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SIMILAR STRUCTURE, DIFFERENT BEHAVIOURS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QATAR AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES' FOREIGN POLICIES

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ABSTRACT

Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) share various historical, political, cultural, and structural similarities. However, they have adopted divergent and often conflicting foreign policies towards Middle Eastern crises and civil wars since the Arab uprisings began in 2011. This divergence is evident in their involvement in the region's civil wars in Yemen, Libya, and Syria. Initially, both countries were aligned in their stances at the beginning of these wars, but their paths diverged in the following period. For instance, in Libya, while the UAE supported Khalifa Haftar against the Tripoli government and re-established diplomatic relations with the Syrian regime in 2017, Qatar continued to support the Tripoli government and opposed the Assad regime. In Yemen, the UAE emerged as a prominent member of the Arab coalition alongside Saudi Arabia, initially backing the Hadi government against the Houthis before shifting its support to the Southern Transitional Council post-2017. Qatar's participation in the coalition was limited and ceased following its expulsion from the unified forces after the Gulf crisis erupted in June 2017. These opposing policies also sparked crises among the Gulf countries. Following a diplomatic rift in 2014, which led Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain to withdraw their ambassadors from Doha, a larger crisis unfolded in June 2017 when a broader coalition of Arab countries imposed a comprehensive embargo on Qatar as Doha did not cease its divergent foreign policy. This embargo lasted four years, ending with the Al-Ula Agreement in January 2021. This study explores why these two non-democratic, small-sized, neighbouring Gulf monarchies, constrained by similar structural factors, pursued divergent and conflicting foreign policies in the civil wars of Yemen, Libya, and Syria from 2011, the onset of the Arab uprisings, to 2021, the Al-Ula Agreement. Utilising role theory, this thesis argues that despite their similarities, Qatar and the UAE's divergent foreign policies in these three civil wars stem from their foreign policymakers' differing national role conceptions, influenced by their socialisation experiences of both countries in this period. This comparative research contributes to role theory scholarship by integrating socialisation experiences with national role conceptions to explain foreign policy roles. It also enriches theoretical approaches to foreign policy studies in the Middle East by applying role theory to the foreign policies of two non-democratic Gulf states.

LAY SUMMARY

Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are two small Gulf countries with many similarities, such as their history, politics, economic structure and culture. However, since the Arab uprisings in 2011, they have taken different and mostly opposing approaches to the crises and civil wars in the Middle East, particularly in Yemen, Libya, and Syria. Although they initially had similar positions, their paths soon diverged. For example, in Libya, the UAE supported one side, while Qatar supported the other. In Yemen, the UAE played a major role in the war alongside Saudi Arabia, while Qatar's involvement was more limited and ended after the Gulf crisis in 2017. These differences in foreign policy led to significant tensions among these Gulf countries, culminating in this major crisis in 2017, when several Arab nations imposed a blockade on Qatar that lasted until 2021. This research seeks to understand why Qatar and the UAE, despite their similarities, pursued such different and conflicting foreign policies during this period. The study uses role theory to argue that the differences in their foreign policies are due to how their leaders see their countries' roles in the regional and international arena, influenced by their dynamic relations with other nations, conceptualised as socialisation in the thesis. This research not only contributes to the role theory by combining both domestic and international factors but also provides new insights into the foreign policies of non-democratic states in the Middle East, more specifically the Persian Gulf.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Puzzle and Research Question

Since the outbreak of the Arab uprisings, the foreign policies of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar have undergone significant changes in terms of their regional and international assertiveness. The successive crises across the region have provided a backdrop for these countries to pursue their ambitions of becoming influential regional players in the Middle East. Utilising their considerable wealth to support assertive political agendas, these two oil and natural gas-rich Gulf monarchies have taken part in almost all conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, from Libya to Yemen, over the last decade. However, in most of these conflicts, they have often found themselves on opposing sides by supporting conflicting parties. This thesis aims to investigate why Qatar and the UAE aligned themselves with opposing camps in the civil wars of Yemen, Libya, and Syria in the post-Arab uprisings era. This chapter will begin by outlining the differences in their foreign policies during this period. It will then introduce the puzzle and research question of this study. The following section will provide a review of the existing literature on Qatar and the UAE's foreign policies. Finally, the chapter will outline the structure of the thesis.

In this context, while Qatar has supported protesters and opposition groups during the uprisings, the UAE has followed a more conservative policy, favouring the maintenance of the status quo in the region. Specifically, Qatar has sought to foster positive relations with regional political Islamist groups, such as by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt or offering asylum to political dissidents (Roberts 2014; Menshawy and Mabon 2021). In contrast, the UAE has maintained a sceptical stance towards political Islamist movements, perceiving them as threats to regional stability (Roberts 2017; Soubrier 2017). Additionally, their foreign policies have diverged with respect to other regional powers. The UAE views Iran and its regional ambitions as significant existential threats, maintaining close ties with Saudi Arabia (Salisbury 2020). Conversely, Qatar's relations with Saudi Arabia have deteriorated over the past decade, as it has cultivated relatively stronger ties with Iran (Mason 2018). Regarding

the other key regional powers, Egypt and Turkey, the UAE has bolstered its cooperation with Egypt, especially in opposition to Qatar and its ties with the MB. In reaction, Qatar strengthened its economic, political, and military ties with Turkey, including concluding a defence agreement with Turkey in 2014 that allowed Turkey to establish a military base in Qatar (Uslu and Kaplan 2017).

These conflicting policies culminated in two major diplomatic crises in the Gulf. In 2014, the UAE, aligning with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, withdrew its ambassador from Doha, accusing Qatar of having ties with terrorist organisations in the region and interfering in the internal affairs of other Gulf countries (Hassan 2015). Three years later, in June 2017, a coalition of Arab states led by the UAE and Saudi Arabia intensified political pressure, imposed a boycott, and ultimately enacted a diplomatic and economic embargo against Qatar. Qatar received a list of 13 demands which primarily required it to reduce its relations with Iran, expel Turkish military officers, and halt the construction of a Turkish military base in Doha. It was also asked to sever relations with all "terrorist, sectarian, and ideological organisations" in the region, specifically referring to the MB, and to shut down the Al Jazeera (Wintour 2017). This list of demands effectively targeted almost every aspect of Qatar's foreign policy in the Middle East, from its diplomatic tools to its affiliations with countries and groups within the region.

During the blockade, Qatar bolstered its ties with Turkey and Iran to mitigate the political and economic impacts. Turkey supported Qatar by providing military assistance and food supplies, while Iran facilitated access to its airspace and ports, enabling Qatar to circumvent the blockade restrictions. Economically, Qatar devised new trade routes and enhanced its food security by boosting local production and sourcing alternative suppliers, notably Turkey and Iran. Strategically, Qatar deepened its existing relationship with Turkey by hosting Turkish military bases and conducting joint military exercises, thereby adding a strategic security layer against potential military threats (Riggs 2021; Yucesoy 2020). Meanwhile, the UAE, as part of the blockading quartet, sought to coerce Qatar into conforming more closely with the quartet's regional policies, particularly concerning Iran and Islamist groups like the MB. The UAE's strategy was multifaceted, encompassing diplomatic isolation, media campaigns to influence public opinion against Qatar, and legal actions in international courts to challenge Qatari practices (Al Jazeera 2020a).

The Al-Ula Summit in January 2021 marked a significant reconciliation, where the blockading countries announced the prospect of restoring diplomatic relations with Qatar. The agreement, facilitated by Kuwait and the United States, focused on non-interference in the sovereign affairs of other countries and the strengthening of Gulf Cooperation Council unity (Kalaban 2021). Following the summit, there was a gradual restoration of trade and travel ties with the UAE, though some political and economic tensions remained. The resolution of the crisis also allowed Qatar to continue its diplomatic engagements with Iran and Turkey without the previous level of scrutiny from its Gulf neighbours, which was both a reflection of strengthening ties with these two countries, especially since 2011, and its foreign policy approach intending to diversify its foreign engagements beyond the Gulf.

The divergent foreign policies can be seen in three civil wars in the region: Yemen, Libya and Syria. Qatar and the UAE took their parts in the Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia and formed to intervene in the civil war in Yemen in order to fight against the Iran-backed Houthis. However, while Qatar's involvement in the coalition had remained limited until 2017 when they were ousted from the coalition following the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis, the UAE became the most active participant of the coalition besides Saudi Arabia (Baabood and Baabood 2020; Brehony 2020; Dogan-Akkas 2021b). Qatari foreign policymakers' perspectives of the Arab coalition and its involvement in Yemen transformed into a critical stance, as they stressed the importance of dialogue among the local groups without the influence and interference of external power and Al-Jazeera condemned those foreign intervenors for creating the 'world's most urgent humanitarian crisis' in Yemen (Al Jazeera 2018).

In Libya, both Qatar and the UAE joined their forces with the NATO-led alliance to conduct air operations against the Gaddafi regime after the severe crackdown of the Libyan government on protestors in 2011. Their policies in Libya began diverging after the fall of Gaddafi government. Despite its gradually reduced profile in Libya over time, Qatar's main policy has been structured around supporting the UN-recognised Tripoli government and politically aligning with Turkey, particularly after the Turkish military intervention in the Libya civil war in 2019 (Cafiero 2020; Krieg 2021a). Conversely, the Emirati position in Libya has been largely driven by countering political Islamism, referring to the MB and affiliated-groups (Bakir 2020; Hedges 2021). Thus, the UAE has supported General Khalifa Haftar's forces fighting against

the Tripoli government, deemed by Haftar and the UAE to incorporate the MB-related Islamist elements (Badi 2020).

Like in Libya, the initial responses of Qatar and the UAE to the 2011 protests in Syria were to support the rebel forces opposing the harsh crackdown by the Assad regime. Qatar was particularly active in financing these groups and worked to diplomatically isolate the Syrian regime, including lobbying for the suspension of Syria's membership in the Arab League (Nuruzzaman 2015; Gorgulu 2018). However, as regional and international actors like the United States, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey became involved, Qatar's direct presence in Syria waned, though it continued to maintain a critical stance against the Assad regime regardless of its level of activity (Baylouny and Mullins 2018; Watkins 2020). The UAE's involvement in Syria was more restrained compared to Qatar. It acted as a junior partner to Saudi Arabia in supporting rebel groups but never engaged as deeply as Qatar in terms of direct support (Steinberg 2020). The UAE's role increased somewhat in 2014 and 2015 with the formation of the United States-led coalition to counter ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Reflecting its broader regional policy, the UAE's approach in Syria was influenced by its anti-Islamist stance, eventually leading it to restore relations with the Syrian government, partly due to the prevalence of Islamist groups among the Syrian rebels (Cher-Leparrain 2017; Hassan 2018).

Despite these conflicting foreign policies, Qatar and the UAE have various historical, political, cultural and economic similarities and proximities. These countries are two non-democratic Gulf monarchies located next to each other and neighboured by two regional powers, Iran and Saudi Arabia. They both achieved the independent sovereign state status in the same year in 1971 after the termination of the Persian Gulf Residency and “the exit of serious British military presence in the Persian Gulf.” (Abbott 2020, 52). They both have rentier political/economic structures, based on their extensive natural gas and oil reserves. This rentier state system model leads to similar demographic structures as well; while the indigenous Arab population is around %10-15 of the total population, the immigrants, mostly guest workers, who are mostly from the South Asian countries constitute the majority of the population (Bel-Air 2020).

Another similarity between these two small-sized countries, which were relatively passive within the Gulf Cooperation Council until the 1990s, is their emergence as significant regional

players over the last decade as they sought to "overcome their smallness" (Miller and Verhoeven 2020). In this sense, purchasing prestigious football clubs in Europe or allocating a huge amount of financial power to fund their worldwide airway companies are the examples demonstrating the attempts of Qatar and the UAE to improve their prestige in the international arena. However, despite these similar attempts, they differ from each other to some extent in terms of the instruments they have been using in the last two decades. In their attempts to become regional players, Qatar has predominantly resorted to soft power instruments such as acting as an active mediator in the region (Kamrava 2011) or employing Al-Jazeera as a foreign policy tool, while the UAE has leveraged its larger economic opportunities thanks to its economic free zone which is the largest in the region to position itself as the financial hub of the Middle East (Miller and Verhoeven 2020).

In addition to the similarities mentioned above, Qatar and the UAE are distinct from the other three small countries of the Gulf, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman, in several points. Firstly, Qatar and the UAE enjoy larger economic capacities and rank significantly higher than Bahrain and Oman in terms of the GDP per capita income levels. Secondly, Qatar and the UAE are relatively distant from the chronic conflict zones of the region (Iraq, Yemen and finally Syria) compared to Kuwait and Oman. Thirdly, they differ in terms of their demographic structures regarding the proportion of Shia-Sunni populations. While Bahrain and Kuwait have substantial Shia populations, Qatar and the UAE, with Oman, have smaller Shia communities (Akbarzadeh 2017). Lastly, as noted earlier, they have pursued more active foreign policies on the regional and even international levels in the last decade, attempting to assume a role in almost all conflicts in the region from Libya to Yemen as well as the increasing state branding efforts that go beyond the boundaries of the region.

Therefore, the UAE and Qatar emerge as two countries that share similarities in various ways even more than their small-sized GCC allies. Within the context of the points stated above, this study aims to address the following question: Why did Qatar and the UAE, two non-democratic neighbouring countries constrained by similar structural factors, follow different and even conflicting foreign policies in the civil wars of Yemen, Libya and Syria between 2011 (the beginning of the Arab uprisings) and 2021 (the al-Ula Meeting)? In addition to the main research question, this thesis also seeks to answer the question of how their ties with regional

and international countries, particularly those that intervened in the three civil wars, influenced their policies towards these cases.

This research question primarily addresses the structural realist perspective, which stands as one of the most rooted and influential theories in the international relations discipline. which argues that structural stimuli drive how countries act in their foreign policies (Waltz 1979, Mearsheimer 2001, Wivel 2017, James 2022). In other words, according to structural realism, countries experiencing similar structural conditions would be expected to behave similarly in their foreign policies. However, the cases of Qatar and the UAE demonstrate an exception to this view. The aforementioned structural similarities have not resulted in similar behaviours in their foreign policy actions. On the contrary, their foreign policies diverged during the specified period. Chapter 3 will examine in detail how the research question of this thesis was structured to challenge one of the main premises of structural realism regarding the influence of structure on countries' foreign policy behaviours.

The cases of Yemen, Libya, and Syria were selected to examine the foreign policy divergences between Qatar and the UAE because the civil wars in these three countries differ significantly. These differences include their geographical proximity to Qatar and the UAE, which likely influenced the motivations of these Gulf monarchies in shaping their foreign policies towards them. Additionally, the extent of internationalisation of these conflicts varies, ranging from the intervention of regional powers in some to the involvement of all international, regional, and neighbouring countries in others. This divergence might lead Qatar and the UAE to formulate their foreign policies with consideration of their relationships with the intervening countries. Furthermore, the degree to which Qatar and the UAE became involved in these civil wars illustrates the objectives they pursued and the tools they employed in forming their policies. The methodology section in Chapter 3 will provide a detailed explanation of the rationale behind the selection of these cases for investigation.

This thesis will employ role theory from the field of foreign policy analysis to address these questions. As detailed in the theoretical framework section of Chapter 3, this theory enables a comprehensive examination of the divergent foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE by integrating both internal and external factors into the analysis. Beyond the broad scope provided by role theory, it also offers a conceptual framework that facilitates the analysis of

foreign policy behaviours of states both individually and comparatively. Within this context, Chapter 3 will first critically assess whether the primary theoretical approaches in international relations and foreign policy analysis, such as structural realism and constructivism, are suitable. It will then present role theory as the theoretical framework selected for this thesis, justifying its appropriateness in providing a theoretical and conceptual foundation to address the specified research questions.

2. Research on Foreign Policies of Qatar and the UAE and Intended Contribution

Several studies have comparatively examined these two countries' foreign policy motivations and aims. Ulrichsen (2012, 2016), after mentioning their increasing activeness in regional and international politics, highlights three factors and developments that enabled Qatar and the UAE to assume active foreign policies: (1) the new generation of leadership in these countries since the 1990s, (2) these leaders' new economic visions and state-branding efforts that eventually brought international attention to Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi in the last two decades and (3) the international changes with the end of Cold War and the following increasing interconnection across the different parts of the world that provided an environment for small countries to embrace and perform ambitious foreign policy visions more than they were expected.

Based on Ulrichsen's analysis, the impact of the new generation in foreign policy formulation of the GCC countries is a well-debated issue in the literature. Specifically for Qatar and the UAE, Hamad bin Khalifa being the Emir of Qatar in 1995 and Mohammed Bin Zayed (MBZ) being the Crown Prince in 2004 are noted as landmarks to make sense of these two countries' expanding foreign policies in the last two decades (Ulrichsen 2017a, Worth 2020, Hedges 2022, Steinberg 2023). Given the non-democratic nature of both Qatar and the UAE, the influence of these leaders is particularly significant. Therefore, as stated above, this thesis will include these leaders' perceptions regarding their countries within the framework of role theory. Chapter 3 will cover role theory in foreign policy analysis, focusing primarily on perceptions of foreign policymakers regarding their countries' position in the international system which eventually generate national role conceptions (NRCs) that drive foreign policy actions. Furthermore, referring to Ulrichsen's second item, the influence of the international and regional systems on the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE will be investigated under

the broader concept of socialisation. In doing so, both countries' dynamic relationships with regional, such as Saudi Arabia, and international, like the United States, will be examined in relation to their effect on the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE in this period.

Regarding the second factor stated by Ulrichsen, Ennis (2018) defines the type of power Qatar and the UAE have instrumentalised as "entrepreneurial power". In this respect, Ennis argues that this power type has been performed by these countries thanks to the flexible autocratic governing style that has been accompanied by the desire and endeavour for higher status and prestige. This ambition manifested through effective branding activities and the promotion of development narratives. Discussing the central pillars of these two countries' foreign policy trajectories, Soubrier (2017) notes that the main emphasis of Qatar in its foreign policy was on visibility and legitimacy as evidently seen within the branding activities and on security by undertaking a "friend of everyone" strategy. Conversely, the UAE has undertaken a credibility-based and security-oriented approach by increasingly enhancing its hard-power capacity in the pre-Arab uprisings period. Discussing their assertive interventions in Libya and Egypt at the very beginning of the uprisings, Soubrier points out that they departed from their traditional relatively passive attitudes towards the crises in the region to realise their own political agendas in accordance with their approaches regarding other active actors of the region such as the MB and Saudi Arabia.

In response to Soubrier's observations, this research aims to elucidate the factors influencing the foreign policies of these countries in three Middle Eastern civil wars, using the framework of role theory. It investigates the characteristics of the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE, which Soubrier identifies as Doha's 'friend of everyone' approach and the Abu Dhabi's 'credibility-based' and 'security-oriented' approach. These investigations focus on how the leaders of each country perceive their nation's roles and their relationships with other influential countries acting as socialisers in these contexts. Additionally, Chapter 2 of the thesis will explore the historical aspects of Qatari and Emirati foreign policies before 2011. Chapter 7 will then compare the findings of the historical analysis with the foreign policy dynamics of these two Gulf monarchies in the post-2011 period after analysing each case to provide a comprehensive view of their roles in these conflicts in the subsequent era. This comparative analysis aims to highlight the changes and continuities in the foreign policy orientations of Doha and Abu Dhabi from the period before 2011 to after 2011.

Referring to the research on small states' foreign policies, Miller and Verhoeven (2020) dwell on how these two small Gulf countries have attempted to overcome their smallness. In this sense, they argue that Qatar has carved out its foreign policy around its soft-power capabilities as they describe as the "Al Jazeera Effect", whereas the foreign policy perspective of the UAE has been guided by "Dubai Port World vision" which puts the main emphasis on the economic development and thereby priorities economic expansion regionally and internationally. Conflicting with the traditional size-based assumptions and indicators in the IR research, Miller and Verhoeven conclude that these active foreign policy visions of both countries have enabled them to acquire a considerable role in regional affairs and even beyond the region in some cases. More than Miller and Verhoeven's emphasis on how Qatar and the UAE have been punching above their weight, the way they described their foreign policies appear to be interesting considering this thesis' research question. Although their conceptualisation as 'Al Jazeera Effect' and 'Dubai Port World vision' do not represent the whole dimensions of Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies, but they lay out some of the essential motivations and tools embedded in them.

