dominated by hard power considerations soft power is meaningless. In the affairs of nations, too much hard power ends up breeding not submission but resistance; likewise, a lot of soft power does not bend hearts; it twists minds in resentment and rage (Fan, 2008).

Chapter 3: Soft Power in the UAE

3.1 UAE Foreign Policy

Soft power had an integral role in the UAE's foreign policy since the formation of the country and during the reign of Sheikh Zayed. During the country's foundation, the UAE was focused on building the internal framework of the country not unlike newly formed nations or countries that gained their independence. However, regional and international developments and occurrences also shaped the UAE's foreign policy, most notable events being:

1. The Gulf War in which the UAE participated in the liberation of Kuwait
2. The eleventh of September - events and the emergence of the phenomenon of "fighting terrorism"
3. Fall of Baghdad, which led to a security vacuum in the region,
4. The security vacuum resulted in the Iranian expansion in the Arab region (Lebanon-Yemen-Iraq),
5. The Arab Spring and the instability of some of the big capitals that were considered as the stability of the region (Egypt - Syria) and the security chaos in the region,
6. The emergence of so-called "terrorist organizations and militias," which does not belong to any state, but implements its agenda in the name of religion,
7. The decline of American hegemony and the American withdrawal from the region under Obama's presidency.

All these transformations and challenges in the region have imposed on the UAE a new reality necessitated it to play a more active role, particularly in its foreign relations. In addition, the UAE expanded and diversified its partnerships and played a large role intensively in containing many of the tensions crises and disagreements, both in the region and internationally.

Moreover, the UAE has always been proactive in supporting the factors of development and economic growth to enhance the various programs of humanitarian assistance and relief, directly and indirectly to support developing countries, especially when they are faced with conflict or natural disasters (EPC, 2017).

3.2 UAE Foreign Policy Towards GCC

After the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, the UAE and five other Gulf monarchies, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, formed a strategic and economic alliance called the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Sheikh Zayed was one of the founders of the GGC cooperation. In May 16, 1976, the prince of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, visited the UAE and began to held talks with Sheikh Zayed on the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council. While the Iran-Iraq war played a role in the motive, the GCC formation was planned and implemented also because of the deficiencies left behind by the United Kingdom after its exit from the Arabian Gulf and the need for the regional states to collectively work together and fill the void (GN Archives, 2013). The first meeting of the GGC cooperation was in Abu Dhabi on May 25, 1981 (GCC, 2019).

Despite the strained relations among some of the recent Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the UAE's alliance with other Gulf monarchy states remains central to the country's security policy.

UAE has always been devoted to and working in collaboration with the states in the GCC Council, the League of Arab States, and other groups to support all efforts to contain and resolve tensions and conflicts in the Middle East. The central emphasis has been to settle disputes peacefully. Bilateral cooperation among the GCC countries is continuously enhanced through agreements, summits, visits and meetings at various levels.

3.3 UAE Relations with GCC States

The UAE have always considered the relationship with the five members Gulf States and in the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) as a central feature of its foreign policy. What brings the Gulf countries together and makes them closer than others is their common history; we see that there is a similarity in customs, traditions, language and religion. In addition, they were all occupied by the British Empire as well as share borders with each other. After the Iranian revolution in 1979, GCC states felt threatened from the new regime in Iran, especially after the British withdrew from the region. Therefore, GCC states leaders met in Abu Dhabi in 1981 and announced the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The relationship between the member states has been very close over the years (Gulf News, 2011).

In June 2017, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt jointly decided to boycott Qatar from diplomatic and economic ties (WAM, 2017). This was one of the major blows to the solidarity among the GCC members.

Furthermore, according to semi-official estimates, the number of Iranians living in the UAE is close to half a million, with a large portion of them being traders and businessmen who are active in numerous industries, mainly in the sectors of food, raw materials, iron, steel, electronics, tires, household equipment and other materials. (Hellyer, 2001: 160-168).

3.4 UAE Foreign Policy in the MENA

3.4.1 MENA/Arab League

The UAE has tried to maintain a solid relationship with nations in the Arab and Muslim world, making it one of the country's priorities in shaping its foreign policy. One of the consequent issues that impacted the UAE's foreign policy is therefore the Arab-Israel conflict. During the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973, the UAE played a role through economic and political channels within the Arab oil boycott, using the Oil as a means of pressure on importing countries supporting Israel at that time (Venegoni, 2019).

Palestine considered UAE as one of its major financial aiders; contribute through Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic development. During 1970-1980, the UAE cut its ties with Egypt following President Sadat visiting the Jerusalem and subsequently signing a peace agreement with Israel in 1979. The Palestinian case has therefore been always significant, which until now impacts the UAE's foreign policy (Hellyer, 2001: 173).

Since the UAE's establishment in 1971, estimated UAE aid from both the government and nongovernmental organizations has been valued at around \$47.4 billion (UAE Embassy in WDC, 2017). These contributions have been used to fund

development, humanitarian and charity assistance projects (UAE Embassy in WDC, 2017). Within the region, the UAE provided and continues to provide generous support and assistance in different methods, which became one of the cornerstones of the UAE's foreign policy strategies. During the last decade, the UAE provided tens of billions of dollars in humanitarian and stabilization support across the region and, according to UAE embassy in Washington DC, some of the UAE's aids in the region include:

- Syria: Since the start of the Syria crisis in 2011, the UAE has in support of Syrian refugees. In 2014 alone, more than \$60 million was allocated for the UN-coordinated Regional Response Plan (RRP) and the Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), which provide food, health, water, sanitation and education services to refugees in neighboring countries, as well as those displaced internally within Syria. The UAE has accepted tens of thousands of Syrian refugees and family members of UAE residents (UAE Embassy in WDC, 2017)
- Iraq: The UAE's recent contribution of \$60 million to the Iraq Stabilization Fund is only its latest commitment to Iraq's reconstruction, which included financial and in-kind support, medical treatment, hospital reconstruction, humanitarian supplies and police training. Since 2003, the UAE has also forgiven more than \$7 billion in Iraqi Government debt (UAE Embassy in WDC, 2017)
- Yemen: To date, the UAE has donated more than \$1 billion in aid and reconstruction support to Yemen and has rebuilt hundreds of schools, hospitals and critical infrastructure across Southern and Eastern Yemen.

- Egypt: The UAE has significantly elevated its support to Egypt to promote economic growth and stability. Egypt was the number one recipient of UAE development aid in 2013 and 2014, receiving \$4.63 billion and \$3.2 billion, respectively through an initiative managed by the Egypt Task Force (ETF) (UAE Embassy in WDC, 2017).
- Libya: For the past five years, the UAE provided direct humanitarian aid and support to the Libyan people in the form of hundreds of tons of food packages, medicines, medical equipment, tents and blankets for Libyan people (UAE Embassy in WDC, 2017).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UAE became the world's largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2013 and held that distinction for a second consecutive year in 2014, with aid amounting to \$4.9 billion (OECD, 2017).

3.5 UAE Foreign Policy at the International Level

International cooperation is essential to the UAE's foreign policy, especially when tackling global challenges; consequently, the UAE is an active participant in, and contributor to, the multilateral system. As part of its foreign assistance strategy, UAE is constantly looking to expand its engagement with relevant and effective multilateral organizations. According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UAE has maintained its ranking as one of the 10 largest donor states in the Official Development Aid (ODA) in 2015 (ODA, 2015).

In 2014, the UAE was named as a participant member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The UAE ranked as the highest ODA to Gross National Income (GNI) ratio in 2015 at 1.09 percent, with the country's ODA accounting for AED 16.1 billion and over 52 percent of the aid, administered in the form of grants (OECD, 2015). In 2016, the UAE spent AED 15.23 billion worth of development assistance (OECD, 2017).

The generosity of the UAE's culture is clearly reflected in its foreign policy strategies, which coincides with the source of income that most, if not all, non-profit organizations, foundations and charities rely on. The UAE has established more than 45 such foundations and charities, with a multitude of capabilities and experience in various sectors and are working on vital issues such as emergency response, blindness, disability services, children's education and sponsorship of orphans (MOFAIC, 2017).

3.5.1 UAE Relations with Iran

Iran's relations with the Gulf States has been strained over the years between, fluctuating from close economic relationships to boycotts; the recent relations have worsened between the GCC states and Iran. The recent US sanctions on Iran forced many Iranian companies in the United Arab Emirates, which has recently become a commercial centre for Iranian goods, to move to other countries such as Turkey and Qatar (EPC, 2018). Despite the tensions, the GCC countries collectively rank second in Iran's trade partners in terms of exports, including the UAE (EPC, 2018). The UAE ranks third among the countries importing from Iran, accounting for 14 percent of all Iranian exports despite the political conflict between the UAE and Iran. Moreover,

there is a large community of Iranians in the UAE, most of them in Dubai (EPC, 2018 and Hellyer, 2001: 170).

3.5.2 UAE Relations with Great Power: US, Russia and China

3.5.2.1 UAE and US

Since 1971, after its independence from the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates has established friendly relations with the United States. In 1972, the two states formed official diplomatic relations and since then, they share a common resolve to maintain security and stability in the Gulf.

UAE is one of the main partner of the United States in the region, and plays a poignant and effective role in the Middle East. The United States and the UAE have strong bilateral cooperation on a whole range of issues including defence, non-proliferation, trade, law enforcement, energy policy, and cultural exchange. The two countries work together to promote peace and security, support economic growth, and improve education opportunities in the region and around the world. UAE ports host more US naval vessels than anywhere else outside the United States does.

3.5.2.2 UAE and Russia

UAE has unique relation with the Kremlin and both of the cooperation between the two states is instrumental to resolve regional security challenges that threaten their interests. Recently, both countries signed the Declaration of Strategic Partnership to cooperate in various sectors such as politics, security, economy and culture, along with cooperation in the humanitarian, scientific, technological and tourist domains (Karasik & Cafiero, 2018).

The economic trade between Russia and the UAE in the non-oil sector amounted to US 2.1 billion in 2016, which is likely to increase significantly in the light of existing and future mutual opportunities for the two countries. In the past two years, the UAE has welcomed more than 600,000 Russian visitors (Egor, 2017).

3.5.2.3 UAE and China

The Gulf States and China had an ancient relationship that formed the "Silk Road" during the ninth century (Karasik, 2016). Recently; we have seen the restoration of this ancient business relationship between two civilizations - except that oil and consumer goods have replaced jade and silk. UAE and China trade in 2017 grew to \$53.3 billion, compared to \$46.3 billion in the previous year, an increase of 15.1 percent. The UAE's foreign trade with China in 2017 consisted of direct trade of US \$ 25.685 billion, or 48 percent of the country's total foreign trade, and free zones valued at US \$ 27.644 billion or 52% (Bridge, 2019).