In addition, the literature includes several works that explore the foreign policy attitudes of Qatar and the UAE against certain groups, countries, and conflicts in the region. Khatib (2019) investigates whether three Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar) have been motivated by sectarianism in Syria while making their moves in the conflict. Khatib concludes that even though sectarian affiliations were emphasised from time to time as a discourse to justify policies, the main driver for all these three monarchies was raison d'état instead of sectarianism. Following Khatib's research, the theoretical discussion in Chapter 3 will present that a role theory analysis would not necessarily delve into certain concepts such as sectarianism when analysing countries' foreign policies. Nevertheless, the results of identifying these countries roles might produce some outcomes that could be examined to infer whether certain notions were embedded in the discourses of these countries' foreign policymakers. Moreover, such an analysis can present how these concepts were employed as motivations or tools by translating into particular roles to be pursued in foreign policy.

While discussing divergent approaches of these countries to the MB, Roberts (2017) puts forward that the underlying reasons of their differing foreign policy attitudes against the MB need to be assessed by analysing both leaders' statecraft styles and countries' own structural

characteristics. In other words, Roberts (2017) argues, the conclusions with the intent to make sense of the UAE's hostile and Qatar's positive approach to the MB and related groups "rest on the interplay between the analysis of the first and second images" (550). Roberts' conclusion regarding the importance of going into detail on individual and state-level analyses to understand these two countries' approaches towards the MB and affiliated groups can be definitely useful to pinpoint their divergencies on this case. However, a more general investigation of this thesis also necessitates the inclusion of third image in the analysis. In addition to the GCC and Saudi Arabia that have been significantly influential on the foreign policies of its smaller GCC allies, the countries that played roles in at least one of the civil wars such as the United States, Russia, Turkey and Iran should be included in this research to explain the external factors shaping the Qatari and Emirati foreign policies in this period. For this purpose, as will be presented in detail in Chapter 3, the impact of Qatar and the UAE's socialisation experiences will be incorporated into this research to better examine their roles in these civil wars.

There are also some studies investigating these countries' foreign policies separately. Kamrava (2017) describes the foreign policy strategy of Qatar as "hedging diplomacy" and its power style as "subtle power". In this sense, while Qatar attempts to protect its security as an independent player by establishing balanced and pragmatism-based relations with both regional (Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia) (Kamrava 2016) and international powers (the United States) (Roberts 2012) as a part of its hedging strategy, it also seeks to expand its influence regionally and globally by employing its economic wealth and turning it into a source to fuel its diplomatic, marketing and branding efforts in the way of improving its prestige in the international society. Key instruments in this strategy include Al Jazeera and the Qatar Investment Authority, which are used to support active foreign policy initiatives (Nuruzzaman 2015). Moreover, Qatar positioned itself as a mediator in regional conflicts, particularly before the outbreak of the Arab uprisings (Kamrava 2011).

Apart from its soft power capacity especially in terms of promoting itself as an aid donor in the Middle East (Almezaini 2012), the use of hard power among other foreign policy instruments has increasingly occupied a central place in the foreign policy agenda of the UAE in the last decade (Roberts 2020). The rise of political Islamist groups and the expansion of Iranian influence in the region that are seen as the two biggest threats by the leadership of

the UAE, as mentioned above, have pushed it to side with Saudi Arabia. These two countries have collaborated in fighting the Iran-backed Houthi movement in Yemen since 2015 as well as backing the Sisi government that carried out a large-scale crackdown on the MB, politically and financially in Egypt (Mason 2018). As a sign of the security-oriented foreign policy vision of the UAE, the UAE ranked fourth as major arms importers between 2010 and 2014 in the world (Ragab 2017, 48). Lastly, the UAE aims to enhance its economic expansion through the Dubai Ports World by taking controls of the ports of other countries in the region. This policy simultaneously contributes to the political expansion efforts of the UAE as it provides the opportunity to establish control in some strategic locations of the region such as Aden, Yemeni Islands and the Horn of Africa (Dogan-Akkas 2021b).

These studies offer insights into specific aspects of Qatari and Emirati foreign policies. They cover their alignment strategies, certain motivations for certain cases, the tools instrumentalised to realise these motivations and insights on their ties with relevant actors. This research's intended contribution to this literature will be in three senses. First, it aims to provide a more comprehensive coverage of Qatar and the UAE' foreign policies in this period, delving into three civil wars that differ from each other in terms of their geographical proximity and the extent to which they have been internationalised. This framework will allow for an examination of how these two countries responded under different circumstances, influenced by the unique characteristics of each conflict and the involvement of various regional and international actors at different levels. In this sense, the first contribution will be an empirical contribution to Gulf politics and international relations research. The following two contributions will be to role theory scholarship.

Second, the research will employ role theory as a theoretical framework to analyse the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE, focusing on the perspectives of their principal foreign policymakers regarding their countries' roles in the international system, particularly in relation to three specific case studies. This analysis will also explore their dynamic relationships with international actors involved in these civil wars. Essentially, identifying their NRCs will help to understand how Emirati and Qatari foreign policymakers perceive their countries' roles, while examining socialisation processes will shed light on how their interactions with relevant countries have influenced their NRCs during this period. By introducing role theory, which provides a rich conceptual framework, this research aims to

contribute to the Middle East studies scholarship, which has a need for more theoretical approaches from the discipline of foreign policy analysis, as discussed by Darwich and Kaarbo (2020). This approach aims to provide a deeper theoretical grounding in understanding the complex dynamics at play in the foreign policies of these Gulf countries. In addition, this research will contribute to the scholarship of role theory by focusing on two non-democratic countries in the Gulf. Given that the role theory literature often underrepresents small-sized non-democratic countries, this study is poised to enrich empirical research within this field. Moreover, while existing studies typically concentrate either on NRCs or the socialisation process in analysing countries' foreign policies, this thesis will integrate both aspects. It aims to explore how the socialisation experiences of countries influence their NRCs, addressing this as a secondary research question.

Third, this research aims to contribute methodologically to role theory scholarship. In addition to the traditional sources used to identify the NRCs of countries, such as speeches, public statements, and interviews of key foreign policy figures, this thesis will incorporate Twitter data, which has not previously been utilised in this field. The inclusion of Twitter data will enable this research to capture day-to-day reactions to events unfolding in the three civil wars. It will also allow the examination of non-official statements that reflect countries' official policies towards conflicts, particularly when some foreign policy figures share their personal opinions on developments in the civil wars in Yemen, Libya, and Syria.

3. Outline

This thesis comprises eight chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. The next chapter sets the historical scene for the subsequent analyses within the study. It provides a detailed review of the development of Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies before 2011, particularly focusing on the factors that influenced their foreign policy directions during this era. The primary aim is to comprehend the positions of countries in both the regional and global contexts, investigating the dynamics and events that led to specific international alliances, and evaluating how these trends in foreign policy informed their actions throughout the period examined in this thesis. Essentially, this chapter seeks to clarify the origins and

bases of the foreign policies that Qatar and the UAE implemented following the Arab uprisings.

The third chapter develops a theoretical framework to explore why Qatar and the UAE adopted divergent, sometimes conflicting foreign policies from 2011 to 2021. It starts by examining various theories prominent within international relations, like structural realism and constructivism, and those specific to Middle Eastern politics, such as omni-balancing theory. After a thorough critique of these theories' relevance to the research questions, the chapter introduces role theory as a foundational approach for this analysis, offering extensive conceptual and methodological tools for subsequent discussions. The chapter concludes by underscoring the potential contributions of this research to the fields of foreign policy analysis and the political dynamics of the Middle East/Gulf region.

The subsequent three chapters explore the distinct foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE in the contexts of Yemen, Libya, and Syria. Each chapter begins by examining the literature on the foreign policies of both countries in these conflict zones. This is followed by a detailed role-theoretical analysis, which aims to define the roles Qatar and the UAE assumed and explores their socialisation experiences during the respective conflicts. The chapters investigate the complexities of each case, assessing how the distinct roles influenced their divergent foreign policies. The chapters conclude with an evaluation of the findings, discussing the specific roles adopted by Qatar and the UAE towards Yemen, Libya, and Syria as well as referring to the outcomes of socialisation experiences.

The seventh chapter conducts a comparative analysis of the three preceding empirical chapters, structured into six distinct sections. The initial section evaluates the variations between these empirical studies, attributing differences to the differing availability of data for each case. Following this, the second section undertakes an in-depth examination of NRCs across two sub-sections. The first sub-section reviews the quantity of NRCs for each country, initially comparing similar and conflicting NRCs, and subsequently explores whether the number of NRCs reflects the level of engagement of the countries in their respective roles. The latter sub-section provides a comparative review of the NRCs, highlighting the disparities among the cases, the prominence of NRCs throughout, and assessing whether the NRCs held consistent meanings for both countries. The third section of this chapter details the

socialisation experiences of Qatar and the UAE, exploring how carved out their foreign policies in relation to their dynamic ties with the countries involved in these cases as socialisers of Qatar and the UAE. The fourth section synthesises discussions from throughout the chapter to address the central research question of this thesis, linking the findings from the NRCs and socialisation analyses to elucidate why these two structurally similar countries adopted divergent and sometimes opposing foreign policies. The fifth section revisits the historical context set before 2011 to assess whether the factors influencing their differing foreign policies originated before the Arab uprisings or as a response to them and subsequent developments. The chapter wraps up with a general analysis in the final section, summarising the key insights gathered from the investigations conducted.

4. Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the research. It began by clarifying the research puzzle and questions this study seeks to address, as well as the rationale behind the selection of the empirical cases for analysis. Additionally, it briefly introduced role theory as the theoretical approach to be employed in answering the research questions. The thesis aims to explain the foreign policy divergences between Qatar and the UAE in the civil wars of Yemen, Libya, and Syria, despite the numerous similarities between these non-democratic Gulf monarchies. The first section also outlined the reasons for selecting these three empirical cases, focusing on the geographical proximity of these civil wars to Qatar and the UAE, the level of internationalisation of these conflicts, and the extent of Qatar and the UAE's involvement. The second section reviewed existing literature on Qatar and the UAE's foreign policies to highlight the intended empirical and theoretical contributions of this thesis. The final section provided an outline of the thesis structure. As indicated in this outline, the following chapter will undertake a historical analysis of the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1. Introduction

This chapter concentrates on elucidating the origins and foundations of the foreign policies adopted by Qatar and the UAE in the post-Arab uprisings era. Such a chapter is essential to ascertain whether and to what extent the foreign policy decisions of Qatar and the UAE during the studied period can be linked to their relations with one another and the nations involved in the civil wars of Yemen, Libya, and Syria. Furthermore, historical insights into their foreign policies and connections with other international actors will shed light on the changes and continuities in their foreign policy actions post-2011. Additionally, this chapter will establish a foundation for a better understanding of the historical dimensions of the roles that Qatar and the UAE assumed in the civil wars examined in this thesis.

This chapter provides historical context for the analyses conducted in the subsequent sections of the research. It offers an overview of Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policy development prior to 2011, with a specific focus on the elements that influenced their foreign policies during this period. The scope of this chapter is confined to the foreign policy actions and decisions that occurred before 2011; it does not encompass the comprehensive history of these two countries and how they evolved up to the 2010s. The primary emphasis is on understanding the stance of foreign policymakers within the regional and international arena, examining the dynamics and events that prompted certain foreign relationships, and assessing the degree to which these foreign policy trends shaped their actions during the period under study in this thesis.

This chapter takes a thematic approach, not strictly following chronological order. Instead, it deals with phenomena and issues shaping foreign policies in these countries item by item. This unconventional structure aims to lay out a historical context by concentrating on specific themes, providing a fresh perspective on the historical development of foreign policies. To put it in other words, the analysis in this chapter seeks to contribute to this research’s questions regarding how these countries shaped their foreign policies between the beginning of the Arab uprisings and the al-Ula Meeting, presenting the dynamics in the foreign policies of Qatar

and the UAE before 2011. This analysis aims to cover both intra-Gulf relations, discussing how the ties between the ruling families of Qatar and the UAE have evolved with each other and with other monarchies' royal families, and their relations with regional and international countries. Such a discussion will provide a more comprehensive historical context of the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE The chapter covers the following sections: (1) historical relationship among the ruling families and its reflections on foreign policy actions, particularly in terms of how these historical ties have affected the alliance structure in the Gulf between the withdrawal of the UK from the Gulf to more contemporary crises in this sub-region in the post-Arab uprisings era; (2) ties with neighbouring countries and actors, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and the MB; (3) relations with countries beyond the Gulf region; and (4) trends in goals and tools in foreign policymaking in both countries.

2. Historical Ties of the Ruling Families in the Gulf

This section aims to discuss the influence of the ruling family ties in the Gulf, varying from territorial claims of certain ruling families over certain parts of the Gulf region referring to their rule in these lands in the history to long-standing marital alliances, on the relations of six GCC countries with each other, especially Qatar and the UAE. More specifically, it will set the background to better understand the impact of historical ruling family relations on the crises that emerged between the Gulf countries in the 2010s.

A quick look at the events unfolded in the near past can demonstrate the importance of such an investigation to better evaluate the dynamics in the region. After the British East Indian Company consolidated its presence in southern India and the seas hosting its trade routes, the security of this commercial mechanism became more of a concern due to piracy (Heard-Bey 1982; Bradshaw 2020). Dealing with these problems, having also established relationships with the countries and local rulers in the Persian Gulf which culminated in the foundation of the Persian Gulf Residency, the British government in India conducted naval expeditions to the Qawasim (plural of the Qasimi family) which they believed was responsible for the pirate attacks on the company's ships (Lawson 1983; Onley 2005; Onley 2009). The Qasimi family has been the rulers of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah. They eventually signed the 'anti-piracy' treaty with Britain in 1820 (Ahmadi 2017). But the pirate label stuck to them by the then-

protector British officials and in the historical narrative created tension in their ties with the UK and, in some cases, with the other families in the region.

This tension clearly manifested itself just before the UK's withdrawal from the region. Saqr bin Sultan al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah, was ousted from power through a coup orchestrated with British assistance when he was in Dubai for a meeting in 1965. His removal was largely due to his close ties with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser (Ghafoor and Mitchell 2022). Moreover, Ras al Khaimah's joining the UAE took place two months after the formation of the federation due to some concerns regarding the decision-making structure on the federal level (Bedirian 2024). The historical tension from the perspective of the al-Qasimi family towards the UK regarding how they labelled the Qawasim as a unity of pirates and how the history of the Gulf was written based on this premise in the UK afterwards featured explicitly in the book written by the ruler of Sharjah, Sultan Muhammed al-Qasimi in 1986. In this book, titled 'The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf', Sheikh Sultan challenges British history writing in the sense of how they instrumentalised the discourse of Arabs being pirates, mostly referring to the Qawasim, and curtailing trade in the Gulf and northern Indian Sea to justify their colonial activities in the region (al-Qasimi 1986).

This story demonstrates that a historical insight into the relationships between the ruling families in the Gulf is essential to better comprehend how they formulated their policies towards each other and also with actors beyond the Gulf in the recent era. What stands out most in the historical narrative of Qatar and the UAE is that both the ruling families in Qatar and the UAE found themselves entitled to determine their foreign policies following the expiration of the Persian Gulf Residency, or in other words, the withdrawal of the UK from the Gulf in 1971. The UK's withdrawal not only transferred the responsibility for managing external issues to the Al Thani, Al Nahyan and Al Maktoum families in Qatar and the UAE but also left them unable to benefit from the British security umbrella. The effect of the expiration of the Persian Gulf Residency on foreign policy relations among the Arab Gulf monarchies will be discussed in the following sections. It is mentioned here to set the background for the rest of the section, showing how the ruling families of these monarchies experienced changes over time in terms of their responsibilities in policymaking, particularly concerning foreign policy issues. These changes also included seeking alternative security alliances in the absence of the British security guarantee, first manifested by the rise of Saudi Arabia as a security

provider and the establishment of the GCC, and then followed by the US presence in the Persian Gulf after the Gulf War (Abbott 2020, Roberts 2023). The rest of the section aims to present these historical relationships in the context of Qatar and the UAE. It briefly deals with the different state structures of these countries, which is followed by an investigation of the impact of historical ties between the ruling families on the recent relationships in the Gulf. It concludes by mentioning the significance of royal marriages in the Gulf.

Both Qatar and the UAE are ruled by a royal family, even though the concentration of power in the central authority varies to some extent. This difference stems from the foundation of state structures that Qatar is a unitary state while the UAE is composed of seven emirates, constituting together a federal state. Moreover, the Al Thani family dominating Qatari politics with a high level of centralisation of power even differs from the other unitary monarchies, such as Kuwait, in which political participation is granted through the parliament that is unparallel to other Gulf monarchies (Roberts 2023). In the UAE, each ruling family retains a certain degree of sovereignty within their emirates, with each emirate maintaining its own domestic governing institutions. However, this does not alter the reality that Abu Dhabi, under the Al Nahyan family, has increasingly centralised politics, particularly in military and foreign policies, over the last decade (Ulrichsen 2017b; Roberts 2017; Worth 2020). Although not constitutionally mandated, the ruler of Abu Dhabi traditionally holds the position of President, while the Emir of Dubai assumes the role of Prime Minister, which demonstrates the de facto hierarchy among the emirates in the country.

This section's aim is to examine to what extent the historical relationship among the ruling dynasties in the Gulf influenced foreign policies of countries in the 2010s in the region. The Al Thani family's dominance, under the protection of the British Empire, on the Qatar Peninsula dates back to 1868 when the dynasty was founded with the title of 'Chief of Qatar' for Mohammed bin Thani, founder of the dynasty (Galeeva 2022). Prior to this, today's ruling family in Bahrain, the Al Khalifa dynasty, was the ruler of the peninsula. Al Thani family migrated to the region from Nejd in the 18th century (Szalai 2017; Al-Eshaq and Rasheed 2022). In other words, unlike others in the Arab Gulf, the Al Thani family was not in a position to utilise a historical discourse and claim to ground their rule (Al-Sharekh and Freer 2021).

The longstanding rivalry between the Al Thani and Al Khalifa families, which began in the 19th century, had lasting political ramifications, particularly in territorial disputes over islands and maritime boundaries that persisted even after the UK's withdrawal from the region. The disputes between Bahrain and Qatar mainly concentrated on the rights over the Hawar and Janan islands and shoals or territorial waters of al-Dibal, al-Jaradah and Zubarah and lasted for longer than a half-century until 2001, when it was resolved by the mediation of the International Court of Justice (Wiegand 2012). Along with the Al Khalifa dynasty, the Al Thani regime in Qatar faced challenges coming from other ruling dynasties in the region. These challenges included the invasion of Doha by Bahrain and the tribes in today's UAE in 1867, the territorial conflicts between Saudi Arabia and Qatar that remained during the 20th century with Saudi attempts to integrate some parts of Qatar in the 1930s and the border conflict between countries that resulted in the death of two Qataris in 1992 (Zahlan 1979; Okruhlik and Conge 1999; Davidson 2012; Miller 2018).

Royal marriages have historically served as a strategic nexus for alliances among dynasties in the Arab Gulf. Ramesh's article (2017) on the effects of disrupted marriage ties during the Gulf crisis in 2017 presents the significance of inter-family marriages among the ruling dynasties. Ramesh demonstrates that the crisis did not only stem from political issues but also personal issues that were related to relationships among Saudi, Emirati and Qatari ruling families. According to this analysis, Qatar's emirs until Hamad bin Khalifa got married to either a member of the Saud family or the Al Attiyah family with whom the Saud family has blood relations. However, this tradition was interrupted when Hamad bin Khalifa opted to keep his marriages within the Al Thani family with his first two wives. His third marriage was with the famous Sheikha Moza, whose father was not of royal descent. Additionally, Sheikh Ahmad, who was ousted from power by his cousin Sheikh Khalifa in 1972, afterwards resided in Dubai and married the daughter of Dubai Emir. The UAE has shown its side regarding the developments in the Al Thani family since then, most notably seen when Bahrain, UAE and Saudi Arabia attempted to depose Hamad bin Khalifa to replace him with his father again in 1996 (Dogan-Akkas 2021a).

In this context, the conflicts among the monarchies of the Persian Gulf can be examined under the concept of 'Royal Family Baggage' as described by El-Eshaq and Rasheed (2022). This term encapsulates the notion that the ruling families in this region, whose connections stretch back

nearly two centuries, have played a significant role in shaping the sub-regional dynamics of the 2010s. El-Eshaq and Rasheed (2022) specifically highlight how the legacy of the Kufoos crisis, a border clash between Qatar and Saudi Arabia resulting in the death of two Qatari and one Saudi in 1992, was integral to understanding the strained relations between Qatar and its neighbouring GCC countries, which culminated in the Gulf Crisis of June 2017. Consequently, other historical incidents stemming from conflicts between these ruling families must also be considered when exploring the historical dimensions of the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE. This broader examination will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how longstanding familial ties and rivalries have influenced political alignments and tensions within the Gulf region. Regarding the ties between Qatar and the UAE, the reflection of these family ties and rivalries can be observed in how these countries shaped their alliances within the GCC in the post-Arab uprisings period. It would be an overstatement to argue that the longstanding rivalry between the Al Khalifa and Al Thani families solely pushed Bahrain to ally with Saudi Arabia and the UAE against Qatar during the 2014 and 2017 Qatar crises. However, neglecting the historical and essentially territorial issues between the royal families of Qatar and Bahrain, or disregarding incidents like Sheikh Ahmad's residency in Dubai, which resulted in increasing voices from the UAE on matters concerning the Al Thani family and the Kufoos crisis, would prevent a complete understanding of the situation.

In conclusion, this section has presented the historical connections between the Gulf's ruling dynasties to better understand one aspect of the background of current interstate relations. The enduring enmity between the Al Khalifa and Al Thani families and their subsequent territorial disputes offer insights into their present-day interactions. It contributes to the investigations into how the GCC countries positioned themselves against each other after 2011, when the rift among them sharpened in terms of their reactions to the unfolding events and their support for specific groups in countries plunged into large-scale political crises or wars in the Arab world. Moreover, the traditional and sometimes disrupted marital alliances among the Al Thani, Al Saud, Al Nahyan, and Al Maktoum families provide an aspect for the diplomatic crises that emerged in the 2010s. The next section will further explore the historical ties between Qatar and the UAE with their neighbours, shedding light on the complexities of their relationships.

3. Relations with Neighbours in the Persian Gulf

The primary objective of this section is to unearth the historical underpinnings of Qatar and the UAE's foreign relations with their neighbours and with each other, focusing especially on Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. It will scrutinise pivotal regional occurrences such as the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, the Kufoos Incident, internal power struggles within Qatar, and the 2003 American invasion of Iraq. By analysing these events, the aim is to highlight shifts and consistencies in the relationship dynamics of the Gulf region and understand how historical events may have shaped present foreign policies in the 2010s.

The termination of the Persian Gulf Residency in December 1971 led the lately independent former protectorates to work on the formation of a federal structure to bring them all under a confederative system. These countries included today's seven emirates of the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain. While the seven emirates agreed to be part of the union and formed the United Arab Emirates in 1971, with Ras al Khaimah joining in 1972, Qatar and Bahrain opted to stay out of the union (Abbott 2020, Roberts 2023). After the withdrawal of the UK, Saudi Arabia emerged as the security provider for the small Arab Gulf countries in practice, even though there was no official agreement or document proving that (Wright 2011; Roberts 2012).

The relationship between Qatar and the UAE with Saudi Arabia can be delineated across two periods: from 1971 to 1991 and from 1991 to 2011. During the first period, Qatar actively sought to maintain positive relations with Saudi Arabia, leveraging Saudi influence as a buffer against external threats. Qatar's foreign policy was largely characterised by aligning with Saudi Arabia on key issues, a strategic choice often described as bandwagoning (Roberts 2016; Dogan-Akkas 2021b). The lack of significant border disputes during this time also facilitated the maintenance of strong bilateral relations. For example, Qatar was the only country that observed the forty days of mourning following the death of Saudi King Faisal in 1975 (Roberts 2016). The UAE, on the other hand, emerged with immediate territorial problems with its two biggest neighbours once first formed. It had border conflicts with Iran and Saudi Arabia that even made Saudis delay the recognition of the UAE for three years until 1974 officially (Rugh 1996).

As the 1970s drew to a close, a series of events prompted the Arab Gulf states to reassess their collective security. The Iranian Revolution in 1979 marked a dramatic shift from a pro-Western monarchy to an anti-Western, revolutionary Islamic Republic that challenged the status quo of monarchist rule in the region. That same year, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and its bolstering support for pro-Soviet governments in Yemen, Syria, and Libya heightened alarm among Gulf states. Further destabilising the region, the Iran-Iraq War, which many anticipated would be a swift Iraqi victory, descended into a protracted stalemate, compounding the perceived threat to Gulf security. In response to these converging crises, six Arab Gulf monarchies united to form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981, aiming to fortify their defence against the tumultuous regional landscape (Rizwi 1982).

The Iran-Iraq War was of particular concern to the UAE due to territorial disputes over Persian Gulf islands (Al-Alkim 1989). Initially, the UAE provided financial support to Iraq but later shifted its approach towards advocating for peace through diplomatic means (Rugh 1996). Sheikh Zayed endorsed a UN Security Council Resolution in 1987 that called for an end to the hostilities, and in the same year, he hosted Iran's foreign minister in Abu Dhabi to discuss the resolution's implementation. This diplomatic engagement positioned the UAE as a mediator when the Gulf Cooperation Council opened dialogue with Iran, reflecting the UAE’s increasingly conciliatory stance towards Iran (Ulrichsen 2016b).

The Tanker War, a subset of the broader Iran-Iraq conflict characterised by assaults on shipping in the Persian Gulf, prompted Qatar and the UAE to reconsider their reliance on Saudi Arabia for security. As the attacks threatened not just regional but also global economic interests, international powers like the US and the UK became increasingly concerned. This led the smaller Gulf states to recognise the need for a more robust security framework than Saudi Arabia could offer at the time. Consequently, they began to broaden their diplomatic engagements, particularly with the United States and European nations, seeking stronger security partnerships (Dargin 2007). This reassessment of security arrangements was further underscored by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which shattered any remaining perceptions of a Saudi security guarantee for the smaller Gulf states.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was a stark revelation for the smaller Gulf states, underscoring Saudi Arabia’s limitations as a regional protector (Dogan-Akkas 2021a; Roberts

2023). This realisation prompted a search for alternative security arrangements and foreign policy networks. In the 1990s, Qatar specifically began to redefine its foreign policy, particularly in relation to Saudi Arabia and its GCC neighbours, Bahrain and the UAE. This shift was partly due to the rising influence of the then-Crown Prince Hamad bin Khalifa, who, along with his young advisors, sought a foreign policy more independent from Saudi influence, in contrast to his father Sheikh Khalifa's strategy of alignment with Riyadh (Abu Sulaib 2017).

Another incident that also affected the young generation's mindset towards Saudi Arabia was the Kufoos Incident, where an aggressive clash took place between Saudi and Qatari forces over border issues that resulted in the deaths of two Qatari soldiers (Kamrava 2018). The border crisis continued throughout the 1990s until the demarcation of land boundary agreement was signed between Qatar and Saudi Arabia in 1999 (Seddiq 2001). Qatar even boycotted the GCC summits in 1993 and 1994 as a result of the tension between countries (Miller and Verhoeven 2020). The final shock in the 1990s to the ties between Qatar and Saudi Arabia was the bloodless coup by Hamad bin Khalifa and subsequent countercoup attempts to restore Sheikh Khalifa by allegedly Saudi Arabia and the UAE in 1995 and 1996 (Bianco 2020).

Another crisis emerged between Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the 2000s when Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic relations after the news aired on Al Jazeera that gave place to corruption and human rights abuses allegations in the Saudi royal family in 2002. The crisis lasted for six years until the diplomatic ties were restored in 2008. However, especially during this period, Saudi Arabia established its own news channel, Al Arabiya, as a direct competitor to Al Jazeera. Al Arabiya aimed to challenge Al Jazeera's narratives and provide an alternative perspective on regional events (Miller and Verhoeven 2020).

To conceptualise the evolution of the relationship between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, it is instructive to refer to the analysis by Keating and Abbott (2021), which explores the dynamics between these two countries. Drawing on history, the authors apply the concepts of entrusted norms and perceived betrayal to investigate the underlying reasons for the crises that erupted in 2014. In their study, Keating and Abbott examine various elements that seemingly positioned Qatar outside the established norms of the GCC structure. This includes a sequence of events and incidents predating 2011, such as the Kufoos incident, which marked the

beginning of Qatar's divergence from being a faithful ally to Saudi Arabia. They also discuss Hamad bin Khalifa's rise to power, the establishment of a US military base in Doha, the founding of Al Jazeera, which introduced a more vocal and public dimension to issues within the GCC countries, and Qatar's burgeoning relationships with the MB and Iran. Employing a social constructivist approach, Keating and Abbott analyse the deterioration of Qatar-Saudi relations through lenses of norms, betrayal, emotions, and social structures. Their work provides an understanding of the complexities behind the volatile relations and Saudi Arabia's responses to Qatar's actions, which were perceived as deviations from the entrusted GCC norms and a betrayal of the sub-regional social structure.

As Keating and Abbott also stated, one of the factors that affected Saudi-Qatar relations detrimentally was Qatar's positively increasing relations with Iran. In the 1990s, parallel to improving ties with the US, Israel, and European nations, which will be elaborated on in the next section, Qatar also notably enhanced its relationship with Iran (Guzansky 2015). Seeking to diversify its diplomatic connections, Qatar cultivated comparatively stronger links with Iran. Factors contributing to Doha's willingness to better ties with Iran included Qatar's demographic composition, which did not predispose it to sectarian conflicts, and the shared massive natural gas field with Iran in the Persian Gulf (Bianco 2020). The deepening dialogue led to additional agreements, such as a proposed plan to pipe water from Iran to Qatar (Roberts 2012). In the subsequent decade, the relations between Qatar and Iran continued to progress positively. Qatar opposed UN Security Council Resolution 1969, which called for sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program. It also took the unprecedented step of inviting Iran to the GCC Summit in 2007. High-level Qatari officials expressed their willingness to support mediation efforts between Iran and the US, aiming to find a viable solution to the nuclear dispute (Guzansky 2015).

Although the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent American intervention also prompted the UAE to look for different options to ensure its security against potential threats similar to Qatar, it did not necessarily deteriorate the Saudi-Emirati relationship. In addition to the US security umbrella for small Gulf states, another development was the UAE's active diplomatic endeavours to create an environment to resolve deepened problems in the region. Sheikh Zayed's vision of being able to talk to each conflicting country, especially in the Gulf region, manifested itself in many issues, including his attempts to mediate between Qatar and

Bahrain to conclude the conflict over the Hawar Islands in 1998 and his efforts to prevent the American intervention in Iraq in 2003 (Ulrichsen 2016b).

After the death of Sheikh Zayed, the young generation of the Emirati leadership sought for more aggressive policy trajectory. In other words, Sheikh Zayed's constructive, bilateral and mostly diplomatic methods of foreign policymaking were replaced with a more hawkish and militaristic approach to external issues with the advent of Khalifa bin Zayed as the President and MBZ as the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi (Kamrava 2018). Big investments were made in the military of the UAE by both importing advanced weaponry to procure its military and modernising the army by bringing military professionals outside (Krieg 2022). The new leadership brought a new perception regarding the threats in the region. As MBZ told former US ambassador to the UAE Richard Olson, the UAE had two enemies: terrorism and Iran (Roberts 2020). Terrorism mentioned here was mainly concerned with Islamist ideologies and groups, which prominently refers to the MB and affiliated groups.

The MB's presence and activities in both the Middle East and, more specifically, in the Gulf countries were perceived divergently by Qatar and the UAE. Its members' settlements in the Gulf countries began following the political rift between the Nasser government and the organisation in the 1950s. Primarily, they were welcomed in both Qatar and the UAE, considering their contributions to the state formation process after the independence of both countries, as well as their active roles in cultural and religious activities (Freer 2017; 2018). Furthermore, MB's Sunni ideology was seen as a counterforce against a potential expansion of Shia ideology after the revolution in Iran. However, as the Islah movement, the UAE's branch of the MB, gained social and political traction in the 1970s and 80s, the administration in Abu Dhabi grew wary of its political involvement. This led to a gradual crackdown on Islah, with measures including the closure of its offices in Abu Dhabi, the removal of members from the Ministry of Education, and confining its operations to Ras Al Khaimah (Alnogaidan, 2011). The stance hardened when MBZ became the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi in 2004. In 2004, MBZ articulated his stance on the MB, describing their conflict as a 'culture war' centred on differing interpretations of religion and politics (Forth 2020). This animosity towards the MB was later mirrored in Abu Dhabi's response to the Arab uprisings. The UAE firmly opposed the MB and its associated groups, taking a clear stand against them in the various conflicts that arose across the region (Roberts 2017).

Qatar, on the other hand, had long formed positive relations with the MB. In an attempt to diverge itself from Saudi Wahhabism, Qatar provided a platform for one of the leading figures of the organisation, Youssef Al-Qaradawi, allowing him to run a television programme on local and international channels of the country (Roberts 2023). Despite the allegedly voluntary dissolution of MB's local branch in 1999, the organisation never experienced a crackdown in Qatar as it did in the UAE and continued to get support from state institutions such as Al Jazeera (Freer 2018). This support remained during and after the Arab uprisings, manifesting in Qatar's alignment with the MB and affiliated groups in Syria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen (Roberts 2017).

In short, Qatar and the UAE experienced various changes in their ties with the neighbouring countries in the region during the period of 1971-2011. Several incidents impacted these alterations, including border disputes, the Iraq-Iran war, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Gulf War and the leadership changes. Qatar favoured a strong relationship with Saudi Arabia in the first half of this period by mostly following the Kingdom in almost all significant international subjects. However, the developments in the 1990s, as mentioned earlier in this section, altered this foreign policy trajectory, pushing Qatar to diversify its external network by forming strong relations with other actors in the region, most importantly with Iran. The UAE's ties with Saudi Arabia did not witness a significant change during this period, excluding changing security dynamics following the Gulf War. Despite the rooted border conflicts with Iran and the expansionist policies of Iraq, Sheikh Zayed's deliberate and constructive foreign policy approach allowed flourishing relations with both countries in the 1990s. Only the change in the Emirati leadership in 2004 brought a more militaristic and aggressive mindset to the decision-making process, which had ramifications in both the quick armament process and deteriorating ties with actors perceived as enemies like Iran and the MB. Having said that, a more holistic analysis of the changes and continuities in Qatari and Emirati foreign policies in this period requires an investigation of their relations with other significant actors such as the US, Europe, Asia and Israel, as will be discussed in the subsequent section.

4. Beyond the Gulf

Considering Qatar and the UAE's ties with actors beyond the Gulf, three main factors appear to be most influential: historical ties, security concerns, and economic expansion. Additionally,

the desire to exert more influence by utilising enormous natural gas and oil resources played a significant role during this period. Not far beyond the Gulf, the UK emerged as an influential country, actively present in the region since the 1820s, serving as the protector of the small Persian Gulf entities, including Qatar and the Trucial States, which are today's seven emirates of the UAE (Onley 2009; Fromherz 2012; Abbott 2020). After its 150-year presence in the Gulf, during which it served as the protector of these entities and managed their external affairs, the UK's decision to terminate the Persian Gulf Residency emerges as an intriguing topic for discussion. Particularly considering that the Persian Gulf's significance extends beyond its strategic importance to include vast reserves of oil and natural gas discovered in the 1900s, the UK's withdrawal from the region becomes an even more compelling point for analysis.

The reasons behind Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf, as part of a general withdrawal from east of Suez, have been attributed to different drivers by various scholars in the literature. For example, Sato (2016) stipulates five reasons that led to the UK's withdrawal from the region. In this sense, Britain's decision to withdraw from the Gulf was driven by a combination of economic, political, and strategic factors. Firstly, the financial strain of maintaining a military presence was substantial, particularly as Britain faced economic challenges domestically, prompting a reevaluation of overseas expenditures. Secondly, the geopolitical landscape was shifting, with rising nationalism within the Gulf states and changing dynamics of the Cold War, which rendered Britain's continued presence less tenable. Thirdly, there was significant domestic pressure from both the public and politicians to reduce imperialistic endeavours and focus on domestic priorities. This was part of a broader reassessment of Britain's global strategy, which was increasingly focused on aligning with NATO and prioritising interests in Europe over colonial holdings. Lastly, the Gulf states themselves were pursuing greater, particularly financial, independence and development, fueled by burgeoning oil revenues that enabled them to assert more control over their affairs and governance, diminishing their reliance on British oversight. Similarly, Roberts (2014) noted that the decision for Britain to withdraw from the Gulf was driven by several factors: the global shift towards decolonisation, highlighted by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's 1960 "winds of change" speech; a strategic pivot towards prioritising nuclear deterrence and European security during the Cold War; and Britain's challenging economic situation, which prioritised domestic financial stability over

maintaining distant imperial outposts, despite the strategic importance of the Gulf's oil resources.

After its withdrawal, the UK signed the 'Treaties of Friendship' with the Gulf countries, in which it fully recognised Qatar's and the UAE's independence in domestic and foreign affairs and expressed its support for consolidating the powers of the rulers of both countries (Arabian Gulf Digital Archives 1971). However, in the following decades, the UK could not maintain its position as the most influential foreign actor in the Gulf, economically, as the main importer; diplomatically, as the peacemaker or mediator; or militarily, as a security provider or key military equipment exporter (Kelly and Stansfield 2013; Smith 2022; Smith 2024).

The economic boom in the Gulf, thanks to developing drilling technologies and the rise of oil prices after the OPEC crises in the 1970s, coincided with a crisis in the British economy. Towards the end of the century, Japan replaced the UK as the top importer in the Gulf (Smith 2024). Additionally, France entered the military equipment market in the Gulf and signed armament sale agreements with the Gulf countries in the same period, while the UAE's air force command was passed from the (British) Royal Air Force to the Pakistan Air Force (Roberts 2014, Smith 2024). Diplomatically, when the UAE and Saudi Arabia encountered a border conflict following the British withdrawal, they opted for potential regional mediators such as Qatar instead of calling upon the UK as they had done previously (Smith 2024). Similarly, as discussed in the previous section, the role of security provider first passed to Saudi Arabia, especially after the formation of the GCC in 1981, and then to the US after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 (Dogan-Akkas 2021a; Roberts 2023).

Despite all, it would be totally wrong to argue that the UK's effect in Qatar and the UAE completely disappeared after its withdrawal. In 1996, the UK and the UAE signed a Defence Cooperation Accord, which 'represents Britain's largest defence commitment outside NATO' (Kelly and Stansfield 2013). Moreover, the British effect on these two countries could be seen in other areas. Most strikingly, two rulers of Qatar and the UAE, Tamim bin Hamad (and his father Hamad bin Khalifa) and MBZ, received education at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. But still, it does not change the fact, in the overall sense, the US has risen as the most influential country in the Gulf, particularly as a security provider.

Even though both Qatar and the UAE had relatively stable and uneventful relations with the US before the late 1980s, which was also carrying resentments due to the US support for Israel, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the intervention of the US altered this paradigm with the active involvement of the US in the Gulf region. While the security structure was changing in the 1990s, Qatar signed military agreements with the US, proposing the construction of a US military base in Doha in 1996. Hosting the largest US military base in the region, Al-Udeid, which then became the running centre for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11, enhanced the partnership between these two countries in the following decades (Roberts 2012). It was also accompanied by further agreements of defence cooperation and the purchase of military equipment (Nuruzzaman 2015).

What added more to improving ties between Qatar and the US was Qatar's attempt to start an engagement with Israel, initially forming financial relations. As a component of Qatar's foreign policy in the 1990s that aimed at diversifying its partnerships by establishing ties with various regional and international actors, Qatar engaged in talks with Tel Aviv to open a trade office in Doha and discuss the feasibility of selling the Qatari gas to Israel. Though falling short of official recognition, these actions positioned Qatar as the first GCC country to grant Israel de facto recognition (Robert 2012; Kamrava 2018). The trade office, which operated until its closure in 2008 due to the Gaza War, was the only Israeli economic mission in the Gulf during its time (Khatib 2013). Qatar also extended an invitation to Israel to attend the MENA Economic Forum in Doha in 1997, despite facing pressure from other participating countries (Miller and Verhoeven 2020).