3.5.3 UAE Relations with South Asian Countries: India

Over the past three years, relations between the UAE and India have matured, despite the fact that the two countries have always been in warm and good relations, the current rapprochement between the two countries is unprecedented, according to senior officials and diplomats. Since the visit of Moody to UAE in August three years ago, visits between the two countries increased, and there have been three other high-level visits by the UAE and India leaderships. In February 2016, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces visited India and made their first official visit to them. In January 2017, the second visit to India the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi to attend the celebration as a major guest in the Republic

of India Day celebrations. The historic visit between the two countries was the base of the beginning of new comprehensive and strategic partnership; the visits resulted in the signing of memorandums of understanding and related agreements:

1. Facilitation of Institutional Investors in infrastructure
2. Cooperation in renewable energy
3. Cooperation in combating cybercrime
4. Cultural exchange
5. Space
6. Insurance
7. Skill development
8. Currency swaps

The bilateral trade and relations between the two countries grew from 1982, where foreign trade figures were at \$182 million to 2016-17, where the numbers stood at \$53 billion,” said Ahmed Al Banna, the UAE Ambassador to India. Moreover, the UAE has a very large Indian community in the UAE, numbering about 3.3 million, living in harmony with 200 different nationalities. All these factors and bonds of friendship between the UAE and India are poised to be further diversified and strengthened in months and years to come (Sengupta, 2018 and Embassy of UAE, 2018).

3.5.4 UAE Relations with South Asian Countries: Pakistan

Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates have a long history of close and cordial relations, reinforced by common interests and shared values, and the convergence of views on all issues of common interest. Since the establishment of the United Arab Emirates, the relations between the two countries has been an expression of a dynamic partnership, ranging from multifaceted economic and trade ties to close cooperation in security and defence. The UAE is currently Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East and provides a major source of investment in Pakistan. Countries complement each other's needs for food security and energy, and can act as a springboard for each other to invest and raise awareness in the region.

The UAE is an important trading partner of Pakistan, and the volume of trade between the two countries reached USD 3.3 billion in 2015, making the UAE the largest investor in Pakistan. Its investments included telecommunications, aviation, banking, real estate, oil and gas. The two are exploring new sectors to develop economic, trade and investment relations between the two countries, in addition to inviting Pakistani enterprises and companies to take advantage of the infrastructure potential of the UAE, improving the cooperation and economic integration among the two nations. Pakistan's businessmen are among the first investors in the Gulf in general and the UAE in particular. Currently there are more than 7,000 Pakistani registered companies in the UAE, including retail, manufacturing, textile factories, food trade, financial services, tourism, hotels, and real estate. The two countries are also linked to a number of agreements, the most important of which are: avoidance of double taxation, promotion of investment and cooperation in the fight against crime and terrorism. Pakistan exports include petroleum products, foodstuffs, vegetables,

fruits, fish and derivatives, artificial textiles, embroidered fabrics and raw materials for the manufacture of textiles, cotton products and fresh and frozen meat. The UAE exports billions of dollars' worth of goods to Pakistan, including crude oil, petroleum products, heavy equipment, jewellery and various re-export items. The UAE and Pakistan signed more than 28 agreements and memorandums of understanding, including agreements to avoid double taxation, promotion and protection of bilateral investments as well as judicial, political, commercial and cultural agreements (Khalifa, 2018). The UAE-Pakistan relations are an example of a constantly evolving bilateral relationship, not only because they are based on firm foundations, but because there is a mutual recognition between the leaderships of the two countries to promote and develop them in all fields. Recently, the Gwadar region of Baluchistan province has laid the foundation stone for the desalination project, which will be built with the support of the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland. The project will be completed in 6-8 months to provide 4.4 million gallons of water per day to the residents of Gwadar area, to 9 million gallons of water per day. Through its charitable and humanitarian institutions, the UAE has worked to develop and support health care in Pakistan through a wide range of health projects across the country under the direct guidance of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. The project was launched by the UAE to assist Pakistan with the results of the UAE polio vaccination campaign carried out in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan between 2014 and the end of 2017. The campaign has succeeded in giving 254 million and 415,000 doses of polio vaccine to more than 43 million Pakistani children (Khalifa, 2018 and Ettihad News Paper, 2018).

3.5.5 UAE Relations with Latin America

More recently, the UAE and Latin America have proved that, despite the geographic distance between them, they have relatively close ties with aims of further improving their relationship. In 2018, the Emirates Argentina Business Platform opened its regional offices in Jebel Ali Free Zone to allow promoting commercial relations between the UAE and Argentina by connecting producers of goods and services with different types of consumers. The UAE imported Dh1.3bn (\$354m) worth of live animals and animal products from Brazil, Argentina and Mexico in the first half of 2017, the vast majority (97%) of which came from Brazil. Mexico is Dubai's second largest trade partner in the region, with AED2.6bn (\$700m) in bilateral non-oil trade during the same period (Gibbson, 2018).

3.5.6 UAE Relations with Africa

Recently, UAE emerged as an important protagonist in the Horn of Africa, in the form of political alliances, aid, investment, military base agreements and port contracts, as it expands its influence in the region. In addition, a recent demonstration took place in the summer of 2018, when Eritrea and Ethiopia, after a wave of visits by UAE officials and with them, announced that they had reached an agreement to end their 20-year war positively influenced by UAE diplomacy and assistance helping close the deal. Gulf port cities have a long history of relations with Africa, which revolves around maritime trade and dates back to the era before the unification of the UAE as a nation state. The instability in region made Abu Dhabi from 2011, to look at countries along the Red Sea coast more than business partners did. The UAE, along with other Gulf countries, is investing in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa in the long term. Ideally, its successful Eritrea-Ethiopia diplomacy will provide the basis for

this engagement. The Eritrean-Ethiopian rapprochement, as well as a wave of other Horn of Africa diplomacy, has greatly enhanced the vision of the Gulf States as geopolitical actors along the Red Sea. The UAE and the United Arab Emirates are now central to the talks on the future of a region still plagued by conflict and instability. With Washington apparently falling, the Gulf States seem determined to play a key role. In 2018, six additional embassies opened on the continent, plus more than a dozen already there and UAE proved many times that its engagement with Africa is there to stay (CG, 201: 65).

3.5.7 UAE Relations with International Organizations i.e. UN, European Union

The UAE has been an important trading partner for the EU, and EU countries have welcomed the deepening of relations between the EU and the UAE since the establishment of the Federation's mission in Abu Dhabi. The UAE was the first Arab country to have concluded a visa exemption agreement for its citizens to the EU countries, in May 2015, with the member states of the Schengen region (WAM, 2015). The role of the United Arab Emirates is important and decisive on several levels, in addition to its military role alongside the coalition forces, Patrico Fondi, the EU ambassador in February 2016, praised the humanitarian assistance provided by the UAE to the Yemeni people. French President Emmanuel Macaron confirmed in November 2017 that the UAE was one of France's biggest allies in the region and pointed out that the presence of a French military base based in the capital Abu Dhabi is proof of its country's commitment to its allies. France also sold two frigates to the UAE, The UAE authorities for their full solidarity with France in the face of terrorism and stand by its side in all measures taken to preserve its security.

In January 2018, the German government announced the suspension of arms exports to countries participating in the Yemen war, including the United Arab Emirates, and that it would no longer grant licenses to export arms to these countries as long as they were involved in the Yemen war. A report in February 2018 revealed that the European Union is prepared to secure 50 million Euros out of the 8 billion Euros allocated by Brussels to sub-Saharan countries between 2014 and 2020 (ECCL, 2018). Physical participation in support of the force the joint venture is limited to the European Union and the United States, but extends to several international players such as the UAE. Brussels received pledges from the UAE to pay \$ 30 million of the required amount (Sinovic, 2010).

3.6 Economic relations between the countries of the Union and the UAE

The UAE is the largest export market of the European Union from the Gulf countries with exports worth 42 billion Euros in 2017 representing 2.3% of the total EU exports. The total trade in goods between the EU and the UAE amounted to 52.6 billion Euros. The most important commodities in EU exports are machinery and transport equipment (more than half), manufactured goods and chemicals. The largest share of imports from the UAE to the EU market is represented in mineral fuels, lubricants and other related materials, as well as manufactured goods, value of trade in services between the EU and the UAE is about 15 billion Euros. According to a German report in August 2017, "The UAE is Germany's most important trading partner in the Gulf, followed by Saudi Arabia and operates more than 900 German companies in the GCC, 600 of which are in Dubai. 13.6 billion euros in the United Arab Emirates" (Sinovic, 2010).

The European Union removed the UAE from its black list of tax havens, and statements revealed that "eight jurisdictions have been removed from a list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, following commitments at high political levels to remove EU concerns. The main advisor to the European Commission and the Director General of Trade in April 2018, the UAE is the seventh destination in the field of products of the European Union in 2017" (Sinovic, 2010).

German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited the United Arab Emirates in May 2017, where the visit was aimed at discussing issues related to climate and terrorism. She urged the German Chancellor to calm the Gulf States and Iran, especially with regard to the situation in Yemen. The French President, Emmanuel Macaron, during his visit to the opening of the Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi, participated in an economic forum in Dubai. HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the European Union, met with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Policy and Security Federica Mujerini in Brussels in February 2018. The meeting discussed bilateral relations between the UAE and the EU and ways of enhancing them in all fields (ECCI, 2018).

In March 2018, the Commander of the UAE Naval Forces, Admiral Sheikh Saeed bin Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, discussed with the Italian Secretary General of the Italian Defense, Carlo Maggrache, his visit to the UAE, the joint aspects of cooperation between the two countries. Common interest, particularly in relation to maritime aspects and ways to develop and enhance them. (ECCI, 2018).

A delegation from the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) participated in the final conference in April 2018 on "Judicial Response to Terrorism in the light of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights", which was held in the French Parliament in

the presence of delegations from 14 European countries. In May 2016, the European Commission announced that the EU and the UAE would sign a reciprocity agreement on visa exemptions for citizens of the two parties, which would enable UAE nationals to enter the countries of the Schengen Union without a visa, (90) days except for Britain and Ireland. As a result, the UAE exempts the citizens of the European Union from the need to obtain a visa for visiting (ECCI, 2018).

The UAE joined the UN 1971, and has since committed to respecting United Nations charters and adhering to the law. The objectives of the United Nations include the maintenance of international peace and security, the protection of human rights, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the promotion of sustainable development and the strengthening of international law (IMUNA, 2019) (Table 1).