Similarly, the UAE began solidifying its defence collaboration with the United States in 1994, signing a series of cooperation agreements. These included allowing the US military to utilise Al-Dhafra Air Base and granting US warships access to Jebel Ali port. Aiming to cultivate a professional and well-equipped military, the UAE's strategic partnership with the US expanded over the years. Consequently, the UAE became one of the most engaged Gulf countries in supporting US military operations, participating in missions in Afghanistan, Somalia, Kosovo, and the first Gulf War. Despite this alliance, the UAE opposed the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, actively seeking to prevent the intervention (Ulrichsen 2017b). Furthermore, following Sheikh Zayed's death in 2004, the UAE's growing concern regarding Iran aligned closely with US policy, further reinforcing ties between the two countries in the 2000s.

For these two small countries, the security guarantee of the US provided a broader sphere to manoeuvre or to move their policies from being solely followers of bigger neighbouring countries to intensifying their foreign policy presences in different sectors and regions. The other needed component to realise this potential was resources to fuel these desires, regarding which it would not be an exaggeration to express that Qatar and the UAE were two of the most fortunate countries in the world. The oil and natural gas resources at their disposal were intertwined with the rising prices and technological developments to facilitate production and transportation in the 1990s and 2000s. Boosting production and enlargement of diplomatic relations led them to establish trade relations with various countries from Europe to East Asia. According to the 2021 figures, Qatar's biggest export markets are China, Japan, India, South Korea and Singapore, thanks to the usage of liquified natural gas (LNG) (World Bank 2021). Western and Asian countries, such as China, the United States, India, Germany and the UK, are also the biggest exports to Qatar. These figures, even though they were collected right after the Gulf Crisis, that started in 2017 and led almost all neighbouring countries to cut their ties with Qatar, demonstrate the diversification of Qatar's economic ties. The figures for the UAE show a similar paradigm with the exception of regional countries like Saudi Arabia and Iraq being in the list of biggest trade partners of the UAE (World Bank 2021).

The expansion of the Qatari and Emirati diplomatic and economic relations with the countries beyond the Gulf was not limited to natural resources trade but also contained investments by the sovereign funds in multiple sectors ranging from international ports to national banks, as will be discussed in the next section. In this context, the following part will exhibit the general trajectory of the Qatari and Emirati foreign policies, concentrating on the main foreign policy tools employed to achieve the ambitions between 1971 and 2011.

5. Goals and Tools in Foreign Policy

The preceding sections have mapped the evolution of Qatar and the UAE's foreign relations, tracing their inter-state dynamics and their broader interactions with regional and global powers. This analysis reveals that a series of events and developments have been instrumental in shaping their foreign policy strategies and actions up to the onset of the Arab uprisings. These determinants include royal family rivalries, territorial disputes, the Soviet-Afghan War, the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the subsequent Gulf

War, the establishment of a US security presence, transformative leadership changes, the fluctuation of oil and natural gas prices, advancements in resource extraction and transportation technologies, and the US military campaigns in Iraq. The present section will delve into the foreign policy formation of Qatar and the UAE in the period leading up to the Arab uprisings, with an emphasis on the objectives pursued and the tools deployed to achieve them.

In their formative years, the tension rising in the surrounding areas compelled Qatar and the UAE to shape their foreign relations primarily around security needs, responding to various regional and international events. These events included the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the revolution in Iran and the Iraq-Iran war. Initially, aligning with Saudi Arabia was seen as a strategic move to ensure protection. However, the perceived decline in Saudi Arabia's capacity to provide security, coupled with the US's expanded military involvement in the Gulf post the Kuwait invasion, prompted a shift in the security paradigm of the region.

The reshaped security landscape following the Gulf War led to a realignment under the US security umbrella, characterised by the hosting of American forces. This, however, was just one facet of the broader security strategies adopted by Qatar and the UAE. Post-1995, under the leadership of Hamad bin Khalifa, Qatar pursued a distinct diplomatic approach, forging relationships with a wide spectrum of countries irrespective of their interrelations. This hedging strategy saw Qatar bolstering ties simultaneously with nations in differing security blocs, notably both Iran and the US-Israel axis, within the same timeframe of the 1990s (Kamrava 2017). Such a policy afforded Qatar the flexibility to engage with various actors across potential divides, allowing it to tailor its foreign policy dynamically and avoid being confined within a single geopolitical camp. This pragmatic approach facilitated Qatar's evolution into a proactive international player, unafraid to undertake additional diplomatic roles, including that of mediator, a subject that will be further explored in this section.

In tandem with establishing closer ties to the US, the UAE embarked on a comprehensive military build-up to enhance its armed forces. This initiative aligned with MBZ's vision, which became prominent when he was appointed chief of staff in 1992 and solidified with his rise to the role of principal decision-maker after Sheikh Zayed's passing in 2004 (Roberts 2020). The UAE made significant strides in military modernisation, ramping up procurement of advanced

equipment, recruiting experienced military personnel from Western nations, and engaging in numerous military operations (Mason 2018; Krieg 2021b). These deliberate steps in military enhancement and active participation in regional security operations led to the UAE being nicknamed ‘Little Sparta’, a testament to its military ambitions (Chandrasekaran 2014; Economist 2017).

Qatar and the UAE leveraged their security alignments to extend their influence, transitioning from peripheral states to proactive regional and global actors, an evolution often described as 'punching above their weight' (Ford 2004; Hiltermann 2017; Dorsey 2020). In this sense, buying prestigious football clubs in Europe or allocating a huge amount of financial power to fund their worldwide airway companies were examples demonstrating the attempts of Qatar and the UAE to improve their prestige in the international arena. However, despite these similar attempts, they differed from each other to some extent in terms of the instruments they used. In their attempts to become regional players, Qatar mostly employed soft power instruments such as acting as an active mediator in the region (Kamrava 2011) or employing Al-Jazeera as a foreign policy tool, while the UAE sought to enjoy its larger economic opportunities thanks to its economic free zone which is the largest in the region to become the economic centre of the Middle East (Miller and Verhoeven 2020).

Article 7 of Qatar’s 2003 Constitution underscores its commitment to 'strengthening international peace and security by encouraging peaceful resolution of international disputes' (Government Communication Office, Qatar). This principle guided Qatar’s intensified mediation efforts in the 2000s, especially after its tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council starting in 2006. Qatar's mediation achievements during this period include facilitating dialogue between the government of Yemen and the Houthis, the Lebanese government and Hezbollah, the Sudanese government and Darfurian rebels, and Djibouti and Eritrea (Ulrichsen 2013; Barakat 2014). These efforts, as Kamrava (2011) notes, were part of a broader state branding initiative to position Qatar as a key peacemaker and a diplomatic powerhouse in the region. The UAE, meanwhile, pursued a different form of state branding through its extensive foreign humanitarian aid. Within just eight years of its formation, the UAE's aid donations amounted to ten percent of its GDP, making it the world’s third-largest donor by this measure as of 2011 (Al Mezaini 2012). Such contributions played a significant role in shaping the UAE’s image as a leading humanitarian benefactor globally.

The launch of Al Jazeera in 1996 significantly advanced Qatar's state branding, propelling the nation onto the global stage through bold and often controversial broadcasting. Notably, Al Jazeera aired statements from Osama bin Laden after the September 11 attacks and provided extensive coverage of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, thereby gaining not just regional, but international prominence (Seib 2008). However, its willingness to tackle contentious issues caused tension with not only neighbouring Arab states but also Western powers like the US and the UK. For instance, the channel's reporting on alleged corruption within the Saudi royal family in 2002 led Saudi Arabia to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar. Further controversy ensued as Al Jazeera's journalists were at times accused of espionage by the US and UK, particularly due to their reporting during the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq (Miles 2005). Although generating international crises with multiple countries over time, Al Jazeera's success in reaching a global audience thanks to its popular and controversial news and coverage, eventually including its broadcastings during the Arab uprisings, and also the following enlargement airing in different languages served Qatar's goal to increase the country's visibility on the global arena unquestionably.

The sovereign wealth funds of Qatar and the UAE, particularly the Qatar Investment Authority and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, played a pivotal role in their state branding strategies through high-profile global investments. Their forays included acquisitions of top-tier European football clubs, stakes in major international brands and banks, and prominent real estate holdings in major global cities (Raphaeli and Gersten 2008; Bahgat 2010; Young 2020). A telling example of the UAE's rising profile through such investments is the statement by Boris Johnson, the former Mayor of London, who quipped that he was the 'mayor of the eighth emirate' in light of the substantial Emirati investment presence in the city (Kerr 2013).

To conclude, building on the US security umbrella, both Qatar and the UAE pursued additional policies to protect themselves from potential threats. While Qatar resorted to a hedging policy by establishing ties with different actors from different security alignments, the UAE allocated a huge resource to build its own well-equipped and well-trained armed forces. Beyond security considerations, these countries stepped into the world arena by conducting state branding activities. The instruments they employed aligned and differed in changing contexts. They both instrumentalised enormous resources of their own sovereign welfare funds to invest in various sectors and countries. In addition to that, Qatar assumed a regional mediator

role in participating in several crises as a diplomatic broker and leveraged its media power through Al Jazeera to contribute to its state branding endeavours. The UAE, on the other hand, shaped its main policy around presenting itself as a financial hub in the region thanks to the rise of its cities, Abu Dhabi and Dubai and its economic free zone. Together, these strategies underscored both countries' ascent to prominence beyond their geographical confines.

6. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies, from their founding in 1971 to the Arab uprisings in 2011. The main purpose of having this chapter was to lay the ground for making sense of the foreign policy behaviours of Qatar and the UAE after 2011 by investigating the roots of their relations with each other and other international actors such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and the UK and the US. In other words, this chapter covered the ties with countries that were influential on foreign policy behaviours in the post-Arab uprisings period. In addition, as discussed in the last section, this chapter laid out the two countries' similarities and differences in foreign policy goals and tools before the period under study in this research, in light of the research question of this thesis.

The essential findings of this chapter can be summarised as follows. First, the royal families of the Arab Gulf monarchies have long-standing relationships with each other, fostering both rivalries and alliances. The Al Thani family of Qatar and the Al Khalifa family of Bahrain have experienced a prolonged rivalry, primarily due to territorial disputes. Simultaneously, the Al Thani family maintained strong ties with the Al Saud family through royal marriages. However, Emir Hamad bin Khalifa did not follow this unwritten tradition in his marriages during the fluctuating times of Saudi-Qatar relations in the 1990s. In their foreign policies, following the expiration of the Persian Gulf Residency, Saudi Arabia emerged as the region's security provider, replacing the UK. The post-Gulf War period saw the US significantly enhance its presence in the Persian Gulf, taking over the security guarantor role from Saudi Arabia. Although Riyadh lost its prominence as the primary security provider for its smaller GCC allies, its importance remained intact as the largest GCC country. Lastly, considering their foreign policy goals and tools, Qatar favoured a hedging diplomacy, while the UAE increased its military spending to develop a well-trained army. Both countries allocated substantial resources for state-branding activities. Additionally, Qatar employed soft power tools, such as

mediating conflicts mainly in the region and establishing Al Jazeera, the most influential media organisation in the Arab world. The UAE leveraged its economic wealth to create the largest economic free zone in the region in Dubai, as well as becoming the financial hub of the Middle East.

Considering, together with the theory that will be employed in this research, namely role theory, this historical account provides a comprehensive background not only for the roles that were assumed by Qatar and the UAE prior to the 2011 uprisings but also for the various countries that played influential roles in Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policymaking processes, including, but not limited to, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United States. As will be elaborated in the following chapters, these countries will be included in this research as potential socialisers to ascertain whether they had any significant impact on the roles undertaken and practised by Qatar and the UAE in the cases being analysed herein. In doing so, this chapter's findings on Qatar and the UAE's ties with these external powers set the context to better understand the socialisation sections in the empirical chapters. Moreover, the comparative analysis chapter will integrate this historical analysis with the subsequent three empirical chapters to provide a comprehensive insight into the reasons why Qatar and the UAE pursued divergent foreign policies in the post-2011 period. This combination will also help to better understand the extent to which the legacy of history influenced this divergence, thereby offering a perspective on the complex interplay between historical legacies and contemporary foreign policy decisions.

This historical context chapter plays a significant role in this thesis to see whether Qatar and the UAE had already differed from each other even before the uprisings and positioned themselves in different alignments as they did in the 2010s. Concerning this question, even though this chapter demonstrated some origins of the contesting approaches between Qatar and the UAE towards, for instance, Iran and the MB, it still needs an analysis of why and how these factors pushed them to play active roles in the unfolding events after uprisings and strictly positioned themselves in the camps of different conflicting parties. The following chapter will try to lay down how such an analysis can be conducted with a theoretical and methodological discussion.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY: ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS AND ROLE THEORY

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. Introduction

This chapter establishes a theoretical framework to determine the most suitable approach for addressing the question of why Qatar and the UAE carved out divergent and even opposing foreign policies between 2011 and 2021. It begins by engaging with a range of theoretical perspectives that are either prominent in the field of international relations, such as structural realism and constructivism, or commonly used to examine Middle East politics, such as omni-balancing theory. Following a critical examination of these theories and their applicability to the research questions, the chapter introduces role theory[1]. It argues that role theory offers a solid foundation for this study, providing a wealth of conceptual tools and, as the subsequent chapter will discuss, methodological resources. The chapter concludes by highlighting the potential contributions of this study to both the areas of foreign policy analysis and Middle East/Gulf politics.

1.2. Alternative Explanations

Chapter 1 reviewed the literature on Qatar and the UAE's foreign policies, encompassing studies that either analyse these countries individually or compare them. These works explore various aspects of their foreign policies across different periods. For a more structured analysis, categorised by their primary focus, it can be noted that one group of studies concentrates on Qatar's use of its soft power capabilities, such as Al Jazeera and the Qatar Investment Authority. These tools are employed in Qatar's foreign policy not only to ensure its security but also to enhance its regional and international status, going beyond mere security concerns (Kamrava 2011, 2017; Nuruzzaman 2015; Soubrier 2017; Miller and Verhoeven 2020).

[1] Role theory is more of a theoretical framework than an actual theory, however, it will be referred to as a 'theory' in this study due to its common usage in the literature (Kaarbo 2019).

In contrast, the central argument regarding the UAE is that its foreign policy has been heavily security-oriented, characterised by increased military investments and acquisitions. In doing so, the UAE aims to counter the perceived threats from the rise of political Islam, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, Iran's growing influence in the region (notably in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen), and Turkey's expansionist policies, especially since the onset of the Arab uprisings (Ragab 2017; Soubrier 2017; Mason 2018; Roberts 2020).

Additionally, Roberts (2017) suggests that to understand the divergent approaches of Qatar and the UAE towards the Muslim Brotherhood, one must examine the domestic politics and structures of these countries. Chapter 1 has already discussed the elements of these existing analyses that could be utilised in this thesis, alongside some critiques. In summary, these studies highlight the importance of focusing on Qatar's soft power and the UAE's hard power-oriented foreign policy approaches. Moreover, Roberts' analysis underscores the significance of domestic politics in explaining their differing foreign policies. Building on these discussions, this section will explore whether and how existing theories in the field of international relations can be applied to understand the differing foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE in the post-Arab uprisings era.

Since the research question of this thesis challenges the main premises of structural realism regarding foreign policies of countries, the primary theory to discuss here is structural realism, also known as neorealism. One of the earliest applications of an IR theory to Middle Eastern politics was undertaken by Stephen Walt using structural realism. In his systemic analysis of the region's politics, in which he modifies this approach by including perceived threats as a central variable, Walt (1987) emphasises the overarching importance of structural factors. He concludes that the primary driver of relations, especially alliances, among Middle Eastern states echoes trends in other regions: states aim to counterbalance perceived threats. Walt further posits that, when determining alignments, security considerations typically outweigh ideological or domestic factors (5; 216-7). Building on Walt's framework, several scholars have adopted the structural realist perspective in their analysis of Middle Eastern politics: Gause (1999) and Hansen (2000) link global structural shifts, rooted in the changing polarity of world politics, to the regional and domestic developments in the Middle East. They examine the recalibration of security considerations by countries in the region in response to the emergence of a unipolar global system subsequent to the Cold War. Lai (2001) analyses the

Middle East system by employing a systemic approach concentrating on the impact of the distribution of power and friend-foe alignments on military conflict. Addressing the democratic backsliding in the Arab world following the uprisings, Coetzee (2013) challenges the premises of the democratic peace theory and suggests that the explanatory power of structural realism focusing on great power politics, polarity in international politics and relative power capabilities still prevails.

A pivotal aspect of structural realism concerning this research pertains to its chosen level of analysis for elucidating international politics. In his foundational work, Waltz positions his theory as systemic, contrasting it with theories integrating unit-level variables, like liberalism, which he terms 'reductionist' (Waltz, 1979). He underscores that his theory primarily seeks to illuminate overarching patterns in international politics rather than delving into specific foreign policy decisions of individual states (Waltz 1979: 121; Waltz 1996). This demarcation between international relations and foreign policy analysis has sparked considerable debate among scholars. For example, Elman (1996) contends that Waltz and fellow structural realists occasionally venture into explaining specific foreign policy actions, as evident in his renowned discourse with Waltz about the distinction between International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis. Furthermore, Kaarbo (2015) highlights that eminent figures in the field, like J. Mearsheimer, view their method as both a theory of state foreign policy and a broader theory of international political outcomes (195).

The question of whether the structural realist framework, which views states as rational unitary actors pursuing their interests and acting based on their relative material powers, which in turn shape their threat perceptions in international affairs, is suited to address this thesis's research questions can be assessed by examining structural constraints affecting the foreign policies of the countries studied here. Although this thesis does not aim to discuss alliance formations, the structural realist account of how countries form alliances in making foreign policy can be provided here as an example to illustrate their structure-based approach. Concerning alliance formation, which is considered one of the essential considerations in foreign policymaking from the structural realist perspective, structural realism anticipates two primary behaviours from states: balancing and bandwagoning (Waltz 1979, 125-6; Walt 1987). The circumstances prompting nations towards either behaviour are shaped by structural dynamics. Waltz contends, “Whether political actors balance each other or climb on the

bandwagon depends on the system's structure" (Waltz 1979, 125). Walt underscores the pivotal role of systemic elements in determining states' alliance-forming behaviours, factoring in the aggregate power, offensive power, and aggressive intents of the threatening nation, along with the targeted state's strength, threat proximity, and availability of potential allies (22-33). Again, this viewpoint suggests that nations are likely to exhibit similar behaviours in alliance formation under similar systemic conditions. Certain structural scenarios prompt bandwagoning, while others induce balancing.

However, this research questions why two countries, constrained by similar structural factors, pursued different foreign policies over a specific period. Besides the similarities noted in the introduction chapter, Qatar and the UAE are geographically more distant from the region's chronic conflict zones, namely, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, compared to other Gulf monarchies. Given these resemblances, especially in terms of geographic proximity, both countries also possess similar alternative alliance opportunities. Thus, contrary to this core premise of structural realism, the Qatar-UAE case demonstrates that similar constraints do not necessarily lead to similar behaviours. This highlights the need to include the other two dimensions (state and individuals) in the analysis as key variables. Exploring these internal factors will offer a foundation to challenge the two additional premises of structural realism that states are (1) rational actors whose actions are (2) chiefly driven by the goal of achieving their national interests.

Moreover, this research aims to analyse two countries' foreign policies traditionally classified as small powers, given their sizes, populations, and relative material capacities. In this context, structural realism presents itself as a theory centred on great powers. Waltz (1979, 72) asserts, "The theory, like the story, of international politics is written in terms of the great powers of an era." Similarly, Mearsheimer (2001, 3) defines the primary research question of his book as, "Why do great powers behave this way (aiming for hegemony)?" He seeks to explain the tragedy of "great power politics." The active foreign policies of these two states and their increasing effect on the politics of the Middle East require this study to go beyond the central assumption of the realist paradigm, ascribing passive and dependent roles to small powers in regional and international politics.

Resulting from debates within the International Relations (IR) discipline about incorporating domestic factors into analyses, the 1990s saw the rise of a new strain in realist school. In this context, Rose (1998) underscored the advent of neoclassical realism, a term he coined. From the perspective of neoclassical realism, the international system is considered the primary variable, while unit-level factors, such as leader image, state-society relations or domestic institutions, act as intermediary variables. Neoclassical realism emphasises the need to explore how domestic agents mediate systemic signals when studying states' foreign policy behaviours.

Employing neoclassical realism, various studies have explored the foreign policy attitudes of Middle Eastern countries. Juneau (2015) analyses the reasons and consequences of Iran's 'suboptimal' foreign policy from 2001-2009, focusing on systemic pressures and domestic drivers such as identity, factional politics, and status. Sahin (2020) offers an approach to examining the changes in Turkey's alignment choices since the end of the Cold War, highlighting the external and internal alterations. Coskun (2023) conducts a historical analysis of Turkey’s foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean, engaging with the literature on neoclassical realism and the concept of middle powers. Ma and Min (2022) use a neoclassical realist framework to elucidate the reasons behind the 2021 rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, highlighting the international, regional, domestic, and leadership-driven factors that led to the resolution of the Gulf Crisis.

Regarding the suitability of employing neoclassical realism to address the primary research questions of this thesis, it can be initially stated that neoclassical realism proves to be a remarkable step in the way of providing a comprehensive ground to investigate foreign policy moves of states within the realist paradigm thanks to the incorporation of domestic factors. However, since neoclassical realism considers the structure as the primary variable and relegates domestic factors to the role of intermediary variables, merely filtering signals from the structure, its theoretical framework does not seem to provide a favourable ground for this research. This study aims to put more emphasis on the domestic factors of Qatar and the UAE, given that both states received similar structural signals during the specified periods.

The neoclassical realist view positions ‘systemic stimuli’ as the independent variable. Rose (1998), who coined the term "neoclassical realism," argues that one should first focus on the

international structure when examining a country's foreign policy. In other words, this theoretical framework places primary emphasis on the effect of the international structure on foreign policy decisions. For example, Ma and Min (2022) identify the international structure as the independent variable that predominantly shapes the foreign policy actions of Saudi Arabia and Qatar during their reconciliation process, which began in 2021. Similarly, Juneau (2024) highlights the importance of the structure itself—defined as 'Saudi Arabia's place in the international distribution of power'—when analysing Riyadh's decision to wage war in Yemen. However, this research seeks to address the differences in the foreign policies of two countries experiencing similar structural conditions during the same period. Unlike the neoclassical realist approach, this study needs to focus on factors beyond structural dynamics and stimuli. As Roberts (2017) notes, paying close attention to domestic factors is essential for understanding the divergent foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE.

Additionally, the way neoclassical realism integrates domestic factors has faced criticism for its lack of clarity regarding which factors are selected and the rationale behind their inclusion. In essence, critics argue that the inclusion of domestic factors in neoclassical realism often appears arbitrary (Kaarbo 2015; Narizny 2017). This arbitrary selection of domestic factors also raises another criticism that under what conditions some domestic factors matter more than others. In this context, Wivel (2005) concludes that the hierarchy established between the internal dynamics and their influence on foreign policymaking appears to be identified in an ad hoc manner. To sum up, while neoclassical realism provides an extensive framework for foreign policy analysis within the realist paradigm, its downplaying approach to domestic factors in relation to systemic signals seems to miss addressing the questions of this study.

Another theoretical perspective in the IR of the Middle East literature is the omni-balancing theory. David (1991) presents the omni-balancing theory as a critique of structural realism's core premises that accept the balance of power or balance of threat as the central motivations of alliance-building. David introduces this approach as a tool to understand the logic of alignment in the "third world". Modifying the balance of threat perspective, David asserts that the third world leaders seek primarily to balance the external and internal threats to survive in power. In other words, the omni-balancing theory departs from the core presupposition of structural realism by incorporating internal factors into the analysis and taking leaders and regimes as the main units or actors in international politics. At its core, it appears David has

drawn inspiration from Putnam's (1988) two-level game theory, adapting it to elucidate the balancing actions of third-world countries in response to threats they face.

Some studies use the omni-balancing approach in the politics of Middle East scholarship to shed light on the balancing behaviours in the region. Gause (2003) employs this theory by compounding transnational political identity factors with the central premises of the realist paradigm about anarchy, the primacy of security concerns and the centrality of states in order to explicate the threat perceptions and alliance choices of states in the Middle East. Similarly, Ryan (2009) investigates the domestic and structural factors behind Jordan's alliance choices during the terms of King Hussein and King Abdullah II. Bringing the omni-balancing theory to the politics of the Gulf, Colombo (2017) accounts for the divergent policies of Oman and Saudi Arabia in the Yemeni and Syrian conflicts. Contributing to the theory by including the concept of "swing state" in the discussion to describe flexible Omani foreign policy, Colombo concludes that Omani and Saudi foreign policies in these two conflicts were mainly shaped by their efforts to balance internal and external threats to ensure the safety of their regimes.

Like neoclassical realism, the omni-balancing theory modifies structural realism by integrating sub-systemic and ideational elements, significantly augmenting its explanatory capacity. However, two considerations arise regarding the theory's relevance to this thesis and its ability to address the research questions. First, Darwich and Kaarbo (2020, 231) observe that the omni-balancing theory equates leaders with regimes, overlooking the distinctiveness of leaders as individual actors possessing unique beliefs, ideas, and approaches to foreign policy formulation. Moreover, in relation to this study's inquiry about potential inter-emirate disagreements in the UAE's decision-making, the omni-balancing perspective perceives Dubai or the smaller northern Emirates as potential threats that require balancing from Abu Dhabi's perspective, rather than recognizing them as integral components of the foreign policy mechanism.

Second, since the omni-balancing theory inherently focuses on threat perceptions and alliance choices, its conceptual tools are primarily tailored to discern the roots of alliances driven by countries' perceived threats. Although these perceptions may significantly influence the foreign policy behaviours of both Qatar and the UAE, given their location in a volatile region, they cannot account for, for example, both of them prominently led Arab countries in

joining with NATO forces in Libya, a country or region that does not present a notable threat to either. The theory also struggles to account for their increasing state-branding initiatives when viewed through the lens of alliance decisions centred on threat perceptions. This thesis seeks an approach that offers a broader conceptual framework, allowing exploration beyond threat-centric viewpoints while still recognising the vital role of security considerations.

Finally, the constructivist approach can be discussed here as to whether it can enable a theoretical framework to address the research questions of this study. The insightful account of constructivism, at least one part of the constructivist literature (see Kaarbo 2015: 199), for the influence of agency on foreign policymaking and the role played by social factors such as identity, culture or norm provides a theoretical ground for going beyond the main assumptions of structural realism against which the main research question of this thesis is structured. Furthermore, its account of how agents and structure interact in relation to foreign policymaking offers the opportunity to incorporate the impact of both actors and constructed values, such as norms, into the analysis.

The constructivist approach delineates key topics and concepts that are well-suited for a comparative analysis of various actors, both domestic and international, as is the aim of this study. The relevance of this approach is particularly evident in the scholarly examination of the Middle East. For instance, the anthology edited by Telhami and Barnett (2002) delves into the interplay between identity and foreign policymaking within this region. This book endeavours to elucidate the foundational identities upon which the Middle East regional system is predicated and operates, offering insights into the regional framework as well as the individual nations that comprise it. Similarly, Jentleson and Kaye (1998) critique the adequacy of realist explanations for regional security cooperation in the Middle East, pointing out their failure to account for alternative subjective conditions. They explore these shortcomings with a focus on the notion of status, particularly examining Egypt's response to the evolving regional security landscape in the aftermath of the Gulf War. Additionally, Barnett (1998) and Abid-Moghaddam (2006) concentrate on the importance of norms and discourses. Their analyses highlight the transformative potential of regional dynamics in the Middle East, underscoring the significant influence of shared norms and cultural elements intrinsic to the regional structure. This, in turn, informs and shapes the foreign policy postures of Middle Eastern countries, especially those in the Arab world.

Beyond focusing solely on the self-perceptions of agency, the constructivist approach explores the interaction between agency and structure through the concept of socialisation. This exploration includes the influential roles of international institutions in the creation and dissemination of norms to their members (Finnemore 1993). The socialisation process encompasses not only the promotion of new international norms but also the integration of relevant members into these emerging norms (Finnemore & Sikkink 2001). This interaction typically involves a socialiser, often an international entity, engaging with a pertinent actor (Checkel 2005). This process consists of persuasion by norm leaders to institutionalise the norms to be internalised by the relevant agents (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). The relevant agents engage with the values of this international environment under the consideration of both rational and material factors (Schimmelfennig, 2005) and social motives, including being involved and positively valued within the group (Flockhart 2004). The constructivist account of the concept of socialisation holds the potential to dissect how the interaction between the international institutions and dominant regional and international actors and states like Qatar and the UAE influenced the foreign policymaking of these countries. Put more concretely, it can illuminate the effects of established or newly introduced norms and values by entities such as the GCC or norm providers like Saudi Arabia and the United States on the behaviours of Qatar and the UAE in the context of the civil wars under study.

The constructivist approach, with its comprehensive focus on both the agent through concepts like identity, norms, and values, as well as the interaction between the agent and structure facilitated by socialisation, holds promise for providing a theoretical framework that can address the research questions of this study. Role theory, being the framework used in this research, has a strong affinity with constructivism, although they differ from each other in terms of their understandings and operationalisations of the central concepts such as identity and norms (Breuning 2011, Wehner and Thies 2014). As will be discussed in the following section, the concepts and tools produced within the constructivist school will be employed in this research with a role theoretical lens. Nevertheless, the following two points demonstrate that this study needs more than the identity-based theoretical approach of constructivism.

First, as stated above, even though some works in the constructivist scholarship go beyond the more structure-based approach of the “first generation” (see Hopf 1998; Wendt 1999)

and concentrate on the agency (Checkel 2008), there is still an understanding to assume states as unitary actors while specifying a country's characteristics regarding its identity, culture or norms. Barnett (1993), in this sense, proposes an alternative reading to Walt's realist account of the politics in the Middle East, still placing states at the centre of the analysis and emphasising states' identities as the determinant in changing and continuing dynamics of the politics of the Middle East. However, since Qatar and the UAE do not only have some structural similarities but also, as mentioned earlier, do have strong cultural and historical proximities, this thesis needs an approach focusing on key foreign policymakers and their relations with other sub-state actors such as other Emirs in the UAE instead of ascribing single and constant identities to the countries.

This discussion does not ignore the works in the broad school of constructivism that engage with agents and their roles in foreign policymaking (for example see Cornut 2018). As briefly mentioned above and elaborated in the following section, this analysis of constructivism in relation to the research question of this thesis highlights that constructivism and its conceptual tools primarily address the relationship between the agents and structure with a focus on constructed values such as identity (Houghton 2017; Hayes 2018). Their examination agency and structure fundamentally establishes a natural linkage between constructivism and role theory (Thies and Wehner 2014). However, this does not negate the fact that most works in the constructivist literature do tend to favour structure over agency and place greater importance on constructed values (Flanik 2011). Different from the constructivist account, this research aims to concentrate on agency and their approach to foreign policy making, while still including international actors and their interactive relations with Qatar and the UAE's main foreign policymakers.

Second, the small-state literature informs us that small states are more sensitive to regional and international changes, with material aspects being crucial in exploring their foreign policy stances (Gigleux 2016; Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017). Since Qatar and the UAE are two small states in terms of their populations and sizes, an analysis regarding their foreign policies requires taking into consideration the place of material factors as well as other drivers emphasised by constructivism, such as identity and norms. To sum up, constructivism provides a robust theoretical framework for analysing foreign policymaking, offering valuable insights into the interaction between agents and structures, particularly through concepts like identity,

norms, and socialisation. However, the general tendency in the constructivist approach to underemphasise the role of agency against structure and material factors makes it better for this research to employ role theory that still falls under the theoretical umbrella of constructivism but also prioritises agency over structure and its role in foreign policymaking as well as including material factors alongside ideational ones.

Given the points discussed above within the IR discipline, this research seems poised to embrace a theoretical model that (1) integrates both international and internal factors, (2) provides an enriched and detailed analysis of the roles of domestic factors, and (3) incorporates both material and ideational factors. For this purpose, this study will employ the role theory to address this thesis's questions, as it offers a framework that involves these three characteristics.

1.3. Role Theory

Adopting it from social psychology, Holsti introduced role theory into the IR and FPA literature with his seminal work in 1970. Identifying role performance, NRCs and role prescriptions (expectations) as the main notions of its theoretical framework, Holsti (1970) puts forward that a country's role performance (decisions and actions in foreign policy making) is significantly influenced by role prescriptions specified by the external environment including the expectations of other states or international actors (alter) and role conceptions defined by policymakers (ego). Roles, therefore, refer to a set of behaviours (decisions and actions) that are determined by the interplay between alter's expectations and ego's conceptions and that are enacted by policymakers (Holsti 1970, 238-9).

Conducting content analysis on speeches of country leaders, Holsti specifies 17 distinct roles and states that countries may and do adopt multiple roles based on the activeness of their foreign policies. Building on the theoretical foundations set by Holsti, later scholars expanded the list of roles and applied role theory to various case studies, as seen in the book edited by Walker (1987). As an example of such case studies in the following period, Chafetz and et al. (1996) investigate which countries with which NRCs are more eager to acquire nuclear power. In this context, they analyse different attitudes of Belarus and Ukraine regarding the nuclear non-proliferation process in the post-Cold War era.

The initial contributions to role theory literature closely followed Holsti's perspective on international relations, which treated states as unitary actors and emphasised the impact of structural factors on their roles (Breuning 2017). However, the domestic politics turn in international relations discipline since the 1990s (see Kaarbo 2015) also showed its effects on the role theory scholarship. While the second generation of the role theory scholarship maintained its claim of integrating the fields of international relations and foreign policy analysis thanks to its account of the agent-structure relationship (Thies and Breuning 2012), it has also started to provide comprehensive insights into the varying actors and factors in domestic politics by going deep into the "black-box" of states (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012, 2016; Wehner and Thies 2014). The additional contributions to this literature include studies that combine role theory with political economy (Thies and Wehner 2014), modify and integrate socialisation into role theory scholarship (Thies 2012, 2013), and introduce leader-based analyses from foreign policy research into role theory (Wehner and Thies 2021; Kesgin and Wehner 2022).

Before explaining why role theory is employed in this thesis, it is necessary to thoroughly examine its main concepts. Roles, as underlined earlier, are generally defined as behaviours that originate from the relationship between others' expectations and the actor's self-perceptions (Holsti 1970, Walker 1987). They are seen as appropriate behaviours determined by the interplay with other actors (McCourt 2012). Roles present a set of possible actions for the agent to perform. One crucial point here to discuss is the difference between role and identity. Recalling the natural link between constructivist and role theory approaches from the previous section, these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably in constructivist works (McCourt 2012). Nonetheless, role theory research differentiates between them: identities pertain to 'who we are,' while roles focus on 'what we should do' (Cantir and Kaarbo 2016). Identity may act as the origin of roles. Roles, on the other hand, originate to be potentially put into action. To illustrate, a state may have the identity of being a Muslim country, but whether it adopts the role of being a defender of the Islamic faith depends on the interplay between the expectations of other actors in the social environment and the perceptions of the foreign policymakers, taking into account the social and material characteristics of the country.

NRCs refer to the self-perceptions of the decision-makers regarding the suitable actions, commitments and rules for their countries to be implemented in the international area (Holsti

1970). In other words, NRCs demonstrate how foreign policymakers perceive their country's positions in the international system (Adigbou 2007). These conceptions can be shaped by a variety of social and material factors, including a country's size, material capabilities, geographic location, national identity, and historical legacies. The interplay of these factors informs decision-makers' perceptions of their nations' roles. In this thesis, NRCs are utilised to investigate how the policymakers of Qatar and the UAE define their countries' international roles and to explore whether differences in their foreign policies can be attributed to varying NRCs.

As Holsti (1970) stated, a country's role is shaped by the self-conceptions of decision-makers and the expectations of others. This demonstrates that roles emerge not solely from the perceptions of the ego but also encompass an interaction with relevant others' prescriptions. Role expectation was mainly associated with the prescriptions that international actors, including states and international institutions, concerning a state's conduct in international politics in the early studies of role theory research. However, contemporary scholarship in this literature introduced the concept of 'domestic role contestation' that can be considered as the expectations from the domestic actors, ranging from other political parties, domestic constituencies or other political entities to public opinion.

In this regard, Cantir and Kaarbo (2012, 2016) introduced the analysis of domestic role contestation into the role theory research by challenging the account of role theory that assumes a harmony and consensus among policymakers and between policymakers and the public regarding countries' roles. Introducing horizontal (among elites) and vertical (between elites and masses) role contestations to the role theory scholarship, they discuss how national roles are contested and selected as a consequence of domestic negotiation processes. These processes may involve contestations and negotiations among ruling and opposition parties, parties in coalition governments, and elected and bureaucratic elites, as well as between these elites and various elements of society such as interest groups, civil society organisations, social movements, and public opinion. Therefore, an examination of role contestation necessitates the application of middle-range theories, such as those pertaining to coalition and bureaucratic politics, to furnish a comprehensive explanation.

Concerning the issue of which actors in domestic politics have more influence on how NRCs are specified, it is assumed that foreign policymaking in democratic countries is subject to be influenced by more domestic actors compared to non-democratic countries because more agents and institutions may get involved in the foreign policymaking process in democracies while fewer domestic actors participate in this process in non-democracies (Hermann 2001; Kaarbo, Lantis and Beasley 2012; Weeks and Crunkilton 2017). For the cases of Qatar and the UAE, similarly, the literature explicitly demonstrates that Emir Tamim bin Hamid and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi MBZ are the chief policymakers for Qatar and the UAE, respectively (Kamrava 2017; Ragab 2017; Roberts 2017; Dogan-Akkas 2021b; Roberts 2020). Therefore, while discussing the NRCs of both countries, the main focus will be on these two leaders, along with prime ministers and foreign policy ministers. As will be discussed in the methodology part, the speeches, statements and interviews of Tamim bin Hamid for Qatar and MBZ for the UAE will be the main sources when the roles will be identified.

This, however, does not mean authoritarian countries should be regarded as unitary actors that do not witness any domestic contestation during the foreign policymaking process. In this sense, Yom's (2020) role theoretic analysis of Kuwait's withdrawal from the Internal Security Pact that was the response by the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council against the uprisings in the region is a significant contribution to the literature on the effect of domestic factors in non-democratic countries. In this article, Yom states that even though the government in Kuwait witnessed demonstrations against the regime itself as in other countries in the region, the tolerance-based Kuwaiti exceptionalism that is internalised by the ruling Sabah family and embedded in the NRCs of Kuwait, and accordingly in its foreign policymaking approach, prevented this country from acting like other Gulf monarchies. Yom concludes that Kuwait did not ratify this pact, differing from its GCC allies, because the ruling family's historically established role as a tolerant protector contested with the newly proposed role as a repressive ruler, and the former prevailed.

Considering domestic role contestation and the cases of this thesis together, Qatar and the UAE differ from each other in terms of their state structures. Qatar is a unitary state, while the UAE is a federal monarchy that is composed of seven emirates. This initiates another discussion about whether and, if so, how the federal state structure in the UAE creates room for role disagreement and negotiation among emirs of different emirates. Several studies in

the literature refer to the different attitudes of emirates, especially Dubai and Abu Dhabi, towards some actors and events in the region. Highlighting the economic partnership between Iran and Dubai thanks to the Iranian investments in Dubai, Rugh (1996) mentions different attitudes of Dubai and Abu Dhabi against the US sanctions on Iran. When discussing the divergent responses of Qatar and the UAE to the rise of political Islamist groups in the region, Roberts (2017) argues that the Abu Dhabi government opposed the rise of these groups in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen because of its negative experiences in dealing with another political Islamist group, Islah movement, in the northern small emirates of the UAE. Roberts states that although the Islah movement had a presence in both Qatar and the UAE, while Qatar managed to keep this movement under control thanks to being a more centralised unitary state, the Abu Dhabi government had some difficulties in preventing the rise of this movement that mostly organised in the northern small emirates.