Table 1: The UAE and its member organizations

Major International & Regional Organizations	UN Specialized Agencies & Organizations
ABEDA: Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa	CTBTO: Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
AFESD: Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development	WTO: World Trade Organization
AMF: Arab Monetary Fund	WMO: World Meteorological Organization
BIS: Bank for International Settlements	WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization
CAEU: Council of Arab Economic Unity	WHO: World Health Organization
CICA: Conference of Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia	WBG: World Bank Group
ICRM: International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement	UPU: Universal Postal Union
IDB: Islamic Development Bank	UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization
IFRCS: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization
ICC: International Chamber of Commerce	UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council	OPCW: Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
IHO: International Hydrographic Organization	MIGA: Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
IMSO: International Mobile Satellite Organization	ITU: International Telecommunications Union
Interpol: International Criminal Police Organization	IMO: International Maritime Organization
IOC: International Olympic Committee	FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
IPU: Inter-Parliamentary Union	IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ISO: International Organization for Standardization	IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
ITSO: International Telecommunications Satellite Organization	ICSID: International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes
LAS/AL: League of Arab States, aka Arab League	IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development
OAPEC: Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries	IFC: International Finance Corporation
OIC: Organization of Islamic Cooperation	IDA: International Development Association
OIF: Organisation internationale de la Francophonie	ILO: International Labor Organization
PCA: Permanent Court of Arbitration	ICAO: International Civil Aviation Organization
WCO: World Customs Organization	IMF: International Monetary Fund

Source: (IMUNA, 2019)

Chapter 4: UAE Future Challenges (Analysis and Findings)

4.1 Interview Analysis and Evaluation

One of the main objectives of this study is to obtain a clear and concise understanding of soft power, along with its tools and strategies, in the context of UAE foreign policy discourse. In order to obtain an accurate understanding of soft power, this study has conducted interviews with 14 respondents over the course of the allotted research time period. The respondents belonged to both governmental and non-governmental institutions. They were selected for this study based on their expertise in the areas of soft power, diplomacy, policy, foreign affairs and communication strategies. The respondents were asked a series of questions from a questionnaire that had been prepared in advance. The questionnaire had a total of 17 questions divided into two categories, which are:

- UAE soft power tools and strategies
- Challenges of UAE's soft power use

Ten questions were dedicated to the first section and seven questions were asked from the latter for the participants to respond. The interviews were recorded by means of an electronic device and afterwards, verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were drafted for the purposes of carrying out an analysis. The objectives of this study could only be met by carrying out a thorough and accurate analysis of the respondents' answers, classifying it as qualitative data. Keeping this in mind, this study chose to analyze the qualitative data by adopting the thematic analysis methodology.

Thematic analysis is one of the most popular methods used by researchers to analyze large data sets. It is a tool that is often utilized to derive a patterned meaning

from a large data set such as the one obtained in this study. The procedure to carry out such an analysis involves reading through the datasets, making notes, labelling, categorizing, theorizing, conceptualizing, making connections, and finally deducing common themes that satisfy the objective of the study. Thematic analysis is known to be theoretically flexible and is an appropriate methodology to analyze underlying philosophies and procedures in such cases. However, in an attempt to provide clarity, there are instances in which this study has chosen to include and highlight important or intriguing statements made by respondents with regard to soft power or the UAE.

After applying the thematic analysis methodology to the interview transcripts, recurring keywords and patterns were identified which in turn led to the elicitation of a few key concepts or themes regarding soft power in the UAE. These themes are instrumental in determining the common or uncommon understanding of the respondents that participated in this study. In the first section titled “UAE soft power tools and strategies”, the questions dealt with topics related to the emergence of soft power in the UAE, the sectors in which they were concentrated, current benefits and future opportunities, soft power in the context of foreign policy goals and crisis, soft power tools, influence and sustainability. When asked about the advent of soft power in UAE, several respondents believed that although the theory was first conceptualized by Nye in the 1990s, several countries (including the UAE) had been practicing a somewhat similar version of the soft power concept much earlier.

Respondents claimed that several factors led to the emergence of soft power in the UAE such as the post-oil economy, investment, people, Arab support, training of UAE diplomats, humanitarian aids and conflict resolution, changing global dynamics, sharing similar cultural values, and perceiving the country as a brand. However, the

one factor that topped the others was the quality of leadership in the UAE. Five respondents unilaterally believed that His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum or any of the other top brass leaders of the UAE were responsible for the commencement of soft power practices in the country. When questioned about the sector-wise concentration of UAE's soft power, four respondents said that economic and social stability as well as UAE's tolerance were the pillars of soft power in the country, along with the country's efforts to providing humanitarian aid to other countries. Other responses included oil revenue, leadership and multiculturalism, women's empowerment, education agendas, and tourism along with an open and socially free society as the propellers of soft power in UAE.

Respondents also believed that the UAE's soft power was about visibility and creating a brand for itself in a manner that was not unlike corporations building a brand for themselves through marketing. Two respondents claimed that one of the benefits of implementing soft power strategies was that the UAE passport had become one of the most desirable passports in the world. Promoting tourism, achieving policy goals, and maintaining global and economic relationships with other countries were some of the other benefits identified by the respondents. Additionally, over 4 respondents believed that the UAE's role in brokering peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea was a primary example of soft power.

When asked if the UAE's soft power would be able to cope with the crises in the Middle East, 4 respondents provided answers in the affirmative, one respondent said no, and the rest were unsure or provided ambiguous answers. Based on the transcripts, the analysis shows the following with respect to yes or no questions (Figure 3).

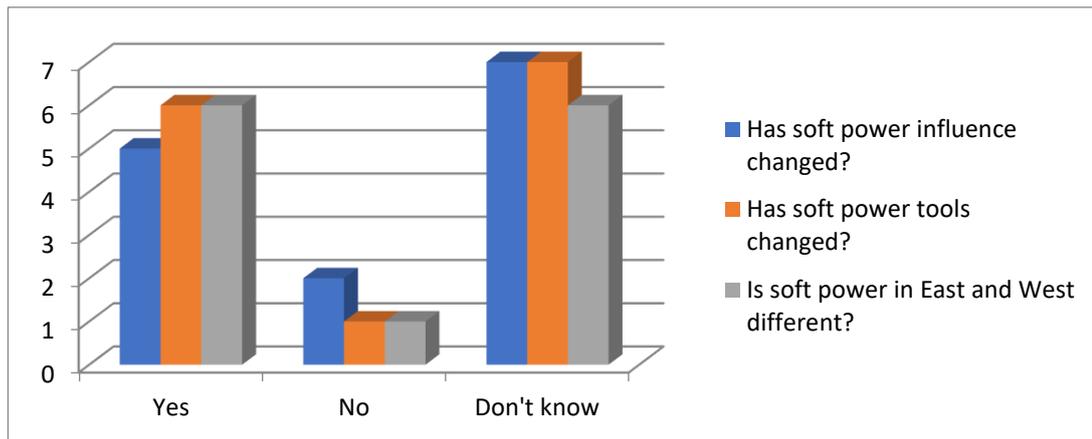


Figure 3: Interview outcomes

Respondents who believed that soft power and its tools had changed over the years attributed technological advancements and rapid digitization as the primary reason. When asked about countries that were more likely to be influenced by the UAE's soft power, the respondents were split through the middle. Over five respondents believed that western countries such as the USA and parts of Europe were more likely to be influenced due to UAE's tolerant values. However, four respondents believed that surrounding countries in the Middle East or Southeast Asia such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh were more likely to be soft power targets as they were culturally similar as compared to the West. One respondent said that "smart power" requires both allies and non-allies to be influenced by the UAE. Talking about soft power in the context of other countries, 9 respondents said that they considered the Yemeni war to be an example of a combination of UAE's soft and hard powers.

Additionally, 6 respondents said that the situation in Yemen had the potential to undermine UAE's soft power strategies. But the remaining respondents said that lack of social freedom or any such intolerant values displayed by the UAE were bound to undermine its soft power. The entire transcript documents terms such as 'Yemen', 'Yemeni', or 'South Yemen' to have been used more than 30 times. Over 10

respondents specifically identified Qatar as a soft power rival to the UAE in addition to countries such as Iran, Syria and Turkey. A majority of the respondents also said that keeping the UAE modern and open in terms of its societal values was one of the ways in which it can overcome challenges posed to its soft power strategies.

4.2 Results and Discussion

After the interview transcripts were codified, analyzed, and categorized, it was evident from the data set that there were patterns, themes, or general concepts that were apparent by how often they recurred in the answers provided by the respondents. The common themes elicited from the data are: “Soft power and hard power combination”, “Tolerant society”, “UAE brand value”, “Stable and open society”, “Multiculturalism”, “UAE and Qatar conflict”, and “Yemen crisis”. These themes were found to feature across the answers provided by all 14 respondents. A keyword search reveals that there were 38 total mentions of soft and hard power throughout the entire dataset. This indicates that the UAE’s soft power is only as sustainable as its hard power, according to most respondents. As one respondent put it, “Soft power and hard power are the two wings of the UAE.” Furthermore, the search also revealed that terms such as “tolerant”, “stable”, “liberal”, “modern”, and “society” were used in a total of 77 times.

This suggests that the respondents increasingly associated soft power in the UAE with the country’s ability to maintain a tolerant, modern and liberal image at the global stage. The term ‘Yemen’ alone was mentioned 31 times while “Qatar” and “conflict” were said a total of 47 times. This means that the Yemeni crisis as well as UAE’s conflict with Qatar continues to interfere in UAE’s soft power and foreign policy discourse.

4.3 Research Findings

The UAE has proven to the international community that it is the largest soft power among Middle Eastern and the Arab countries with numerous sources of attractions derived the three traditional elements of soft power that Nye (2004) espoused. These are namely, political values, culture and foreign policy. Indeed, the UAE's foreign policy since its establishment as a state in 1971 has been anchored in soft power tools. This is not a coincidence because Sheikh Zayed, the founding father of the country, willed a previously disparate group of Emirates together through the sheer force of his diplomatic personality and persuasion rather than coercion. Buttressing this point, Emirati Expert (3) pointed out that the “UAE used soft power before the term was coined by Nye in 1990. Since its inception as a state, the founder of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, used the soft power of cooperation and mutual interest to advance his agenda of federation and managed to coopt the other members of the Union to join the federation”. Apart from using soft power for state formation, the new state under the leadership of Sheikh Zayed also pursued a foreign policy laden in soft power at a time when the concept was not as popular as it is now.

According to Emirati Expert (2), “soft power was part and parcel of the UAE’s foreign policy avant la letter (before the term was invented).” This continued through Sheikh Zayed’s active participation in the formation of the GCC. Hence, the cultivation and use of soft power has become more prominent in the UAE national and foreign policy strategies.