As a reflection of this situation stemming from being a more decentralised federal monarchy, the UAE embraced an opposing policy against political Islamist groups, mainly the MB, during the uprisings. Also, Miller and Verhoeven (2020) mention how the Abu Dhabi government has consolidated its power against Dubai, the second biggest emirate, after the 2008 crisis that diminished the power of Dubai Emirate, which had reached remarkable growth rates thanks to its developing liberal economy in the 1990s and 2000s. In this sense, the differences between Abu Dhabi's security-oriented approach and Dubai's economy-based approach seem to have the potential to contribute to making sense of whether the divergent approaches embraced by these two emirates shaped the NRCs of the UAE.

In addition, the socialisation game that is introduced by Thies (2012; 2013) into the role theory scholarship significantly contributes to this literature in terms of explicating the agent-structure relationship. Socialisation is conceptualised and defined in the international relations literature by many approaches, each of which draws attention to different points, including the type of relationship between the socialiser and socialisee, the concepts that are mainly focused and shaped throughout the socialisation and whether it is a process or an outcome. In this context, Waltz (1979) considers socialisation as a process through which the principal mechanisms of the structure are conditioned for the units of the system: states (also see Thies 2012: 26; Thies 2013: 2). As a process of norm internalisation, constructivists view socialisation where actors in international area are inducted into "the norms and rules of a

given community" (Checkel 2005: 804; Flockhart 2004), while the English School engages in this concept by discussing how international society, with its highly social setting, provides an environment for the adaptation to the social conventions for the actors (Anderson 2001; see Checkel 2005: 806; Beasley and Kaarbo 2018: 10).

Role theory scholarship advances the conceptualisation of socialisation by introducing how international actors are socialised by the existing members while locating their roles. Thies (2012, 2013) defines socialisation as a role bargaining process where preferences of the ego and the expectations of the relevant alters come into interaction to decide the set of roles the actor can assume. Role theory views socialisation differently from the other mentioned perspectives. Primarily, considering roles as a subject to be performed in international politics, role theory does not necessitate the internalisation of the expected roles since the actor may accommodate the expectations solely to comply with others' prescriptions without internalising them (Thies 2003; Beasley and Kaarbo 2018). It also diverges from other perspectives, presenting a more behavioural socialisation process where the relevant roles are not regarded as given or socially constructed but amenable to change through the dynamics of the interaction and contestation between the parties (Beasley and Kaarbo 2018).

As an application of this approach to the case, Thies (2012, 2013) analyses how the newcomers (novices) to the international society are socialised by their socialisers (mostly embedded members of the system like regional and great powers) through looking at the relationship between Israel and the United States in the 1940s and 1950s and also the interactions between the US and the United Kingdom in the 19th century. In a similar vein, Thies (2015) investigates the ability of great powers in socialising the rising powers in locating the appropriate roles for them by examining the interactions between the US and China through the 1995-1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis. Differently from both role theory research and the studies in the IR literature, Beasley and Kaarbo (2018) look at the socialisation of Scotland during the Scottish independence referendum, going beyond the understanding in the literature that views sovereign states as the starting point. Similarly, differently from the role theory scholarship on socialisation, Guimaraes and Maitino (2017) discuss how a smaller state could undertake the socialiser role to altercast a bigger country's regional roles by analysing the relationship between Bolivia and Brazil during the 2006 Bolivian Gas Crisis. This example demonstrates that the interaction between socialiser and socialisee do not necessarily take

place in the form of more dominant actors influencing smaller ones in a certain direction. In the socialisation process of role theory, the reverse is also possible.

When the intended contributions of this thesis were outlined in Chapter 1, it was stated that this research would combine NRCs and the socialisation process to analyse the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE in these three cases. In this context, the study will first discuss and identify the NRCs of both countries in each case and then examine the attempts by their relevant socialisers to influence them into adopting specific roles. What sets this work apart from other studies on socialisation in role theory research (see Thies 2012, 2013, 2015; Guimaraes and Maitino 2017; Beasley and Kaarbo 2018) is its approach of first identifying the NRCs of countries by analysing the statements of their main foreign policymakers. It then examines the extent to which their potential socialisers influenced the selection of these roles and how these socialisers responded to the roles articulated by Qatar and the UAE.

For example, Thies (2012) and Beasley and Kaarbo (2018) do not focus on identifying a set of NRCs through a separate analysis of the discourse of the main foreign policy figures in the countries they study. Instead, they discuss the socialisation efforts of potential socialisers regarding specific roles that were already attributed to those countries, without the need for prior identification. To illustrate, Beasley and Kaarbo (2018) examine how various relevant actors, including the UK, several EU countries, and the US, reacted to Scotland's intended "sovereign" role, which became apparent with the 2014 independence referendum. Similarly, Thies (2012) analyses the dynamic interactions between Israel and the US when Israel articulated the roles of being a "sovereign" state in 1948–49 and a "regional collaborator" in 1956 during the Suez Crisis. This analysis primarily focuses on Israel's intention to adopt these roles and the US's socialisation efforts, which resulted in the acceptance of the former and rejection of the latter. In this context, Thies (2012) does not explicitly identify Israel's NRCs using a specific methodology. Instead, this article briefly mentions Israel's willingness to adopt these roles by observing its actions, while devoting the main discussion to the US's attempts to socialise Israel into specific roles.

Unlike the aforementioned works on socialisation in role theory research, this study will first identify the NRCs of both countries in each case. The methods used to specify these NRCs will be presented in the following section. It will then examine the reactions of potential socialisers

and their influence on the process of role adoption for Qatar and the UAE. For example, as outlined in Chapter 4, it will first identify the UAE's 'faithful ally' role through a content analysis of the statements made by key Emirati foreign policymakers. The second stage will analyse how Saudi Arabia's socialisation efforts led the UAE to adopt this NRC in its foreign policy towards the civil war in Yemen. In doing so, this research will establish a link between NRCs and socialisation experiences by examining whether and, if so, to what extent socialisation efforts of external actors led Qatar and the UAE to adopt certain roles in these three cases.

Considering that Qatar and the UAE gained independent sovereign state status in 1971 and that they were newcomers to the politics of the Middle East, exploring how these two countries have undergone their socialisation processes would contribute much to the investigation of this thesis. In this context, the roots of their differing and eventually conflicting foreign policies can be traced by examining how these countries have acted during their socialisation games. This is important as it will enable this study to figure out the effects of socialisation experiences on the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE, particularly in terms of whether and to some extent their interactions with the other actors led to a change in their approaches to the cases analysed. In this respect, an account for these two countries' relations with regional powers, principally Saudi Arabia and the United States, as their socialisers constitute a central place in specifying the alter's role expectations for them. In addition to their relations with the regional and international powers, it is important to analyse the effect of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a regional institution and the norms adopted and internalised by the GCC and its members on this socialisation process. Also, their active foreign policies especially in the last decade show us that they do not see themselves as novices or socialisees in the politics of the Middle East anymore. Rather, they are eager to play socialiser roles when, for example, the UAE's attempts to facilitate reconciliation between Israel and Bahrain in the process of the Abraham Accords are considered.

1.4. Role Theory and the Middle East

Several studies in the literature investigate the politics in the Middle East by using role theory. Barnett (1993) analyses the role conflict between the concepts of state sovereignty and pan-Arabism, suggesting that this conflict contributes to instability in the Arab world. Barnett notes the challenges of examining this conflict solely through the lens of realism, which prioritises

interests and state sovereignty, or liberalism, which emphasises institutions stemming from pan-Arabist ideals. Rather, he uses role theory to explore the dissonance between these two concepts and its negative implications for regional stability. In relation to the main research question of this research, while state sovereignty unsurprisingly remains a prominent element of foreign policymaking for Qatar and the UAE, it is challenging to argue that pan-Arabist motivations occupy a place in their interactions with other actors in the region.

Akbaba and Ozdamar (2019), on the other hand, delve into the foreign policies of four regional powers in the Middle East: Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. They modify the cognitive model of the agent-structure relationship specified by Breuning (2011) by incorporating religion as a determinant dimension when analysing Middle Eastern politics. In their examination, they explore the NRCs of these four countries between 2011-2016, considering the material and ideational factors and ascribing a high level of importance to the religious characteristics of these countries. Specifically, they discuss how sectarian differences and conflicts influence foreign policymaking in the Middle East. They also highlight the approach to and utilisation of religion by one Shiite (Iran) and three Sunni countries (Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia) as fundamental drivers in shaping NRCs. The authors present the material and ideational sources that shaped the foreign policy perspectives of the policymakers in these four countries, considering both domestic and regional scopes. They identify their NRCs before and after the Arab uprisings. One of their main conclusions is that religion and political-religious developments in the region overwhelmingly influenced the countries' roles, particularly after the Arab uprisings. This influence either manifested in the Shia-Sunni clash, as seen in the cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia, or in the rise of political Islamist groups like the MB, particularly affecting Egypt and Turkey. In summary, Akbaba and Özdamar conclude that the NRCs of these four regional powers changed after the Arab uprisings due to evolving material and ideational factors, with religious factors being the most significant.

Considering this thesis' puzzle, a pronounced focus on religious or sectarian attributes is not deemed essential for scrutinising the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE. As Khatib (2019) postulates, sectarianism does not play a leading role in these countries' reactions to the developments in the region. Instead, this study adopts an approach that transcends the confines of sectarianism. Simultaneously, the discussion on the rise of political Islam, especially the MB, and the reactions of Qatar and the UAE to it, did play a role in these

countries' divergence in foreign policies, as detailed in Chapter 1. The empirical and analytical chapters will focus on the impact of the concept of political Islam, its initial flourishing, and subsequent decline in the region following the 2011 uprisings.

As mentioned earlier, Yom's (2020) role theory research on Kuwait's divergence from its GCC allies by not ratifying the Internal Security Pact, which stipulated repression of protestors, serves as a sample study on domestic role contestation in the GCC countries. This research also aimed to examine domestic role contestation in both Qatar and the UAE. In light of the discussion on domestic role contestation above, the UAE case appeared particularly promising due to the country's federal structure, which might have created an environment for Emirates other than Abu Dhabi to express their own foreign policy perspectives. However, after collecting data, it became evident that there was little evidence of domestic role contestation on the Yemen, Libya, and Syria cases in both Qatar and the UAE. Therefore, the empirical chapters will not include a separate section on domestic role contestation. Further analysis will be provided in Chapter 8 regarding the lack of data on domestic role contestation in Qatar and the UAE.

1.5. Concluding Remarks on Theoretical Framework

Role theory provides a holistic framework for exploring the foreign policy practices of countries, thanks to its rich conceptual tools. It not only incorporates both internal and external factors into the analysis but also facilitates an examination of the interplay between these elements. Additionally, by considering both material and ideational factors, the theory further broadens the scope of research. In this context, a comparative examination of NRCs and socialisation experiences will present a comprehensive framework to detect the divergencies between the Qatari and Emirati foreign policies in the cases analysed and, accordingly, to address the questions of this thesis.

Although there is a wealth of studies within role theory that examine NRCs and socialisation as distinct entities, there is a notable gap in literature regarding their interconnection. Works combining both external and domestic factors to examine a country's foreign policy can contribute remarkably to role theory scholarship. Such an approach can create an opportunity to provide an analysis that delves into how these factors affect and eventually shape each

other when countries formulate and implement their foreign policies. By doing so, a more comprehensive analysis that incorporates various national and international dynamics can be produced to explain why countries behaved in certain ways and to predict how they might act in similar situations in the future. Therefore, this research intends to bridge this gap by jointly analysing NRCs and socialisation through a comparative case study approach. By identifying and exploring their interaction, this study will examine how the socialisation process influences and shapes the assumed NRCs. Particularly, it will explore how the process of role location can lead to changes in roles. Hence, this research aspires to enrich the existing role theory research by elucidating the dynamic relationship between NRCs and socialisation, offering new insights into their combined effects on foreign policymaking.

Beyond its conceptual depth, although role theory also offers various methodological tools to collect and operationalise data, role theory scholarship has been criticised for the absence of methodological rigorousness (Thies 2010; Wehner 2020). The subsequent chapter will first outline the methods commonly used in role theory scholarship. Then, it will present the contributions of this study to the methodological scope of role theory, particularly in terms of data collection and analysis.

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The preceding section provided an in-depth discussion of the theoretical framework of this thesis, examining alternative theoretical approaches to the research questions. It then explored role theory and the conceptual tools it offers for this study. This section focuses on the research methodology. It begins by detailing the case selection process and discussing the rationale behind the choice of cases for comparative analysis. The chapter then describes the data collection methods employed. Finally, it outlines how role theory is applied to analyse the selected cases.

To provide context for the subsequent sections, it is essential to clarify the central research question of this study: "Why did Qatar and the UAE, two non-democratic neighbouring countries subjected to similar structural constraints, adopt different and even divergent foreign policies between 2011 (the onset of the Arab uprisings) and 2021 (the al-Ula Summit)?" This thesis utilises role theory to tackle this question. Systematically, the different foreign policies of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates during the specified period serve as the dependent variable, while the NRCs are identified as the independent variables. The socialisation experiences of these countries are considered an intervening variable, primarily influencing the role location processes and explaining the temporal changes in NRCs.

2.2. Case Selection

To begin with, the period selected to focus on is between the beginning and spread of the Arab uprisings in the region in 2010-2011 and the al-Ula Summit that brought the parties of the Gulf Crisis together to end the conflict in January 2021. The uprisings that started in Tunisia in December 2010 extended across the Middle East, resulting in mass protests, regime changes and civil wars. With the interference of several international institutions and global and regional powers, the Middle East hosted an internationalised turmoil from Libya to Yemen. Thus, since 2011 brought tectonic changes to the region, it has been chosen as the starting date to conduct comparative research on the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE.

As discussed briefly earlier and will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, these countries generally diverged from each other in responding to the developments related to the uprisings. This divergence became more evident as the crises intensified and transformed into an international characteristic, culminating in the outbreak of a diplomatic crisis among the Gulf countries in 2014 with the recall of Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini ambassadors to Doha. Although an agreement was reached between the parties in that year, it could not prevent the eruption of another crisis involving a broader coalition and more severe stipulations and restrictions against Qatar, varying from rupture of political relations to economic embargo, in 2017. This crisis lasted for four years until it ended with a GCC meeting in al-Ula in January 2021. Since Qatar and the UAE, with its coalition allies involving Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, came together to end the full-scale embargo and set a schedule to officially restore relations in this meeting, this meeting has been selected as the ending date for this study.

This analysis examines three civil wars in the Middle East (Libya, Syria and Yemen) that erupted following the Arab uprisings, chosen for four primary reasons. Initially, these conflicts witnessed the interventions of both Qatar and the UAE despite the varying levels of involvement and strategies regarding whether to implement direct military interference or opt for other instruments, such as engaging with local militant or non-militant elements, employing diplomatic tools like mediation and leveraging their economic might. Second, the involvement of various international actors in these civil wars allows for an examination of the socialisation experiences of Qatar and the UAE, offering insights into the formation of their foreign policies through interactions with these external powers. Third, accordingly, referring to the thesis' research question and role theory, the internationalised nature of these three civil wars and the involvement of Qatar and the UAE, with varying extents depending on the case, provides the opportunity to investigate why they carved out their foreign policies divergently in the context of the interactions between their NRCs and socialisation experiences. Fourth, the clandestine nature of foreign policymaking in the Gulf makes data acquisition challenging; however, the heightened visibility of these conflicts in conventional and social media, along with a growing body of literature, facilitates access to necessary information. Consequently, the internationalised civil wars in Libya, Yemen, and Syria are deemed the most suitable for this study. The subsequent section outlines the differences between these cases, detailing the four criteria that informed their selection for analysis.

Firstly, these civil wars vary in geographical proximity to Qatar and the UAE, which are neighbours. Given that a country's decision to intervene, or not to intervene, in a crisis is often influenced by the crisis's proximity (Joyce and Braithwaite 2013), it is anticipated that Qatar and the UAE would base their policies on different motivations. While none of these wars are directly adjacent to Qatar and the UAE, the Yemeni and Syrian conflicts have arguably raised more significant security concerns for these countries than the Libyan civil war due to their closer geographical proximity. Therefore, including the Libyan case in this study, alongside the Yemeni and Syrian civil wars, offers a broader perspective on the foreign policy motivations of Qatar and the UAE in scenarios where their primary concerns differ.

Secondly, the degree of internationalisation of these civil wars is crucial to this thesis, as it seeks to explore the impact of socialisation experiences on foreign policy attitudes. Increased involvement of international actors typically provides clearer examples of the interaction between socialisers and socialisees, which in turn shapes the role perceptions of Qatar and the UAE in these conflicts. The civil wars in Yemen, Syria, and Libya have all seen varying levels of international intervention by regional and global powers, as well as transnational non-state actors. The Syrian and Libyan conflicts are particularly internationalised, evidenced by the military, financial, and political engagement from numerous external forces. Yemen, while less internationalised, is dominated by the conflict between regional powers Iran and Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, the prominent roles of the GCC, particularly Saudi Arabia, a primary socialiser in the Gulf, and the UAE in the Yemeni conflict justify its inclusion in this study.

Thirdly, the level of involvement by Qatar and the UAE in these conflicts also varies. Both countries were proactive in the early stages of the Libyan crisis, swiftly joining NATO forces to depose Gaddafi and engaging with local factions to shape the emerging political landscape. Since the second Libyan civil war in 2014, Qatar and the UAE have supported opposing sides, providing political, financial, and military assistance. In Syria, both countries initially backed different opposition groups against the Assad regime. However, while Qatar maintained its support in alignment with Turkey, the UAE shifted its stance, restoring diplomatic ties with the Assad government in 2018.

Unlike the situations in Libya and Syria, Qatar and the UAE exhibited divergent activity levels in the Yemeni civil war. The UAE took a more assertive stance, initially aligning with Saudi

Arabia against the Iran-backed Houthi forces, before shifting to pursue its economic interests in Aden independently. In contrast, Qatar assumed a more subdued role, contributing 1,000 ground troops to the GCC forces from 2015 to 2017.[2] However, following the onset of the Gulf Crisis in 2017, Qatar withdrew its forces from Yemen. These varying levels of involvement present additional research questions, such as why Qatar adopted a comparatively passive foreign policy in Yemen, especially when both countries demonstrated increased involvement in the other regional civil wars.

Lastly, the selection of cases also takes into account the extent of coverage that Qatari and Emirati policies receive in the literature in order to make sure that this thesis makes a contribution. In this regard, Khatib (2019) examines whether sectarianism influenced the policy decisions and alliances of the UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia in the Syrian conflict. Khatib concludes that while sectarian rhetoric was occasionally used to justify actions, the predominant motivation for these monarchies was the pursuit of national interests, or raison d'état, rather than sectarianism. Furthermore, Polat (2021) and Hedges (2021) analyse the Emirati intervention in the Libyan civil war, highlighting the country's economic interests and ideological underpinnings, often framed within the context of 'counterterrorism'.

Krieg (2021a) observes Qatar's shift in Libya from direct engagement with local factions to a multilateral approach, backing the internationally recognised government in Tripoli. In the case of the UAE's policy in Yemen, Dogan-Akkas (2020) and Juneau (2020) highlight a strategic pivot towards prioritising economic interests over the alliance with Saudi Arabia in recent years. Beyond individual case studies, some studies discuss Qatari and Emirati policies towards these three civil wars while discussing these countries' general foreign policy attitudes in the post-Arab Spring period (see, for instance, Roberts 2017; Soubrier 2017; Kamrava 2017; Ragab 2017; Mason 2018; Roberts 2020; Miller and Verhoeven 2020; Watkins 2020). Overall, even though some studies examine these countries' policies in these civil wars individually, a

[2] Although Al Jazeera reported that Qatar deployed 1,000 soldiers, 200 armoured vehicles, and 30 Apache attack helicopters to join the Arab coalition in Yemen (Al Jazeera, 2015), Hokayem and Roberts (2016) question the accuracy of this report. They note that 1,000 soldiers would comprise 10% of Qatar's total ground forces, and more importantly, they point out that Qatar did not have Apache attack helicopters in its inventory at the time the report was published.

comparative analysis that focuses on the three civil wars collectively is absent from the literature, as is a comprehensive study on Qatar's foreign policy in Yemen.