4.3.1 Institutionalization of Soft Power

In recognition of the utility of soft power as a foreign policy tool, the UAE government established the Soft Power Council and launched a soft power strategy in

2017 with the aim of increasing “the country’s global reputation abroad by highlighting its identity, heritage, culture and contributions of the UAE to the world” (UAE Government, 2019a). The strategy seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To develop a unified direction for various sectors including the economy, humanities, tourism, media and science
- To promote the UAE’s position as a gateway to the region
- To establish the UAE as a regional capital for culture, art and tourism
- To establish its reputation as a modern and tolerant country that welcomes all people from across the world (UAE Government, 2019c).

In spite of the UAE’s embrace and institutionalization of soft power, it is not oblivious of the dangers that it faces due to its location in one of the geo-political regions that is home to numerous conflicts and instability.

Regional threats to the UAE include the malignant and destabilizing behavior of Iran, the dangers of sectarian strife in neighbouring countries, the dangers of political Islam and associated terrorist threats. For example, according to the Global Peace Index, Afghanistan is the most dangerous country in the world, replacing Syria, which is now the second most dangerous. South Sudan, Yemen and Iraq make up the remaining dangerous countries in the top five list (GPI, 2019). Therefore, in order to effectively mitigate all the above threats and dangers, the UAE combines soft power strategies with hard power in order to survive and thrive in a tough neighborhood. Indeed, “Nye argues that successful states need both hard and soft power - the ability to coerce others as well as the ability to shape their long-term attitudes and preferences” (Ikenberry, 2004). Furthermore, the UAE invested heavily in hard power

to complement its repertoire of soft power. Thus between 2007 and 2014, the UAE increased its military spending by 123% and, according to many experts, it is the region's best-trained and equipped armed forces.

Likewise, it has used its financial influence, not least its possession of the world's second largest sovereign wealth fund, to shape regional economic governance by having a diverse economy and minimize the impact of the commodity price volatility and helps prepare the economy for the post-commodity era

Similarly, policymakers in the UAE are aware of the limits of hard power alone. The proliferation of sophisticated and destructive weapons and intensive economic interdependence makes the application of military power increasingly risky and economic sanctions increasingly expensive, making the UAE's abundant supply of soft energy assets more attractive (Ibish, 2017).

4.3.2 The Soft Power Tools of the United Arab Emirates

The themes that emerged from this research point to the fact that the UAE has excelled in many facets of governance, accomplished a lot in a relatively short period and pursued domestic and foreign policies that have made it a role model for other countries. These accomplishments enable the UAE to exercise soft power influence in places where these accomplishments are effective and appreciated. The UAE's soft power tools under political values allow it to position itself as a role model in the world, including its success in the following areas: governance and leadership model, economic development and security and stability. Its cultural attractions include the following: embrace of the norm of tolerance; educational institutions, hosting of international events, image as a cultural hub and multiculturalism. In terms of foreign

policy, the UAE's attraction is evident in the following areas: Support for major international organizations and multilateral efforts; international philanthropy, humanitarian assistance and efforts in conflict resolution.

4.3.3 Political Values

4.3.3.1 Governance and leadership model

The UAE holds the distinction as the only federal state in the Gulf Region that has not only survived but thrived in the face of perennial geo-political tensions and adversity. Moreover, the success of the UAE's federal model in light of the growing emergence of separatism in some regions, has strengthened the UAE's role as a soft and influential regional and international power (Trends Institution, 2018).

According to Emirati Expert 2, "UAE's reputation as an area of stability and business friendly, as well as very tolerant society will augment its image and thus its soft power. All these features will lead to its many successes in foreign policy."

From a Western perspective, the UAE's political values do not immediately appear to lend themselves to soft power. However, the UAE stands as the Gulf's most liberal country and the quality of its political institutions outshines those of its regional counterparts. Throughout the last decade, the UAE has consistently inhabited the upper echelons of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index clinching 21st position in 2017, thereby putting it ahead of a majority of European Union countries. In addition, the UAE also appears in the top 20% of the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators for regulatory quality and applying the rule of law and in the top 10% for government effectiveness (World Bank, N.D.). Academic Expert (4)

pointed that “UAE soft power strength comes from its culture, religion and social aspect in terms of having a very liberal environment.”

4.3.3.2 Political Stability and Public Safety

The enduring political stability and high levels of public safety of the UAE are major sources of attractions for thousands of people who visit the country yearly and even settle to do business. In terms of political stability, the country has never witnessed any violent upheavals from the people or among the ruling elites in the political sphere. In a region rife with sectarianism, extremism and terrorism, the leadership of the UAE has pursued proactive systems that has inoculated the country against any of the aforementioned afflictions. By thriving in a dangerous region, the UAE has carved for itself an image of exceptionalism that continuous to attract rest of the region and the world in general.

According to the World Bank’s Political Stability Index, which measures the absence of Violence/Terrorism measures perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism, the average ranking of the UAE from 2006-2016 was 0.85 well above the global average of -0.05 which was the best in the Middle East (The Global Economy, 2019). In addition, according to the Fragile States Index released by Fund for Peace, which ranks the most politically unstable countries in the world, the UAE was 149 out 178 as the least instable countries in 2019, the highest ranking in the Arab world (Abass, 2019). According to Emirati Expert (4) “The UAE represents a role model of stability, prosperity and peace in a challenged region. One of the UAE’s main aspirations is to become a positive-change driver to ensure a better reality and future.”

In terms of public safety, the UAE was ranked the second safest country in the world in 2017 by the World Economic Forum (WEF). The UAE has one of the lowest levels of violent crimes in the world as evidenced by the fact that in 2015 there was only 110 violent crimes. Also, the UAE ranked 9th among countries with the lowest crime rate as well as 4th among with the lowest assault rates. These rankings are far better than most advanced countries in the West (in the same year the country ranked 9th).

4.3.3.3 Economic Development

For years, thousands of people have been attracted to the resilience of the American economy and have either migrated to or aspire to migrate to the U.S in order to experience their ‘American dream’ (Augustine, 2018).

Top U.S government officials often cite the huge annual visa applications statistic to reinforce the global appeal of the U.S to many around the world. In many ways, the UAE also enjoys similar global appeal due to its remarkable economic development within a relatively short period since independence. It is therefore not a coincidence that out of the country’s nearly ten millions residents, over ninety percent are immigrants who are mainly economic immigrants in the pursuit of a better life or economic opportunities. The country is perennially ranked high in most international economic and social indexes such as the UNDP Human Development Index. In addition, the UAE has cultivated an image for years as a place open for business as captured by rising rankings of the country in the annual global ranking of ease of doing business. For example “the UAE jumped 10 places in the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business ranking to 11th position globally in 2019 from 21st position last year to lead the Arab world for the sixth consecutive year” (Augustine, 2018).

In addition, the UAE is seen as having a very competitive economy which attracts thousands to do business with and in the country. This is supported in a 2017-2018 World Economic Forum ranking of the most competitive economies in the world which ranked the UAE first in the region and seventeenth globally (World Economic Forum, 2018). The country particularly ranked extremely high in a series of infrastructural indexes as follows: 1st in road quality; 3rd in airport infrastructure and means of air transport quality; 4th in seaport infrastructure quality; 3rd in mobile phone subscriptions per 100 users and 4th in the quality of infrastructure (UAE Government, 2018).

Furthermore, the UAE consistently ranks among the top expatriate destinations in the world and shares elite company with countries such as Switzerland, Singapore and Germany. For the third consecutive year, in 2018, the UAE was ranked among the top most desirable expatriate destinations in the world per an HSBC's Expat Explorer Survey. Marwan Hadi, head of Retail Banking and Wealth Management of HSBC in UAE attributes the high ranking of the UAE to the following:

Better earning potential is the cornerstone of why people seek career opportunities here. It is indicative of the success of the UAE's focus on diversification, which has resulted in the creation of an internationally recognized and sought-after working environment (Haine, 2018).

4.3.4 Culture

4.3.4.1 Education

One of the UAE's main aspirations is to become a positive-change driver to ensure a better reality and future for all humanity. The country seeks to achieve this

through several international educational initiatives aimed at instilling hope in the region and empowering the youth. Some of these initiatives launched by His Highness, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum are part of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives, such as the Arab Reading Challenge, which is the largest-ever Arab literacy initiative to encourage students to read. This reading initiative aims to:

“Raise awareness of the importance of reading among students and youth in the Arab World, improve Arabic language skills, including fluency and eloquence in Arabic speech, develop self-learning, analytical and critical thinking skills, and broaden understanding and comprehension, develop emotional and intellectual intelligence, promote cultural awareness among students, build a network of young Arab readers and facilitate the communication between them to build Arab cultural gatherings, promote patriotism and Arabism, and the feeling of belonging to one nation” (Arab Reading Challenge, N.D).

One of the enduring soft power tools of the United States that Nye (2004, 2008) often cites as making the U.S a global soft power, is the reputation and prestige of its tertiary institutions. These institutions have been attracting millions of students worldwide for years and have been serving as a conduit for the transmission of American values. Nye (2004) notes that among the Russian political elite who took up the leadership mantle of the country in the early post-Soviet era were several key U.S educated players. It was therefore not surprising that such players advocated relatively more conciliatory and mutually beneficial policy for both countries after years of Cold War mistrust and confrontation.

Over the years, the UAE has extend its massive infrastructural investment into the field of higher education culminating in the creation of the Dubai International Academic City in 2006. Billed as “*The world’s largest free zone dedicated to higher education and the pursuit of intellectual growth*” it is “Home to numerous regional and international colleges and universities, it serves over 27,000 students from all around the world (Dubai International Academic City, 2019).

According to the Dubai International Academic City (2019), UAE has 32 campuses from abroad, which are the most concentrated in the world. These includes prestigious institutions such as New York University and Sorbonne University. Just as in the case of the influence of U.S universities in shaping the values of generations of global elites, UAE based Universities are bound to replicate similar soft power influence on thousands of its Alumni from all over the world in the immediate future and generations to come. Buttressing this point, Saeed Mohammad Al Eter, Director-General of Public Diplomacy Office at Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Future, and secretary-general of UAE Soft Power Council points out that “the rise of international students coming to the UAE, who spend around four years here earning their university degree and experiencing local culture before returning home” (Masudi, 2019) would lead to a positive image of the UAE among these graduates upon their return to their respective countries.

4.3.4.2 Tolerance

The UAE has carved a niche in the world as a tolerant and moderate Islamic country that welcomes all in the pursuit of mutual cooperation and respect. As a result of this image, the country is perennially ranked as one of the most desired tourist

attractions in the world. There is a direct correlation between the millions that visit the country each year and the perception of the country as a tolerant country.

There was a significant increase in the number of visitors during the last two years, receiving 14.4 million international visitors in 2015, an increase of four million from 2013 and 2014. Dubai alone reached 14.9 million in 2016 (Cafiero, 2019).