This research aims to fill these scholarly gaps by providing a comparative study using role theory. Apart from enriching the Middle East literature with the empirical contribution, it also holds the importance of analysing two countries' foreign policies in three different cases by using role theory that provides an overarching frame enabling to speak to both internal and external factors in foreign policymaking can offer a framework applicable to sub-regional systems such as the GCC. In other words, demonstrating role theory's utility to compare the foreign policies of countries bearing some resemblance to each other in this research may lay the groundwork for further research, potentially examining a bigger group of countries in a sub-system comparatively with the role theory lens. Such a study, for example, can engage with the foreign policies of similar-sized states of South America (Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia) or of the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia).

2.3. Data Collection and Operationalisation

2.3.1. NRCs

In terms of data collection and operationalising the independent and intervening variables, this research draws on methodological tools frequently used by role theory scholars. As noted by Breuning (2017), role theory is "methodologically eclectic," utilising diverse methods such as content analysis (Breuning 1995; Aggestam 2006; Hansel and Moller 2015), process tracing (Walker, Schafer and Beieler 2016), and game theory models (Walker 2011; Thies 2012; Thies 2013). Researchers in the field have adopted either Holsti's (1970) typology, which involves inductive coding through systematic content analysis, or they have devised their own lists of NRCs (as seen in Hans and Moller 2015; Akbaba and Ozdamar 2019), often to accommodate changes in the international environment or specific case studies. The data for identifying NRCs have been sourced from a variety of materials, ranging from primary documents like press statements, speeches, interviews, parliamentary debates, and policy reports, to secondary analyses found in the literature.

The way the NRCs are identified varies in the literature. One approach has followed Holsti's research (1970), collecting the statements of the relevant foreign policymakers to conduct a

content analysis to pinpoint the NRCs (Chafetz and et al.1996; Aras and Gorener 2010; Ozdamar, Halistoprak and Sula 2014; Hansel and Moller 2015). This method involves forming a codebook to extract NRCs from discourses, ultimately ascribing the statements to specific roles. Another approach employs the interpretivist perspective, identifying NRCs through an examination of the national identity and culture in interaction with international expectations (McCourt 2011). In this context, narrative analysis detects NRCs through historical research of traditions and dilemmas (Wehner and Thies 2014; Wehner 2020). Informed by game theory models, the binary role theory approach is another method to initially identify the roles and exhibit the interaction and integration of beliefs and behaviours in international politics (Walker 2011).

Cantir and Kaarbo (2016) suggest that empirical research in role theory often comprises two stages: first, identifying roles, and then linking these roles to foreign policy behaviours. This study will expand the framework into three stages by incorporating research on role location or socialisation processes as the second stage. The initial stage will identify the NRCs of the countries as the independent variable. In the second stage, the analysis will focus on socialisation experiences as an intervening variable. Lastly, the NRCs, in interaction with the influence of the role location process, will be connected to the differences between the foreign policy behaviours of Qatar and the UAE, which are considered as the dependent variable.

For the first stage, a collection of speeches, press statements, newspaper articles, and interviews from the top foreign policymakers of both countries concerning the selected cases will be compiled into a dataset. This dataset will include traditional primary sources as well as tweets from these leaders, expanding the study's scope to encompass a wider range of information sources to identify the NRCs. In addition, this research will collect tweets of the specified foreign policymakers. Twitter is one of the most commonly used social media platforms by presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers and other political figures in official state positions in the world, paving the way to the increasing usage of tweets posted by politicians or bureaucrats in the politics and international relations fields (Schneiker 2022; Jackson 2019). Research on tweets enables one to examine state officials' approach to certain domestic and international issues, presenting how they articulate their positions and their

efforts to shape or manage international and public discourse concerning these certain topics. (Manor 2016; Collins et al. 2019; Jezierska 2022).

Using Twitter data will allow this study to observe foreign policymakers' daily reactions to the events unfolding in these wars, thereby enhancing this study's analysis of role change. Twitter data will also facilitate the analysis of personal opinions of foreign policymakers regarding certain issues. In other words, along with the official statements representing states' positions, these tweets will present how these foreign policymakers personally viewed their countries' roles in these three civil wars. During data collection, the Twitter Academic API v2 provided access to a comprehensive database of tweets, enabling the retrieval of all tweets posted by any specified account. Using this tool, tweets from relevant foreign policymakers were gathered. Specific keywords associated with each case, which are detailed in the respective case chapters, were used to filter the tweets. These keywords were selected among the actors, event and locations relevant to respective civil wars and identified through a close reading of the literature on these conflicts. To ensure contextual relevance, this study also includes complete tweet threads if at least one tweet contains a keyword, thus avoiding the omission of tweets that, while not containing the specified keywords, are still pertinent to the case.

The foreign policymakers included in the analysis are listed with their positions in Table 1. As the table illustrates, the selected names held, or are holding, positions as president, ruler, head of government, or foreign ministers in their respective countries in the studied period. In addition to MBZ and Tamim bin Hamad, three additional foreign policymakers from each country will be included in the analysis. For Qatar, former Emir Hamad bin Khalifa, who was in power from 1995 to 2013, will be included as he was the Emir during the first two years of the uprisings. Khalid bin Mohammed, who held significant positions in the government between 2011 and 2021, serving as Foreign Minister from 2013 to 2016 and as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence since 2016, will also be part of the analysis, with his statements incorporated. The current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammed bin Abdurrahman, who succeeded Khalid bin Mohammed in 2016, will also be included among the foreign policymakers in this research. On the UAE side, the speeches, interviews, and tweets of the Emir of Dubai and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Rashid, along with those of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah bin Zayed, will be analysed. Additionally, the statements of Anwar

Gargash, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs from 2008 to 2021, will also be incorporated into the analysis.

Table 1. Top Foreign Policymakers of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates	Qatar
Mohammed bin Zayed Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi (2004 – 2022) President (2022 -)	**Hamad bin Khalifa** Emir (1995 – 2013)
Mohammed bin Rashid Vice President, Prime Minister, Ruler of Dubai (2006 -)	**Tamim bin Hamad** Emir (2013 -)
Abdullah bin Zayed Minister of Foreign Affairs (2006 -)	**Mohammed bin Abdurrahman** Prime Minister (2023 -) Minister of Foreign Affairs (2016 -)
Anwar Gargash Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (2008 – 2021)	**Khalid bin Mohammed** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence (2016 -) Minister of Foreign Affairs (2013 – 2016)

The period of analysis for this research spans from 2011 to 2021. In this context, all statements (speeches, press conferences, interviews, and tweets) made by the specified foreign policymakers were examined to create the database. The primary sources for accessing the data, apart from tweets, included the official websites of the Emir of Qatar, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, the Ruler of Dubai, and the foreign and defence ministries of both countries. Additionally, the LexisNexis Newspaper database was utilised to access statements by these foreign policymakers that were not available on the official websites. The keywords 'Yemen', 'Libya', and 'Syria' were searched on both the official websites and the LexisNexis Newspaper database within the time frame of 2011 to 2021. For tweets, as detailed above, specific

keywords were searched in the dataset created using Twitter Academic API v2. As a result, a dataset was compiled comprising 161 public statements (speeches, press conferences, and interviews) and 1,508 tweets. This data was then organised into six Excel files, each corresponding to one case (Yemen, Libya, and Syria) for each country (Qatar and the UAE). Each Excel file contains five columns: date, source type (either public statement or tweet), source title (applicable to non-tweet data), source website link, and the NRC derived from the source.

The data collected will be subjected to qualitative content analysis to identify the NRCs of the countries under study. The role theory literature does not provide a pre-existing keyword database for identifying role conceptions via content analysis, as noted by Cantir and Kaarbo (2016, 19). Researchers typically code the language used and match it to specific role conceptions or inductively derive role conceptions from textual themes. This research will conduct a detailed examination of the gathered documents to pinpoint NRCs, drawing on established typologies found in the literature (Holsti (1970); Breuning (1995); Akbaba and Özdamar (2019).

While coding the statements and tweets, this research follows the selection criteria proposed by Hans and Moller (2015) and Cantir and Kaarbo (2016). The documents included in the analysis must contain explicit references to the names of the countries (Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) or use pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ (Hans and Moller 2015). Moreover, these documents need to articulate the positions of the countries within the organisational (GCC), regional (the Middle East) or international structures. In this sense, a document must go beyond merely stating countries’ specific foreign policy preferences that solely address the desired reactions to particular issues (Cantir and Kaarbo 2016). Instead, it needs to engage with how the foreign policymakers delineate their countries’ stances in the international area, which may encompass its role in a regional organisation or international community. As this study is a comparative case analysis concentrating on the roles of these countries in three cases, the documents included in the analysis will naturally speak to these cases. However, in order to prevent confusing policy preferences with roles, the document selection period will be carefully conducted by paying regard to the content and frequency of the articulated role-alike statements to discern whether they represent a general stance of these countries showing reflections on these cases or they are solely case-based policy preferences (see

McCourt 2021). Working on three cases will also help to discern whether the role-alike statements exist in the statements as short-term policy preferences or reactions to certain events. Table 2 presents a selection of these NRCs, particularly highlighting those not featured in classic typologies in role theory research, accompanied by illustrative examples from the data.

Having said that, the data collection process revealed that although the foreign policymakers of both countries articulated some statements presenting roles for their countries (as illustrated in Table 2), the nature of public diplomacy in the GCC countries necessitated this thesis to focus on the statements that predominantly reflect policy preferences rather than role expressions. Leaders in the Gulf monarchies are occasionally explicit in their public engagements, particularly when it comes to foreign policy, even compared to other non-democratic countries such as Russia[3] (Forth 2020; Heibach 2021). As embedded in the political culture of the region, leaders in the Gulf monarchies, especially the rulers, presidents and crown princes, refrain from expressing how they position their countries. In the case of the UAE, for instance, Forth (2020) notes that the then-Crown Prince MBZ "… has made few state visits and has never attended a United Nations assembly. He does not do Davos. He rarely gives speeches and does not talk to journalists."

The nature of politics and public diplomacy in the Arab Gulf requires this study to include statements that may not explicitly articulate roles but can often be attributed to foreign policy preferences or comments that reinforce roles assumed by foreign policymakers in other contexts. For example, the following two statements regarding the Yemeni civil war, one from the UAE and one from Qatar, illustrate this point. On November 7, 2015, then-Crown Prince MBZ posted a tweet stating, 'The Coalition has proven that Arabs have the capability and will to preserve their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and prevent interference in their affairs.' While this tweet does not explicitly express a role, as it does not meet the criteria outlined above for detecting roles in statements, when analysed alongside other statements by Emirati

[3] For instance, Strycharz's (2022) research on role theory in Russian foreign policy demonstrates that, despite Russia's non-democratic structure, its foreign policymakers frequently deliver speeches and make statements that articulate the roles their country assumes within the regional and international community.

foreign policymakers, it reinforces the UAE's articulated roles, such as 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs.'

Similarly, the Foreign Minister of Qatar, Mohammed bin Abdurrahman (2018), expressed the following statement on June 21, 2018:

> "We do not see any progress or hope for finding a political solution for the Yemeni crisis. Qatar does not support the Iranian situation or any situation in Yemen, and we will never support any party in the Yemeni conflict, and we will not support the coalition in the war in Yemen."

This passage from the foreign minister's speech does not indicate a specific role for Qatar but rather reflects Qatar's policy stance on the civil war in Yemen. However, when considered in conjunction with the emphasis by Qatari leaders on an 'independent' role within the GCC, particularly in relation to Saudi Arabia's attempts to socialise Qatar into the role of a 'faithful ally'—as detailed in the following chapter—the foreign minister's speech has been incorporated into the analysis to enrich the data supporting Qatar's independent role in this conflict. Consequently, this thesis will primarily rely on statements asserting roles when identifying countries' NRCs. Additionally, statements that demonstrate policy preferences will also be included in the empirical chapters to provide a more comprehensive illustration of the roles assumed by these countries.

Table 2. Definitions and Examples of NRCs

National Role Conception	Definition	Example
Advocate/Facilitator of Arab Solidarity	This NRC presents itself with the reference to the Arab role and solidarity. As discussed in the empirical chapters, it shapes around the rhetoric of "Arab solutions to Arab problems' and firmly related to the NRC of 'bulwark against external intervention of Arab affairs' as seen below.	"The Arab role in Syria has become more necessary in the face of Iranian and Turkish regional aggression, and the UAE is seeking today, through its presence in Damascus, to activate this role, to have Arab options present, and to contribute positively towards ending the war and enhancing opportunities for peace and stability for the Syrian people

		(Anwar Gargash, Twitter, 27.12.2018).
Anti-terrorism Agent	This NRC appears in the statements reiterating a state's commitment to fight against terrorism. It mostly manifested itself when the UAE and Qatar joined the anti-ISIS alliance or the UAE established its policy against the MB and affiliated militant groups in the region.	"We have been committed to supporting regional and international efforts, including those aimed at combating ISIL. We have also contributed to hosting the Hedayah Centre to assist the international community in building capacities and exchanging best practices to counter all forms of extremism" (Abdullah bin Zayed, 2015, UN General Assembly).
Bulwark against External Intervention in Arab Affairs	This NRC refers to the UAE's firm stance against the intervention of especially regional countries in the Arab countries. It was concerned with the presence of Turkey and Iran in the Arab countries politically and militarily, particularly in Libya, Yemen and Syria. As demonstrated in the following chapters, this NRC might appear as bulwark against Iran or Turkey depending on the case.	"The tensions in Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iraq and other states are all related to blatant interference in Arab affairs made by states that incite strife and discord, or that have historical delusions of restoring their domination and colonial rule over the Arab region and the Horn of Africa. The result has been brutal wars. In this context, we recall our firm position of rejecting regional interference in Arab affairs, and request full respect for sovereignty, which is fully consistent with international law and international norms" (Abdullah bin Zayed, 2020, UN General Assembly).

Advocate of State Sovereignty	This NRC mainly engages with a country's emphasis on the significance of national sovereignty free from foreign interference in international politics. Particularly, this role conception manifests itself when addressing a country facing domestic crisis and foreign intervention.	"In that regard, I emphasize that the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference in January 2014, in which all the Yemeni parties participated, provided equitable and fair solutions to all the issues related to the ongoing fighting, including the system of government, the State's federal structure and the issue of the south. The parties reached those solutions by way of dialogue among themselves. Until Yemenis implement the solutions they have reached without foreign intervention, there is nothing to be done but support United Nations efforts to end the war and support its humanitarian and relief efforts" (Tamim bin Hamad, 2019, UN Speech).
Supporter of International Cooperation	This NRC demonstrates a state's stress on a multilateral approach to a crisis for resolution. In the context of this research, it refers to the involvement of different political actors, particularly the UN, to provide a solution for conflicts taking place in the region. In other words, it challenges any unilateral attempt.	"In Libya, we were very coherent with the international resolution security council, and we did not do anything out of this context. We worked hand in hand with NATO forces in 2011 to help the people" (Mohammed bin Abdurrahman, 2019, World Policy Conference).

2.3.2. Socialisation

The works on socialisation utilise various sources and methodological tools. Checkel (2005) uses process tracing, incorporating both primary sources such as archival materials and confidential meeting summaries, and secondary sources including newspaper reports and scholarly analyses. Thies (2012 and 2013) integrates role theory with cognitive dissonance

theory to develop a game theoretical model, depicting a decision-making tree that outlines interactions between socialisers and socialisees. Thies also employs process tracing and the analytic narrative method for data collection and analysis. Content or discourse analysis is another common method in role theory scholarship. Beasley and Kaarbo (2018) analyse speeches and statements from foreign policymakers and bureaucratic elites within EU countries and several international powers. Similarly, Guimarães and Maitino (2017) and Nilsson (2018) scrutinise leaders' statements, speeches, interviews, official government declarations, and secondary sources.

When it comes to how to pinpoint the existence or type of socialisation, there are multiple methods employed. Schimmelfennig (2005) conducts a correlational analysis to examine the interaction between desired norms and policies by the European institutions to be internalised and carried out and the domestic reactions through an investigation of party systems. Thies (2012, 2013) mainly employs historical research on the primary documents and secondary sources to implement the game theory model for detecting occurrences of socialisation. His works focus primarily on the foreign policy practices of the countries engaged in the socialisation game, observing the foreign policy choices they had in relation to their expectations or demands from each other. Guimarães and Maitino (2017) rely on public speeches, statements and interviews with key political figures to illustrate the altercasting process between Bolivia and Brazil. Their research demonstrates how Bolivian foreign policy officials used these communication channels to 'frame' Brazil as an imperialist country on regional and international stages, aiming to influence both audiences and, over time, leading Brazil to adopt the roles Bolivia demanded (Guimarães and Maitino 2017, 13). Similarly, Beasley and Kaarbo (2018) analyse a range of materials, including statements, speeches, interviews, newspaper articles and public documents, to discuss the forecasting attempts of the pro-independence political actors for independent Scotland. They include both domestic and international actors in their analysis and demonstrate the efforts of the 'Yes' side in the independence referendum in 2014 that presented an independent Scotland embracing the role of a good global citizen with its position in the democratic world and its practical contributions to multiple global issues such as climate change, international development and human rights. They also give place to the reactions of domestic and international actors

holding a firm stance against the independence to forecasting endeavours of Scotland, again using public statements of key political figures.

Building on this literature, this research utilises a variety of sources, including statements, speeches, newspaper articles, and interviews from key political actors in the countries involved in the analysis, to examine socialisation. A similar process to that used for identifying NRCs will be followed. The official websites of the presidency, prime ministry, and foreign ministry of the respective countries were searched to find relevant statements on Qatar and the UAE for each case. Additionally, the LexisNexis Newspaper database was utilised to access either public statements or newspaper articles written by foreign policy officials of the socialiser countries about Qatar and the UAE for each case. When accessing documents via the LexisNexis Newspaper database, each search included three keywords: the names of the socialiser, the socialisee, and the case. For example, when Turkey's socialisation efforts towards Qatar in the Libyan case were investigated, the keywords searched were Qatar, Turkey, and Libya. The timeframe was specified as 2011–2021. In addition to these sources, this thesis also draws on works in the literature concerning the specified socialisers' foreign policies towards both Qatar and the UAE, as well as the studied cases. The countries involved will be discussed in detail in the respective case chapters, which will also include justifications for their inclusion.

To pinpoint the socialisation efforts of the selected socialisers in these sources, the method commonly used in role theory scholarship is to identify statements that involve expectations of, or reactions to, the socialisee by the socialiser (Guimarães and Maitino 2017; Beasley and Kaarbo 2018). For example, after the Arab coalition to intervene in the Yemeni civil war was formed by Saudi Arabia in March 2015, the then-Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Adel al-Jubeir, described the coalition's mission as combating Iranian expansion in Arab lands (Willner 2022). In this context, as members of the coalition, the UAE and Qatar were targeted by Riyadh to be socialised into the role of 'bulwark against Iran' in the Yemeni civil war. This example illustrates Saudi Arabia's expectations of Qatar and the UAE during the conflict. In the chapter on this case, the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE will first be identified, followed by an analysis of their reactions to Saudi Arabia's attempts to socialise them into the 'bulwark against Iran' role. This discussion will explore the interactions between Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia in

relation to Riyadh's socialisation efforts, with a focus on whether they complied with or rejected this role during the civil war.

Lastly, as discussed in the previous chapter, this study differs from other studies in the literature in terms of how it positions socialisation as a variable. While NRCs will be used to explain the dependent variable as the independent variable, socialisation will serve as the intervening variable. In this sense, this research will investigate the impact of socialisation experiences on the formation of NRCs and examine why certain role conceptions towards specific cases may have evolved over time. In essence, this exploration of the relationship between operationalisation stages will seek to understand changes in role conceptions within individual cases.