Over 200 nationalities are living in the UAE, making the country a melting pot of people living in harmony and peace; people choose UAE because everyone can practice the religion they want, and have a complete freedom to practice their cultural traditions when respecting the multitude of cultures in the country. Moreover, there are around 45 churches in the UAE (Cafiero, 2019). In addition, the first Traditional Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi is under construction “on 13.5 acres (55,000 square meters) of land gifted by His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. In the Year of Tolerance, the UAE government has gifted an equal area of land additionally for building parking facilities in the temple premises”.

It is clear in academic circles that the soft power of any state is based primarily on ethical mechanisms such as state culture, including literature, arts, heritage, traditions and educational systems. It also depends on the prevailing value system and whether the concepts of tolerance, acceptance, cooperation, generosity, openness, justice and governance are promoted. In 2018, the Papal visit marked an historic milestone in the UAE as Pope Francis went to Abu Dhabi, the capital city, a first in the annals of a GCC country (WAM, 2017).

It was indeed a historic and phenomenal sight to see thousands of Christians from all over the world openly pray in a public space such as a stadium in an Arab country. The Papal visit and subsequent religious programs were broadcasted live worldwide and the general international good will and soft power benefits towards the UAE is immeasurable. According to Dr Jamal Al Suwaidi of the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies stated, ‘there is a close correlation between the concepts of tolerance and soft power, with its diverse definitions (Al Suwaidi, 2019).

The term soft power, coined by the US intellectual Nye in the early 1990s, describes a state’s ability to influence the behaviour of others through attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion” (Al Suwaidi, 2019). This occurs when a country possesses characteristics and values that see it become a model to be emulated. There is no doubt that tolerance is one of the greatest values that elevates the status of societies and nations, enhancing their soft power. Places where tolerance, harmony, cooperation and acceptance prevail, and where all forms of violence, extremism and hatred are rejected, are viewed with admiration and appreciation, seen as attractive models to be embraced and followed’ (Al Suwaidi, 2019)

The Papal visit achieved the signing of “The declaration” during the Human Fraternity Meeting, which coincided with the Global Conference on Human Fraternity where more than 700 religious representatives from around the world discussed peaceful dialogue and coexistence at the World Conference on Humanitarian Fraternity in Abu Dhabi (Abraham, 2019).

Apart from the above symbolic acts to promote tolerance, the UAE has also taken some legal systems to institutionalize the norm. The first is the established on a Ministry of Tolerance and Happiness as well as “a legal framework that criminalizes

intolerance in the form of Federal Decree by Law No.22015 has also been established. The law ‘punishes hate crimes and discrimination with penalties including, but not limited to, imprisonment (from six months to fifteen years) and fines (of AED 50,000 to AED 2,000,000)’ (Antwi-Boateng & Binhuwaiden, 2017: 10). In addition, the UAE put a huge effort in promoting its tolerance model in its sphere of influence in the region and beyond where intolerance and extremism (Antwi-Boateng & Binhuwaiden, 2017: 10).

This is evidenced by the establishment of the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Award for Tolerance and the International Institute of Tolerance. The aim of this award is to ‘lay the foundation for developing young Arab leaders in the field of tolerance and providing support to the intellectual, cultural and media promotions of values of tolerance and openness’ while the institute seeks to ‘offer consultation, advice and expert views on policies for promoting values of tolerance among nation’ (Antwi-Boateng & Binhuwaiden, 2017: 11). Such deliberate policies aimed at deepening tolerance in the UAE has the desired effect of attracting positive attention to the country and thereby enhancing the image of UAE as a country that is worthy of emulation, since it is promoting an ideal that is highly coveted worldwide.

According to Expat Academic (1), “the UAE’s soft power focuses on leveraging its good international image based on its tolerance with all international communities, utilizing its unique location, economic and social stability and hosting all nationalities”. In this regard, it can be concluded that the image of the UAE as a Model of Tolerance, is arguably its strongest soft power tool. Arguably, “UAE’s economic performance and its rank as the second largest economy in the Arab world, replenishes its fountains of soft power “Emirati Expert (2), Being viewed as a Model

of tolerance by the international community, garners good will and trust worldwide. This helps fuel the UAE as one of the favourite destinations for tourists and residents, especially when the UAE official position encourages others to promote tolerance and fight extremism, terrorism, violence and hate speech.

4.3.4.3 Female Empowerment

In spite of the negative reputation of the Arab Middle East with regards to women's rights and female empowerment, the UAE stands tall in its commitment towards female empowerment and women's rights. The country's commitment towards women's rights and empowerment has been demonstrated since its inception as an independent federal state in 1971. This commitment is captured by the founding President of the Country, Sheikh Zayed, who once said that: "Nothing pleases me more than seeing Emirati women assuming their role in society and achieving their rightful position. Nothing should hinder the march of women's progress. Like men, women have the right to assume the highest positions according to their abilities and qualifications" (Al Tayer, 2018).

According to Ibish, (2017: 12) the progress for Emirati women appears impressive. According to experts says the UAE is perhaps the only country in the Middle East where women are fully accepted working in high-paying professions such as finance and banking in 2015. Amal Al-Qubaisi became the first woman to serve as the Federal National Council's deputy president.

Constitutionally, Emirati women have been given similar rights as men in terms of equal "access to education, jobs, social and health benefits and holding government offices". The UAE ranked 1st out of 132 countries in the 'Women Treated

with Respect' indicator in the Social Progress Index 2014 report and ranked 2nd highest among Arab countries in World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2017" (UAE Government, 2019b).

This constitutional guarantee has further been strengthened via a series of affirmative action laws and policy initiatives aimed at ensuring gender parity among the sexes in all aspects of society. These affirmative action policies includes "mandatory female presence in board of directors in all government entities and corporations" (UAE Government, 2019c) as well as a mandated fifty percent female membership of the Federal National Council (FNC), the country's quasi-Legislative body of the country. Academic expert (4) believes that "empower women in UAE is one of the soft power tools that UAE can concentrate on it".

The results of the UAE's commitment to female empowerment has been stellar and has been recognized globally thereby enhancing the prestige of the country. For example, the UAE now has one of the highest number of female representation in Cabinet in the world. This is evidenced by the fact that "nearly 30 per cent of the UAE Cabinet is female, almost the same as the UK government and higher than many countries, including India, where 22 per cent of cabinet ministers are women" (Langston, 2017). In addition, as a result of UAE 's long track record of female empowerment, as of 2015, 66 percent of the country's public sector workforce is made up of women (UAE Government, 2019c).

Furthermore, UAE earns international respect and admiration for its financial support to multinational organizations at the forefront of global women's empowerment. For example, "UAE has donated over \$26 million to UN Women since its founding in 2010". In November 2017, the UAE pledged to the World Bank's

Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative fund” to promote female entrepreneurship in developing countries (Embassy of UAE, 2019).

Such financial support for a cause deemed worthy and noble is likely to positively enhance the prestige of the UAE in multilateral settings and among beneficial countries. According to Cameron (2017), “there is a clear connection between women’s inclusion and increasing prosperity and stability, and it seems that equality may also enhance nations’ soft power.”

4.3.5 Cultural Hub and Multiculturalism

The UAE has branded and positioned itself as the cultural hub of the Middle East, where Islamic culture meets and embraces Western civilization. To this end, the country has undertaken major investments in cultural infrastructure that depicts local and Islamic culture and also collaborated with some major global cultural brands. Undoubtedly, one of the most iconic domestic cultural investments in the UAE is the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque which was opened in 2007.

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque stands out as one of the largest mosques in the world, accommodating 40,000 worshipers and visitors. According to statistics released by the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre, the tally included 1,400,965 worshippers, 3,417,130 visitors, 857,510 iftar attendees and 2,496 Quran memorization class students, and the rest were people who attended charitable meals (The National, 2018). This mosque is quite unique in that it opens its doors to all people of different faiths who otherwise would never have had the opportunity to ever visit a mosque in the life times. In addition, not only does the mosque promotes inter-faith

dialogue and understanding, it also promotes the UAE's image as a moderate Islamic country.

Another domestic cultural landmark in the UAE is Qasr Al Hosn in Abu Dhabi built around 1790. It is considered the oldest stone building in the city of Abu Dhabi and was the residence and official government headquarters of some of the early rulers of Abu Dhabi. However, it now serves as a living monument of the nation and the narrator of the history of Abu Dhabi (Department of Culture and Tourism, N.D).

In terms of cultural collaboration with the West, the UAE has designated an entire Island as a cultural District in the form of the Saadiyat Island's Cultural District which has been planned to house the largest cluster of world-class cultural assets in Abu Dhabi. The most renowned feature of the Cultural District is the Louvre Abu Dhabi, which cost about \$1 billion and opened its doors to the public in November 2017.

The project was a culmination of a 10-year collaboration with France. At the museum, more than 600 artworks from around the world have been displayed and there are 300 works on loan from 13 leading French institutions in its 23 permanent galleries, by world-renowned artists such as Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Cy Twombly. The work depicts the main stages in human development and emphasizes the links between cultures and civilizations and being host city for the world expo 2020 is one of the baggiest cultural success to UAE. Forecast to draw some 25 million visitors the World-Expo is, according to Jay Wang, director of the University of Southern California's Centre on Public Diplomacy, "the largest single promotional event of a nation outside their own borders.....a major platform for countries to reach out to the foreign public" (Saber et al., 2018b: 44-58).

The Saadiyat Island Cultural District of Abu Dhabi is also under going construction to host the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, which will be the largest of all the Guggenheim Museums in the world. When completed the Museum will be part of an ambitious project to "create an exhibition space intended to turn this once-sleepy desert city along the Persian Gulf into an international arts capital and tourist destination" (Fattah, 2001). Indeed according to the former Guggenheim director Thomas Krens "The Middle East is one of the world's most important emerging regions in terms of contemporary culture" (Critchlow, 2006).

Cultural collaborations such as Louvre Abu Dhabi further enhances UAE's cultural diplomacy and soft power. The UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr. Anwar Gargash observed that "Louvre Abu Dhabi teaches the world to celebrate our diversity and common humanity, our shared hopes and dreams. Emiratis are granted visa-free travel in Schengen zone countries and every citizen can now travel visa-free to 159 countries and we still aim for making our passport among the world's top most powerful" (Salama, 2018).

4.3.5.1 International Events Hosting

The UAE is a major player when it comes to international events hosting. Indeed, the country is one of the top destinations for cultural and sporting events as well as a top destination for business events due to its highly developed infrastructure in terms of transportation, communication and the availability of suitable conference/hotel facilities. In the area of sports, the UAE boasts of world class stadiums that has enabled it to successfully host major international sporting events such as the 2015 FIFA under 17 World Cup as well as the 17th edition of the AFC Asian Cup.

Another major international sporting event that the UAE hosted from 2009-2016 is the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, as part of the Formula 1 franchise. Over the years, the events attracted over 200,000 attendees per race and on average, 53 per cent came from abroad. It creates multiple layers of cultural and economic benefits for the host city. While complementing the local and national tourism strategy, other benefits included global exposure, positive economic upgrading, and contributions to tourism and job creation. The hosting of Formula 1 also has a significant positive impact on the economy of the host city. In addition, it stimulates consumer spending and creates new opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. For example, in the United States, the Grand Prix that was held at The Circuit of the Americas (COTA) contributed substantially toward the local economy, with total economic impact to the Austin Metro area between 2012 and 2015 valued at \$2.8bn (Scott, 2016).

In addition, according to study by Price Waterhouse Coopers, the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in Baku created \$277.3m of increased economic value in 2016 and 2017. In terms of branding, the Mexican Grand Prix has generated over \$5.5bn (Avison, 2018).

Along with 200,000 participants per race and an average of 53 per cent coming from abroad, Formula 1 boosts tourism and opens a city to new audiences. Mexico City saw a 12 per cent increase in hotel occupancy in 4 and 5-star hotels during the Grand Prix, and on average weekend spending per guest was £ 1,600 (excluding tickets). Since the first Grand Prix in 2008, Singapore has hosted more than 450,000 international visitors, who contributed about \$ 1.4 billion in additional tourism revenue. Similarly, year after year, Formula 1 increases annual and seasonal

employment, and creates new jobs in a number of industries. To support this, 640 additional jobs were created in the Quebec area. In addition, COTA's annual activities and operations combined to support 9,100 jobs in the Austin area, representing \$306 million in annual salaries for workers in the Austin area (Avison, 2018).

The UAE has parlayed its reputation as a major tourist destination into an image of a host of business and intergovernmental conferences. For example, Dubai hosts the highly reputable annual World Government Summit that was established by Sheikh Maktoum in 2013 as “a global knowledge exchange program governments...to showcase cutting edge government services and technologies, in an effort to bring policymakers, businesses and civil society in the future” (World Government Summit, 2019). The annual event bring hundreds of world leaders and policy makers to the UAE to brainstorm and the international media exposure that comes with the coverage of the event great enhances the image of the UAE in the international community.

In recognition of UAE's reputation as a world class business destination and host of conferences, in 2013, the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) general assembly in Paris awarded Dubai as the host EXPO 2020, a major international business and trade fair. Expo 2020 is expected to attract over 25 million visitors, with 70% coming from abroad. Although most of these visitors will come for business purposes, the number of tourists visiting the city off the back of the exhibition is expected to be huge. Participating in the Expo will provide a city like a unique and global stage for engaging in cultural diplomacy and interacting with the host country, other participants, potential tourists, business partners and investors. Through dedicated pavilions or spaces, each country presents itself to a large, captive and diverse audience, creating a global village offering an unprecedented experience for

visitors and participants alike. Moreover, Hosting Expo is an opportunity to create a positive and fresh impression of the country between the influxes of foreign guests and present this internationally through the inevitable media attention.

Furthermore, hosting big events, such as the EXPO2020, is one of the best ways to advertise the UAE and show the world what the country can do. EXPO2020 will also be a way to promote popular aspects of UAE culture. Currently, three of the world's top 500 brands belong to the UAE. These are Emirates and Etihad Airlines and Etisalat (Telecom) (Trends institution, 2018).

In addition, Emirates Airlines and Etihad Airways promote the UAE by being on the ten top best airline over the world, both of the airlines has sponsorship offers across a variety of sporting events, including cricket, rugby, tennis, motor sports, horse racing and golf and football. The Emirates brand adorns the shirts of some of the world's leading clubs such as Milan, Paris Saint-Germain, Real Madrid, Benfica and Arsenal. There is an international acclaim to UAE especially through legitimacy in foreign policy, which is one of the tools of soft power, because “if a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes” .However, there are a variety of ways in which the UAE asserts the legitimacy of its foreign policies. One is to deepen participation in the network of dense organizations and institutions that enforce and protect the norms, standards and principles that govern global politics. According to Trends institution, there has been a significant expansion in the participation of the GCC countries, and the UAE is often at the forefront in developing international standards, particularly those related to international finance, energy and climate change. In fact, there are a number of international bodies, most notably the International Renewable Energy Agency, which

is based in the UAE. The United Arab Emirates has sought to support international standards by assisting in UN humanitarian and peacekeeping missions (Trends institution, 2018).

Preliminary evidence suggested that UAE's attempts at promoting its values and showcasing itself to the rest of the world is having the desired effect. UAE has been the top choice amongst the 18-24 year olds as the country they would like to live in and the model for other countries to imitate, for six consecutive years.

4.4 Foreign Policy

The prominence of foreign aid is a testament to its rising significance in the world and the UAE's proud legacy of offering humanitarian aid indicates that the country acknowledges its importance. In 2017, the UAE's contribution of Dh 19.32 billion made it the world's largest donor of development aid for that year as per a report from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Although the United Nations specified an aid target of 0.7 percent of a country's gross national income, the UAE surpassed that target and donated nearly 1.31 percent in foreign aid. The OECD report also states that the UAE's 2017 contribution rose by 23.72 percent as compared to donations in previous years. Almost half of that aid was dispersed across Asian countries (Dh 8.28 billion) while over 28 percent of foreign aid was sanctioned to African countries (Dh 5.4 billion), and another 23 percent to European countries (Dh 4.44 billion) (OECD, 2017).

The key objectives of the UAE's five-year foreign aid strategy are centered on women's empowerment and protection, transport and urban infrastructure, and technical cooperation. These three facets of the adopted strategy would help the UAE

in its main goal of reducing poverty and improving the quality of life among underprivileged communities, according to the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In consequence, the aid strategy will further create and solidify economic relations with the beneficiary countries and the UAE. However, the UAE has also clarified that under no circumstances would it make humanitarian aid subject to the recipient country's policies. The new strategy also hints at a unique approach of offering UAE assistance in developmental projects undertaken by beneficiary countries (UAE Cabinet, 2016).

In its myriad attempts to spread hope and instill the value of giving in society, the UAE has also made significant strides in exerting its soft power through the country's foreign aid policies. One of the ways in which the UAE has been able to tackle the despair and pessimism surrounding the region is by coming up with campaigns such as the Arab Hope Makers initiative. The UAE's newly-established Ministry of Community Development also serves a similar purpose by looking to improve the various components of society (ADDCCD, 2019). The fact that UAE's foreign aid contributions constitute as soft power is further validated by academicians.

4.4.1 Philanthropy and Foreign Aid

The UAE's soft power has now, to some extent, had an impact on Arab countries and Muslim countries. First, because of the tremendous amount of aid, financial aid too many kinds of crisis and disaster areas and second, because of its continuous economic support to Islamic countries who are suffering from some problems. This actually influences the UAE's soft power over such Islamic countries.

The UAE donated Dh 2.97 billion to Yemen during the country's crisis (OECD, 2017), (WAM, 2017), and (Bridge, 2019). This way, the UAE was one of the first

countries to initiate a global response to the Yemeni crisis. In order to efficiently and immediately respond to other similar crisis situations, UAE Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum founded The International Humanitarian City (IHC) in 2003. This initiative is the only non-profit, independent, and humanitarian free-zone that comprises several inter-governmental organizations along with international NGOs and UN organizations as well. Based out of Dubai the IHC's purpose is to provide quick-relief aid to countries across the world.

Emirati expert (10) noticed that “UAE through many initiative aims to instill hope in the region and empower youth”. The UAE's goal of improving the Arab world by undertaking humanitarian, developmental, and community-related work was exacerbated with the creation of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI) founded by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum in 2015. The MBRGI initiatives are focused on various issues dealing with education, environment, and good governance. These initiatives champion education reform by spreading knowledge, take up environmental causes by combating poverty and disease, and seek to promote good governance through entrepreneurship and innovation. Since its establishment in 1971, the UAE has aided both governmental and non-governmental organizations by donation nearly \$47.4 billion. Presently, it assists over 130 million people including families, children, and youth in 116 countries around the world. This has greatly compounded the soft power influence of the country (MBRGI, 2019).

4.4.2 Peace Keeping Contributions

In 1976, UAE troops were flown to Lebanon to join the Arab Deterrent Force for a peace-keeping mission in that troubled country, which was the UAE's first

international peacekeeping assignment. In addition, UAE's Armed Forces were at the forefront of coalition efforts to liberate Kuwait, marking the UAE's first involvement in an active war zone in 1991.

During the Serbian aggression in Bosnia, Shaikh Mohammad pressed for an international force to be dispatched to Bosnia, and made clear the UAE's willingness to participate in such an operation. The UAE, however, provided numerous airlifts of wounded Bosnian Muslims to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, where they received medical treatment and their families were provided with accommodation and financial support. The UAE was one of the first countries to commit resources to UNOSOM II, a multinational operation, Restore Hope, policed by the United Nations Operations in Somalia (Salam, 2015)

The UAE Armed Forces were also deployed in Kosovo in 1999, in an attempt to end Serbian genocide there. After the war subsided in Kosovo, the UAE Armed Forces signed a Dh12-million contract for the establishment and maintenance of the Shaikh Zayed Hospital in Kosovo, and the facility was officially opened in 2003. The UAE Air Force has also been engaged in bombing missions against Daesh militants in Syria since August (Salam, 2015).

The UAE was the first Arab country to become involved in the Afghan war following 9/11. From 2007 onwards, the UAE army then went on to support the UN mission in Afghanistan, providing both personnel and armored vehicles. Assisting with aid distribution, Emirati patrols faced attacks from insurgents, and even fought their way out from Taliban ambushes. According to the Washington post, UAE mission in Afghanistan was primarily humanitarian; the Armed Forces worked to protect relief workers, and offered a safe environment for the rebuilding of

communities, including the establishment of schools, clinics and mosques (Salama, 2015).

4.4.3 Conflict Resolution

In 2018, the UAE, under the personal supervision of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, ended a two-decade long war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The UAE significant influence has become more widely and trustworthy. According to diplomats in the Gulf said “UAE has privately taken credit for the peace agreement,” which makes the UAE a peacemaker (Fick & Cornwell, 2018). Emirati Expert (2) pointed to the “UAE ability to broker peace between Eretria and Ethiopia as well reduce the tension between Pakistan and India is some of the most recent example of its use of soft power.”

4.4.4 Muslim States' Coalition

The United Arab Emirates joined the “Muslim states' coalition” on 14 December 2015 and plays an active role in the fight against global terrorism. The UAE is also considered as a core member of the U.S.-led coalition to “degrade and ultimately defeat” ISIL, and actively participated in the early part of the campaign conducted and even led airstrikes against the group in Syria. Although the UAE did not take military action in Iraq, it conducted the second largest number of airstrikes against ISIL targets in Syria, trailing only the United States, and is the only Arab country the United States has authorized to command such airstrikes (Ibish, 2017: 31).

4.4.5 Multilateral Organization Membership

Apart from its bilateral and multilateral leadership on climate change and renewable energy, the UAE also plays an important convening role at the global level

on these issues. Currently, the UAE plays a leading role in the following global activities:

- The Annual World Future Energy Summit, which brings together experts from around the world to explore innovation, digitalization and market shifts in the global energy mix. In 2018, WFES brought together more than 33,000 attendees from 170 countries to network, dialogue, and do business across the energy sector. Approximately US \$15 billion of projects were announced in 2018 (Weatherby et al., 2015).
- The World Energy Congress is a triennial event that brings together representatives from more than 150 countries to lay out a global strategy for a collaborative, sustainable, and innovative energy future and provide opportunities for dialogue. The UAE will be hosting the 24th World Energy Congress in 2019 (Weatherby et al., 2015).
- The World Expo 2020 Dubai includes sustainability as a key theme. Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) is officially partnering with Expo 2020 Dubai and is investing AED 4.26 billion (\$1.16 billion) in sustainable infrastructure to support the Expo. Dubai created the \$100 million ExpoLive fund for start-ups in the lead-up to the Expo, with a focus on driving competition on energy and sustainability (Weatherby et al., 2015).
- The Clean Energy Ministerial Committee is a high-level global forum which brings together 24 countries which globally contribute 99% of clean energy investments and 75% of greenhouse gas emissions. The UAE hosted the

Ministerial meeting in 2011 and currently leads the Clean Energy Education and Empowerment initiative (Weatherby et al., 2015).

Moreover, The UAE ratified the Paris Agreement on September 21, 2016, making it the first country in the Middle East to do so. In addition, the UAE quietly works with many other members of the GCC and the Arab League behind closed doors to promote regional interest in alternative energy technologies. This was likely a factor in the announcement at the 2016 Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference that the GCC would invest a combined \$100 billion in renewable energy through (Weatherby et al., 2015).

4.4.6 Diplomatic Missions

Since the foundation of the United Arab Emirates, the country has conducted an active diplomatic enhancement strategy. As a result, the total of number of all embassies and consulates representing the United Arab Emirates abroad, in addition to the embassies and consulates hosted in the United Arab Emirates total 308. As a result, the UAE currently maintains 97 embassies abroad, in addition to 20 consulates and other representative offices. While the capital, Abu Dhabi, hosts 119 embassies. In addition, there are 72 consulates and six other representative offices in the United Arab Emirates (MOFAIC, 2017).

4.5 The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organization that acts as a platform for international cooperation on the global renewable energy transition and promotes the adoption of renewable energy. IRENA provides authoritative research, tools, and policy guidance to countries

interested in deploying renewable energy, including but not limited to solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, hydropower, and other emerging renewable technologies.

Among the practical resources that IRENA provides are the following:

- Renewables Readiness Assessments, which are done collaboratively with individual governments and regional organizations to assess the current situation and identify ways to accelerate renewable energy deployment on a national or regional basis.
- The Global Atlas, which is a web resource showing maps of renewable energy resource potential around the world.
- Renewable Energy Roadmap (REmap), an initiative to help double renewable energy's share of the global energy mix by 2030.
- The IRENA/ADFD Project Facility, which utilizes IRENA's technical expertise to identify scalable renewable energy projects in developing countries and is funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

In 2009, the UAE successfully won the rights to host the headquarters of International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Winning the vote was a significant victory for the UAE as IRENA is one of very few international organizations to have headquarters in a non-Western country, and it is the first to be located in the Arab world. Hosting such a major international organization entails substantial long-term financial commitments and in line with the UAE's reputation as an extremely generous contributor to overseas development assistance. Globally, the country ranks among the highest contributors of aid as a percentage of gross national income.

The UAE's published strategy for international assistance between 2017 and 2021 prioritizes international cooperation on areas where there is significant opportunity to enhance the UAE's reputation as a leader. The strategy also seeks to provide technical cooperation to enhance the effectiveness of foreign aid and benefit from international initiatives based in the UAE (Weatherby et al., 2015).

4.6 UAE Soft Power Future Challenges

To accentuate and build on these foundations, the UAE's Soft Power Strategy identifies four key objectives:

(1) To develop a unified direction for various sectors including the economy, humanities, tourism, media and science; (2) to promote the UAE's position as a gateway to the region; (3) to establish the UAE as a regional capital for culture, art and tourism; and (4) to establish its reputation as a modern and tolerant country that welcomes everyone from across the world (UAE Government, 2017).

Proclaiming a soft power strategy is one thing but making it work is another. A key tension in the projection of soft power is that having drawn attention to themselves, states cannot control the aspects of their culture, political values and foreign policy that others may dwell upon. The experiences of other states have revealed a variety of ways in which soft power strategies can misfire. Fortunately, these experiences also offer lessons about how these pitfalls can be mitigated or avoided. Lessons stand out (Nye, 2006).

First, unlike hard power resources, which tend to be concentrated in the hands of government, soft power resources are diffused to a profusion of public and private actors. Typically, the primary responsibility for the state's external relations lies with

diplomats who are state appointees and specialists in precise and accurate communication with their counterparts. Although these formal channels remain important, the revolution in communications technology means that today almost anyone can, in effect, act as an emissary for their country through interactions with people overseas (Nye, 2008).

Direct contact between the masses, so-called 'new public diplomacy', is encapsulated by the UAE's Deputy Prime Minister's observation at the launch of the soft power strategy that "the responsibility of the UAE's reputation is also the responsibility of any person and group in the UAE" (Gulf News, 2017). The dilemma is that the messages and images conveyed by a myriad of non-state actors will not necessarily correspond to that envisaged by the government. The challenge therefore is to harness the creativity of private groups and individuals whilst transmitting a reasonably coherent message. Most academic evidence suggests that, especially in an age of social media, that national values, cultures and brands are most credible when they are carried by celebrities, businesses and ordinary citizens. The lesson from elsewhere is that soft power works best when government acts to facilitate, rather than tightly control, the activities of private actors (Hill & Beadle, 2014). Moreover, considerable thought needs to go into how the UAE's message is to be imparted and to whom. Purveyors of soft power must remember that effective public diplomacy is a two-way street. It involves listening as well as talking. Public diplomacy is more effective when it engages with, rather than broadcasts to, its intended recipients. The UAE's Soft Power Council must also recognize that what is deemed attractive, desirable or legitimate varies enormously around the world. Put another way what generates soft power in one country or region may detract from it in another (Hill & Beadle, 2014).

Second, soft power is costly. In the case of the UAE, most of the soft power attractions such as international philanthropy, investments in tourism, aviation and infrastructure etc. require heavy investments and are difficult to sustain in the long run. Soft power is a long-term commitment requiring significant political and financial capital. The returns on hard power investments such as military armaments tend to be immediate, quantifiable and visible. Conversely the effects of soft power investments tend to be of a piecemeal and intangible nature that is imperceptible to policymakers and the public. The difficulty of demonstrating that a soft power strategy is delivering bang for the government's buck makes them candidates for retrenchment and abandonment. Many of the UK's soft power assets, for example, such as the BBC World Service and the British Council are withering owing to budgetary cutbacks imposed by politicians determined to close the country's yawning budget deficits. These problems are exacerbated by the view that soft power is a cheap option. Soft power assets certainly offer good value when compared with the cost of constructing an aircraft carrier or buying the latest artillery. Equally communicating your message to the rest of the world incurs substantial expenditure. Consider the case of sports mega-events where intense competition to win the nomination spurs governments to make ostentatious bids whose costs are then further inflated by an eagerness to woo the global audience the event is designed to attract (Flyvbjerg et al., 2016).

Third, a successful soft power strategy abroad rests on domestic support. Countries cannot assume that grandiose projects designed to dazzle foreign observers will resonate or be appreciated at home. Ordinary citizens who are often understandably indifferent or even hostile to such undertakings feel the opportunity costs of lavishing extravagant expenditures on enterprises ostensibly aimed at international audiences. Concerns are also sometimes expressed that openness to

foreign influences may erode the national and cultural identity upon which soft power is founded (Flyvbjerg et al., 2016).

The view that the actions of states simply accord with an impartial assessment of their national interests, and that such prevailing interests reflect the distribution of power in the international system, still has much to commend it. Equally, in many cases, decision-making is, as one seasoned diplomat has observed, “more often than not informed by emotional, psychological factors, by innate and sometimes unarticulated affinities or antipathies” (Flyvbjerg et al., 2016). This is the essence of soft power. The UAE’s strategic nurturing of these affinities, especially if it learns from the experience of others, leaves it in pole position to become a soft superpower of the future.

Fourth, the absence of a UAE global media outlet makes the country dependent on other media outlets for its success stories to be written and told. This makes the UAE vulnerable to hostile media coverage and false media narratives. Indeed, the media has become the ultimate tool of power and influence in the world. Therefore it is not surprising that great powers such as the U.S and European countries that have some of the most famous media houses in the world, are among the most influential as well.

Never before in human history have many countries abandoned many of the old political and economic arrangements for one new system. In the 1980s and 2010, the number of liberal democracies has increased (as defined by Freedom House) from about 100 to 150. Based on rankings published by the Wall Street Journal and the Heritage Foundation, free market capitalist economies grew from over 40 to close to 100. Hollywood, which globally engages to inject America’s image into the minds of

people, is an entertainment vehicle facilitating the transmission of social and political messages of the United States. Hollywood tells the culture of Americans, justifies that democratic values are needed in the world, and attempts to put the lifestyles of foreign public in the social and politics fields into a form that is proper to American values. The United States starts to apply opinions and philosophical arguments making up its soft power through Hollywood in foreign policy. In addition, The United Arab Emirates and the region do not affect, but have been affected, both through Western media and Western culture. For example, Hollywood and Bollywood have become more attractive and popular in the Emirates and the region than any local media.

Despite the fact that the UAE has big budgets for the media and the existence of media cities in the UAE, the country still lags globally in terms of media influence. An example of a country exercising soft power influence globally is Qatar, via its Aljazeera network which competes with other major media outlets such as BBC and CNN for global influence. Indeed, during the Arab Spring, the Aljazeera media network succeeded in projecting itself as the voice of the powerless, thereby shaping the hearts and minds of thousands of people within the region (Antwi-Boateng, 2013: 39).

Fifth, the creeping use of hard power such as the War in Yemen could negatively affect the good image of the UAE due to the negative international media coverage and the humanitarian crisis there. This is in spite of the fact that the UAE has lost over 80 soldiers in the Yemeni civil war, and have helped to stop the Houthi rebels from taking over most of Yemen and, simultaneously, prevented al-Qaeda from setting up its largest territorial caliphate after it made inroads in the port of Mukalla in 2015.

Sixth, the acceptance of western cultural projects such as Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim Museum could expose the UAE to accusations of cultural appropriation and lack of cultural authenticity. Also, accelerated Westernization could lead to the loss of UAE's Islamic and Arab identity which could lead to resentment among some conservative elements within the country. Indeed, a successful soft power strategy abroad rests on domestic support. Concerns are also sometimes expressed that openness to foreign influences may erode the national and cultural identity upon which soft power is founded.

The following recommendations have been made to address possible future challenges to UAE's soft power strategies:

- Soft power resources are diffused between a diverse audience of public and private actors and are not solely in the hands of the government, with the private sector sharing some of this power. For example, the United States and India both rely on films made by Hollywood and Bollywood (both of which are run by private actors) as a tool of foreign and domestic soft power influence.
- Soft power is a constantly evolving theory. This makes it all the more prudent for researcher to carry out extensive studies for more effective soft power strategies.
- The research recommends the development of uniform strategies for soft power at the state level.
- The research recommends that the government opens a direct online and interactive platform where people can contribute towards the formulation of soft power strategies in order to reduce openness concerns.

- It is recommended that the Soft Power Council be transformed into a permanent government institution, of which the Federal National Council is a model, with some members appointed and others elected.
- Government should create a comprehensive concept of soft power in the UAE that does not contradict its customs and values but at the same time embrace the international concept of soft power.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Soft power is neither a new concept nor practice, but the term was coined relatively recently by Robert Nye in the 1980s, which is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get desired outcomes, whether it is through financial motivation or to coopt the other party for a shared goal. Soft power, as opposed to hard power, does not rely on military or economic strength to coerce others in delivering what is required, but rather does it in a more cooperative and integrated manner. Moreover, the strategies for soft power are often long-term, built out of a relationship of trust and support, rather than an instant outcome. Numerous political scientists argue on the exact definition of soft power and how it is and should be practiced, but the general principles remain the same.

One of the countries to have demonstrated a successful understanding and implementation of soft power for their development is the UAE. It has demonstrated that a small nation is capable of utilizing its relationships with countries, organizations and institutions for its social, economic and political development. The UAE's political positioning in the international sphere has been largely based on the cooperative stance the country has with international organizations such as the United Nations and the friendly relationship it has with neighboring, regional and international states. To ensure the country's integration with others is effective and sustainable, the UAE established cultural, economic and humanitarian ties with numerous countries. The flow of people, information and resources between the UAE and others has been one of the soft power measures the country uses to help establish itself as a growing major player in the international scene.

In an historic event, the UAE reached new heights in its space and technology agenda when the country successfully put the first Arab in space on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 (Pillai, 2019). Before shooting off to the International Space Station (ISS), UAE national Hazza Al Mansoori held the UAE flag in one hand while delivering the country's three-finger salute in the other. The event signified a proud moment, not just for the UAE but for the world's entire Arab community. While UAE was lauded across the globe for this new achievement in space, the country had also managed to pull off a striking victory with regard to its soft power strategy.

The United Arab Emirates has become a brand that is almost aggressively promoted throughout regional as well as international media. The UAE's influence today is a testament to the myriad of advantages in the use of soft power. The soft power concept has already been validated by the likes of countries such as UAE. The country has proved on more than one occasion that soft power is not inferior to hard power. In fact, soft power enables the UAE to act as a platform for globalist notions. The concept of soft power is becoming increasingly envisioned as a ticket to even a relatively small country to obtain a seat at the table. This study shows that soft power is not only restricted to cultural influence abroad. It also plays a crucial role in framing domestic policies and sentiments among the common citizens of UAE. However, one must be wary of the fact that soft power is a constantly evolving theory. This makes it all the more prudent for researches to carry out extensive studies on soft power strategies.

The research used several qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews of major UAE-based foreign policy actors and experts/academics and complemented by a critical analysis of primary and secondary UAE official foreign policy documents

and statements. Notable official documents that were referenced includes: UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda, UAE Centennial 2071 Plan and The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 etc. In addition, the research also utilized some quantitative techniques by incorporating the results of polling about the UAE by reputable international polling firms as well as statistics from international organizations such as the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund etc.

The research finds that UAE has succeeded in exercising its own soft power through its foreign policy in different sectors. In terms of political values, the country's success as the only federal state in the Gulf region that has not only survived but thrived in the face of perennial geo-political tensions and adversity makes it very attractive around the world. Moreover, the success of the UAE's federal model in light of the growing emergence of separatism in some regions has strengthened the UAE's image and thus admirability. In fact, UAE's reputation as a stable and business friendly country, as well as a very tolerant society will continue to augment its image and thus its soft power. All these attributes will lead to more foreign policy success in the immediate and foreseeable future. In terms of political stability, the country has never witnessed any violent upheaval from its people or among the ruling elites in the political sphere. In a region rife with sectarianism, extremism and terrorism, the leadership of the UAE has pursued proactive policies that have inoculated the country against any of the aforementioned afflictions. Thus, the enduring political stability and high levels of public safety of the UAE are major sources of attractions for thousands of people who visit the country yearly and even settle to do business. In terms of economic development, the country is perennially ranked high in most international economic and social indexes such as the UNDP Human Development Index. The UAE consistently ranks among the top expatriate destinations in the world and shares elite

company with countries such as Switzerland, Singapore and Germany. For the third consecutive year, in 2018, the UAE was ranked among the top most desirable expatriate destinations in the world per an HSBC's Expat Explorer Survey.

Moreover, the UAE has several international educational initiatives such as the Arab Reading Challenge, which is the largest-ever Arab literacy initiative to encourage students to read. The country also hosts several reputable multinational Universities such as Sorbonne University, New York University, Middlesex University etc.

In terms of tolerance, the research found that UAE has carved a niche in the world as a tolerant and moderate Islamic country that welcomes all in the pursuit of mutual cooperation and respect. In the UAE, religious minorities of different faiths are free to worship and often given land to build their places of worship by the Rulers of the country. In addition, the UAE was the first country to establish a Ministry of Tolerance and Happiness as a sign of norm institutionalization. Female empowerment has been one of the most interesting findings of this research. The UAE's commitment towards women's rights and empowerment has been demonstrated since its inception as an independent federal state in 1971. Indeed, the UAE is one of the few Middle Eastern countries where women are highly represented in high-paying professions such as finance and banking. In 2015, Amal Al-Qubaisi became the first woman to serve as the Federal National Council's deputy president. In addition, the UAE has recently gained a reputation as a credible peace maker and conflict mediator as evidenced by the successful mediation that led to the end of the over two decades of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and to calm tensions between India and Pakistan. In spite of all the above soft power strengths, there are potential challenges that needs to be navigated to ensure maximum outcomes in soft power strategies.

First, unlike hard power resources, which tend to be concentrated in the hands of government, soft power resources are diffused among diverse actors. Typically, the primary responsibility for the state's external relations lies with diplomats who are state appointees and specialists in precise and accurate communication with their counterparts. Although these formal channels remain important, the revolution in communications technology means that today almost anyone can, in effect, act as an emissary for their country through interactions with people overseas. Direct contact between the masses, so-called 'new public diplomacy', is encapsulated by the UAE's Deputy Prime Minister's observation at the launch of the soft power strategy that "the responsibility of the UAE's reputation is also the responsibility of any person and group in the UAE" (Gulf News, 2017). The dilemma is that the messages and images conveyed by a myriad of non-state actors will not necessarily correspond to that envisaged by the government. The challenge therefore is to harness the creativity of private groups and individuals whilst transmitting a reasonably coherent message. Most academic evidence suggests that, especially in an age of social media, that national values, cultures and brands are the most credible when they are carried by celebrities, businesses and ordinary citizens. The lesson from elsewhere is that soft power works best when government acts to facilitate, rather than tightly control, the activities of private actors (Hill & Beadle, 2014). Moreover, considerable thought needs to go into how the UAE's message is to be imparted and to whom. Purveyors of soft power must remember that effective public diplomacy is a two-way street. It involves listening as well as talking. Public diplomacy is more effective when it engages with, rather than broadcasts to, its intended recipients. The UAE's Soft Power Council must also recognize that what is deemed attractive, desirable or legitimate

varies enormously around the world. Put another way, what generates soft power in one country or region may detract from it in another (Hill & Beadle, 2014).

Second, soft power is costly. Most of the UAE' soft power attractions such as international philanthropy, investments in tourism, aviation and infrastructure etc. require heavy investments and are difficult to sustain in the long run. Soft power is a long-term commitment requiring significant political and financial capital.

Third, a successful soft power strategy abroad rests on domestic support. Countries cannot assume that grandiose projects designed to dazzle foreign observers will resonate or be appreciated at home.

Fourth, although the media has become the ultimate global tool of power and influence for countries and people who control and wield it, the UAE lacks such a tool and is therefore vulnerable to uncontrolled narratives that could be detrimental to its image. Great power countries such as US and Europe and also regional rivals such as Qatar have powerful global media outlets that are not always charitable towards the UAE.

Fifth, the creeping use of hard power such as the war in Yemen could negatively affect the good image of the UAE due to the negative international media coverage and the humanitarian crisis there.

Sixth, the acceptance of western cultural projects such as Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim Museum although laudable, could expose the UAE to accusations of cultural appropriation and lack of cultural authenticity.

The research realizes that soft power is a constantly evolving theory which makes it all the more prudent for researchers and scholars to carry out extensive studies in order to discover more effective soft power strategies

The research also discovered that soft power resources are diffused to a profusion of public and private actors. Thus, it's not only constrained with the government part only but the private sector can play a major role in building UAE's soft power,

The research recommends the development of uniform soft power strategies at the state level by opening a direct online government platform where the views and inputs of people could be solicited and incorporated in soft power strategies. This will go a long way in addressing concerns of openness and inclusiveness. The research recommends that the UAE's Soft Power Council be converted into a permanent federal government institution, of which the Federal National Council is a model, with some members appointed and others elected. The new institution must be mandated to create a comprehensive concept of soft power for the UAE that does not contradict its customs and traditions while respecting international norms of soft power.

Despite the success of the United Arab Emirates in its soft power drive, there are questions that arose at the end of this research that need further probing. These include: Is there an opportunity to turn the UAE into a smart power instead of focusing on soft power in the future? Would the UAE be pushed more towards the exercise of hard power as a result of increased security threats in the region? Could the Emirates' soft power become a model for the region and the countries of the world? What does the UAE needs to do in order to become a model in the region to reinforce its strategy as a soft power?

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