2.4. Concluding Remarks on Methodology

This section has outlined the research methodology, detailing the case selection process and providing justifications alongside a comparative analysis to highlight the relevance and potential contributions of these cases to the literature. It aims to advance scholarship by applying the role theory framework to multiple cases, thereby establishing a foundation for further studies that examine the foreign policies of countries within a sub-regional system through a comparative role theory lens. Moreover, the chapter describes the planned data collection process, which not only covers methods commonly used in the literature but also incorporates Twitter data to expand the scope of sources for analysis. For further research, the use of Twitter data may also facilitate the examination of short-term role changes, given the platform's provision of daily statements from foreign policymakers. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the operationalisation of the research, explaining how the data will be employed to identify NRCs and to describe socialisation experiences. It emphasises that while this research will principally employ methods from existing role theory scholarship to derive NRCs from documents and to illustrate the role location process, it also distinguishes itself pertaining to how it regards the relationship between NRCs and socialisation experiences as variables.

CHAPTER IV

YEMENI CIVIL WAR: THE UAE'S STRATEGIC ASSERTIVENESS AND QATAR'S INDEPENDENT STANCE

1. Introduction

A month after the uprising started in Tunisia in December 2010, Yemeni President Saleh was called to step down by the protestors ranging from the political opposition to the university students. Following several failed attempts to placate the protesters by announcing several economic and constitutional reforms and pledging not to seek re-election in 2013, President Saleh eventually agreed on the plan conceived by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that transferred the presidency to Vice President Hadi in November 2011. However, this transition failed to resolve the country's crisis. Along with a deepening economic crisis, the Hadi government contended with various challenges from the internal armed groups, Islamist militants and Houthi rebels. In September 2014, the Houthi fighters occupied the key government buildings in the capital, leading to President Hadi's resignation, occupied the presidential palace and seized control of the capital in the first month of 2015. The intervention of the Arab Coalition led by Saudi Arabia in March 2015 and Iran's support for the Houthi rebels escalated the crisis, turning the civil war into a proxy war between regional players in Yemen.

This chapter investigates Qatar's and the UAE's policies towards the civil war in Yemen. Considering its relative geographical proximity to Qatar and the UAE compared to the other two civil wars in the region and the high level of involvement of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the conflict, this case can provide a comprehensive scope to see how these two countries calibrated their policies and identified their roles in the Yemeni civil war. The analysis begins with a review of the existing literature on Qatar's and the UAE's policies in Yemen. It then proceeds with a role-theoretical analysis to determine their roles and describe their socialisation experiences during the conflict. The chapter concludes by analysing the results and discussing how the roles adopted by Qatar and the UAE influenced their distinct foreign policies towards Yemen.

There is little if no scholarship that compares the behaviours of Qatar and the UAE towards the civil war in Yemen. In accordance with the UAE's more active policy as an essential part of the coalition, the number of studies on the Emirati foreign policy in Yemen is unsurprisingly more than the ones on Qatar's role in this war. Presenting a broad review of the UAE's role in Yemen, Brehony (2020) argues that three goals pushed the UAE to undertake a leading role in the coalition together with Saudi Arabia: (1) to prevent an Iran-backed Houthi regime in the region; (2) to protect its strategic and commercial interests in the Gulf of Aden and Bab al-Mandeb; and (3) to eliminate Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorist groups. After mentioning the operational successes and failures of the UAE's Yemeni strategy and how its local partnership ties shifted from the central government to the southern forces, Brehony concludes his book chapter by underlining the divergence of interests between Saudi Arabia and the UAE after the Khashoggi incident and the Stockholm Agreement. The assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul attracted significant international attention and pressured Saudi Arabia and the warring parties to reach an agreement in Stockholm in 2018, in order to avoid an offensive on al-Hodeida that could potentially trigger a humanitarian crisis. These two developments led Abu Dhabi to reassess its interests and ultimately led to the decision to scale down its military presence in Yemen in 2019 (Brehony 2020). Similarly, Dogan-Akkas (2020) investigates the factors that led the UAE to withdraw most of its forces from Yemen and describes this policy change as "from bandwagoning to buck-passing". Among the reasons behind this policy change, Dogan-Akkas specifies the prioritisation of economic interests over military interests and consolidation of internal power. Additional literature examines the UAE's actions in Yemen as a broader example of its regional ambitions, looking at its expanding political, economic, and military influence (Mason 2018; Salisbury 2020; Krieg 2021b).

As to the Qatari role in Yemen, Baabood and Baabood (2020) associate the level of Qatari involvement in the civil war with its fluctuating relations with the coalition powers. In this regard, they argue, Qatar's decision to join the coalition forces was a part of its efforts to recover its ties with Saudi Arabia after the 2013-2014 diplomatic crises. Similarly, after the Qatari crisis had broken out in June 2017, Qatari forces were expelled from the coalition, and Qatar adopted a critical view of the Saudi-Emirati military presence and its share in the humanitarian crisis in Yemen through its media power. For example, Al Jazeera published a

news article in November 2018 on the war crime, torture and inhumane treatment allegations against Abu Dhabi Crown Prince MBZ and called what was happening in Yemen "the world's most urgent humanitarian crisis" (Al Jazeera 2018). Additionally, various newspaper articles discuss Qatari ties with some Yemeni militant groups that are parties to the ongoing war, such as the MB-affiliated Islah movement and Houthis (Ramani 2018; Almeida 2017).

This chapter sets out to provide a comparative analysis of Qatari and Emirati foreign policies in Yemen, differentiating itself from previous studies by employing role theory. Role theory offers a broad framework for examining both international and domestic influences through the lens of the agent-structure relationship, as detailed by Thies and Breuning (2012). By leveraging the rich theoretical tools and concepts of role theory, such as NRCs and socialisation processes, the chapter will explore how interactions between internal and external factors have shaped and caused the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE to diverge. The next section will analyse the gathered data using role theory, and the subsequent section will disclose the findings from this analysis.

2. Role Theoretical Analysis

This section will apply role theory to the collected data. It will proceed with three stages. First, it will detail how the data was collected for this chapter. Then, the NRCs of both countries will be identified by analysing the collected statements from both countries' main foreign policymakers. Finally, it will look at the socialisation experiences of these two countries to present the "role location" process (Thies 2013).

2.1. Keywords to Identify NRCs

As detailed in the methodology chapter, the NRCs of both states will be identified through qualitative content analysis, looking at the statements, speeches and interviews of the specified foreign policy figures. All references to the civil war in Yemen in entire speeches on the websites were searched. Also, all speeches given by the Emir of Qatar and the Foreign Minister of the UAE at the UN General Assembly since 2011 were collected. A total of 40 were collected, 18 for Qatar and 22 for the UAE. Regarding the Twitter data, tweets posted by the specified foreign policymakers in the studied period were compiled. Then, the following 13 keywords that allow reaching all tweets posted concerning the civil war in Yemen were

specified: Yemen (اليمن), Hadi (هادي)[4], Saleh (صالح)[5], Houthis (الحوثيون)[6], Ansar Allah (أنصار الله)[7], Operation Decisive Storm (عملية عاصفة الحزم)[8], ODS (Operation Decisive Storm), Operation Restoring Hope (عملية إعادة الأمل)[9], ORH (Operation Restoring Hope), Aden (عدن)[10], Hudaydah (الحديدة)[11], Riyadh Agreement (اتفاق الرياض)[12], AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) (تنظيم القاعدة في جزيرة العرب)[13].

While specifying these keywords, the approach was to include actors, events and locations related to the case. These actors, events and locations were identified through a review of the literature on the Yemeni civil war. In this context, the keywords used to capture the tweets relevant to the Yemeni civil war included the stated actors (Hadi, Saleh, Houthis, Ansar Allah, AQAP), events (Operation Decisive Storm, Operation Restoring Hope, Riyadh Agreement) and locations (Aden and Hudaydah). Additionally, as discussed in the methodology section, the tweet threads in which at least one of the tweets includes one of these keywords to the

[4] Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi who served as the President of Yemen between February 2012 and April 2022. Before becoming the president, Hadi was the vice president of Yemen.
[5] Ali Abdullah Saleh was the President of Yemen from 1990 to 2012. In other words, he was the country's president when the Arab uprisings began. Due to escalating protests and international pressure, Saleh stepped down and handed over his position to his successor, Hadi.
[6] Named after the Houthi tribe, this movement is primarily composed of Zaidi Shia Muslims who have been engaged in armed conflict with the Yemeni government since 2004. Following the outbreak of the civil war in 2014, the Houthis seized control of Yemen's capital, Sana'a. Houthis have been allegedly supported by Hezbollah and Iran financially and militarily in their fight against the Sunni-dominated Yemeni government and the Arab coalition, which intervened in the war in 2015.
[7] Official name of the Houthis.
[8] Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen in March 2015 to eliminate the potential threats to neighbouring Saudi Arabia and support the Yemeni government and President Hadi against the rebel forces, the Houthis, that had captured control in Sana'a. Apart from Saudi Arabia, the intervening countries include the UAE, Qatar (2015-2017), Egypt, Kuwait, and Bahrain. The UAE played the most active role in the coalition alongside Saudi Arabia despite the disagreements between the two allies in the following period, which will be elaborated below.
[9] In April 2015, Saudi Arabia broadened the coalition's objectives in Yemen, renaming the operation to reflect a more comprehensive set of goals. These included protecting civilians through financial and medical assistance, combating terrorism, and persisting in their military campaign against the Houthis.
[10] Strategically located in southern Yemen as a port city, Aden became the battleground between the forces of the Yemeni government, loyal groups to previous President Saleh and the Houthis in 2015, which led President Hadi to flee Saudi Arabia and eventually the intervention of Saudi-led Arab coalition in Yemen. In 2017, Aden was captured by the Southern Transitional Council, whose alleged affiliation with the UAE prompted a crisis between the Hadi government and the UAE in the following period, as will be discussed later in this chapter.
[11] Similarly to Aden, the battle for Hudaydah represented one of the most intense confrontations between the Saudi-led coalition backing the Hadi government and the Houthis in 2018. The strategic significance of this port city as the main conduit for international humanitarian aid reaching the Yemeni people afflicted by the war drew considerable global concern.
[12] The Riyadh Agreement, signed on 5 November 2019, represented a significant step towards forging a united front as it brought together the Yemeni government, the Southern Transitional Council, and the UAE in a commitment to jointly combat the Houthis.
[13] AQAP, established in 2009 from the merger of the Saudi and Yemeni branches of Al-Qaeda, has perpetrated numerous terrorist attacks in Yemen, particularly following the onset of the war. The UAE has engaged in several operations against this organisation as part of its regional counter-terrorism strategy.

analysis in order to avoid missing tweets that do not involve any of these words but are still related to Yemen contextually were added. In total, 1013 tweets were included in the analysis.

2.2. Qatar's Foreign Policy and NRCs in Yemen: From Limited Support to Independent Stance

Analysis of the Emir of Qatar's speeches reveals a clear evolution in his rhetoric regarding the Yemeni conflict, especially towards the coalition and the war's local actors. Between 2015 and 2017, the Emir of Qatar and Foreign Minister expressed support for the president of the internationally recognised and Saudi-backed Yemeni government and, in some speeches, for the Arab coalition. For instance, Emir Tamim (2015a) criticised Ansar Allah (Houthis) and former president Saleh's forces and declared his country's support for President Hadi in his speech at the 26th Arab Summit in 2015. Months later, at the 36th GCC Summit, he reiterated his support for the Gulf Initiative along with the national dialogue conferences and relevant Security Council Resolution (Tamim bin Hamed, 2015b). Even in March 2017, a few months before the Qatar diplomatic crisis, during the 28th Arab Summit, Emir Tamim (2017) reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to the Arab alliance, emphasising support for Yemen's unity, sovereignty, and President Hadi's constitutional legitimacy.

However, Qatar's approach to the war in Yemen shifted notably after the beginning of the blockade in June 2017. Qatar was ousted from the coalition, and Qatari troops participating in the coalition forces in Yemen were suspended. On June 29, 2017, Qatari foreign minister Mohammed bin Abdurrahman (2017a) underscored Qatar's success in fulfilling its commitment to the GCC by "protecting the Saudi borders in the ongoing war in Yemen" in his speech at the Washington DC Arab Center. This assertion was likely intended to counteract accusations from the blockade-imposing countries, which suggested Qatar had failed to support the coalition's efforts in Yemen fully.

In July 2017, Khalid bin Mohammed, the Qatari Defence Minister who was the Foreign Minister when the war started, gave an interview to TRT World, a Turkish state-owned channel, where he spoke about the blockade. Addressing the Yemeni conflict, he stated:

> "We are ... a member of the GCC, and at [the same] time, we have our own opinion on how to solve the situation in Yemen. We always believe in dialogue… But unfortunately,

> we find ourselves obliged to join the coalition. And we've never been inside Yemen by the way; we've been defending the border of Saudi" (Leinne 2017).

This comment, particularly regarding Qatar's obligation to join the coalition and its defensive position at the Saudi border, was seized upon by media outlets of the blockading countries as proof of Qatar's reluctance to engage in the coalition from the outset fully.

Harsh criticism against the blockading countries continued in the following months. In November 2017, the foreign minister of Qatar condemned the "threat policy" of blockading countries and described these countries as the cause behind the turmoil in the region and as the responsible actors for the "meaningless stalemate" in Yemen (2017b). On June 21, 2018, at the Committee on Foreign Affairs at the European Parliament meeting, the foreign minister explicitly stated:

> "We do not see any progress or hope for finding a political solution for the Yemeni crisis. Qatar does not support the Iranian situation or any situation in Yemen, and we will never support any party in the Yemeni conflict, and we will not support the coalition in the war in Yemen" (Mohammed bin Abdurrahman 2018a).

Instead, he emphasised Qatar's preference for a national dialogue that would bring all Yemeni factions together to negotiate a resolution.

The array of statements given by Qatari officials illustrates the country's adoption of an independent actor role in the crisis, a stance that became particularly pronounced following the blockade in 2017. This independent position became a recurring theme in the speeches of Qatari foreign policymakers. Post-2017, they frequently emphasised their neutral stance, distancing themselves from either side of the conflict. This was a departure from their initial stated obligation to join the Arab coalition. Furthermore, they challenged allegations accusing Qatar of maintaining ties with the actors involved in this war against the Arab coalition. Rather, they reinforced their discourse of blaming the countries blockading countries attending the Arab coalition as culpable for the turmoil in Yemen.

Apart from the call for a political solution through national dialogue instead of military intervention, the emphasis on a political resolution and the worsening humanitarian crisis

became central themes in the post-blockade speeches of both the Emir of Qatar and the foreign minister regarding Yemen. A review of the Emir's addresses at the UN General Assembly from the start of the Yemeni civil war in 2014 to 2020 shows a consistent call for national dialogue and support for the Gulf Initiative's efforts concerning Yemen. Moreover, Emir Tamim increasingly highlighted the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Yemen, advocating for international assistance to combat poverty, hunger, and disease in the country. In his 2019 speech, he stressed the significance of the 2014 National Dialogue Conference, which had brought together most Yemeni parties who had reached certain agreements. He stated that Yemeni factions should implement the solutions they agreed upon independently, without external interference, subtly reinforcing Qatar's critical view of the Saudi-Emirati coalition's intervention in Yemen (UNGA 2019a).

In analysing these speeches of Qatar's Emir and foreign minister, the following points manifest themselves explicitly. First, in the speeches analysed, Qatari policymakers never directly blamed or even criticised Iran as responsible for the Houthi coup and the breakout of the war, a stark contrast to what Saudi and Emirati policymakers constantly did. Furthermore, Emir Tamim never mentioned any group or country name, including the Houthis, in his UN speeches when mentioning the Yemeni issue. Second, while some remarks acknowledged Qatar's role within the Arab Alliance, such as the statement made during the 28th Arab Summit in 2017 prior to the Qatar Crisis, the main focus was not on the coalition or its potential to resolve the crisis. The recurring theme in Qatari speeches concerning Yemen consistently revolved around the significance of a national dialogue and political solutions derived from the Gulf Initiative and pertinent UN Security Council resolutions, a stance maintained even before the Qatar Crisis. There was also an absence of references to the coalition in the Emir's UN speeches. This cautious approach to avoid taking a firm stance against any party and the reluctance to overtly criticise the anti-coalition forces underscores Qatar's intent to maintain an independent role in the crisis.

From these speeches of Qatari officials, the following three NRCs emerge: a humanitarian agent, a supporter of international cooperation, and an advocate of state sovereignty. Qatar's emphasis on the necessity for humanitarian aid to Yemen, demonstrated through its pledges and contributions, solidified its role as a humanitarian actor in the crisis. Furthermore, Qatari policymakers consistently called for international cooperation in resolving the Yemeni crisis,

highlighting the inadequacy of unilateral actions by certain states that sought to further their own interests in the region. Therefore, these discourses reveal Qatar's position as a supporter of international cooperation and as an advocate of state sovereignty.

The Twitter activity of key Qatari figures, such as the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamed and the former Foreign Minister and current Defence Minister Khalid bin Mohammed, is limited regarding the Yemeni crisis. Emir Tamim bin Hamed has a relatively low tweet count, with only 225 tweets, and has not addressed the issue of Yemen on this platform. Khalid bin Mohammed's Twitter presence is slightly more substantial, with 285 tweets, but he has only mentioned Yemen once. This singular Arabic tweet was to offer condolences for the death of a Qatari soldier in Yemen in November 2015, which does not reflect a broader engagement with the Yemeni conflict on social media by these officials.

Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdurrahman has been an active user of Twitter since March 2016, which is two months after his appointment as foreign minister. Within the analysed time frame, he posted 2,329 tweets. Out of these, he tweeted about Yemen 23 times in Arabic, with 14 of these tweets having English translations, resulting in 23 unique tweets about Yemen. During the Qatar crisis, from June 2017 to January 2021, the tweets that were not translated into English generally addressed the worsening humanitarian situation in Yemen and called for an end to the conflict and support for national dialogue. The first tweet after the Al Ula Summit, which congratulated Saudi Arabia on initiating a ceasefire in Yemen, was also not translated into English. Subsequent tweets were translated. The untranslated tweets cover a variety of topics and actors related to the crisis, suggesting no pattern in content that would imply intentional exclusion of English translations. However, the timing of these untranslated tweets, exclusively during the Qatar crisis, indicates a deliberate choice to communicate these particular messages to an Arabic-speaking audience rather than an international one. This pattern may reflect a strategic communication approach during a sensitive geopolitical period, aiming to engage and perhaps align with regional sentiment more directly than with global opinion.

The first two tweets posted in April and May 2016 were to support Kuwaiti efforts to bring all parties together for a political solution. Most of the tweets until 2018 were about Qatari support for a political solution to the war. Also, two tweets were posted to condemn the

attacks on the Emirati and Saudi frigates. But neither of these two tweets mentions or criticises any group or country as attackers, mirroring Qatar's policy of not publicly blaming the Houthis or Iran as seen in official statements. The central theme of the tweets in 2018 was the repeated calls for a national dialogue among the parties in Yemen, as well as the calls for the international public about the necessity of humanitarian assistance to the country. Only two tweets were posted regarding the Yemeni civil war in 2019 as a part of a flood in which the warring parties were called to stop the war immediately (15.08.2019). This tweet's significance lies in its timing; it was posted on August 15, merely one week after the clashes between the Saudi-backed central government and the Emirati-backed Southern Transitional Council in Aden. Hence, it is reasonable to interpret these two tweets as an implicit critique of the Saudi and Emirati involvement in Yemen. Lastly, following the Al Ula Summit in 2021, Mohammed bin Abdurrahman tweeted his commendation to his Saudi counterpart on the initiative for a ceasefire in Yemen. The additional three tweets from that year focused on Qatar's humanitarian assistance to Yemen and its partnership with the UN in these efforts.

In conclusion, with a role theory lens, the most noticeable NRC that was expressed by the Qatari policymakers is the "independent" role, particularly since the onset of the Gulf Crisis. For instance, as quoted above, the Qatari Foreign Minister underlined this stance by explicitly stating that they do not support either Iran or the coalition in the Yemeni war. Similarly, Khalid bin Attiyah's statements in his interview with TRT World reflect his country's divergent attitude towards the Yemeni Civil War from other coalition members. Moreover, even before the Qatar Crisis erupted, Emir Tamim bin Hamad never acknowledged the coalition nor highlighted its efforts in resolving the Yemen crisis in his UN speeches, setting Qatar's position apart from that of the UAE and other coalition members.

The Qatari stance on Yemen, as articulated through various statements and tweets, also underscores their role as an "advocate of state sovereignty." This is evident in the repeated calls for external actors to withdraw and allow Yemeni parties to resolve their issues independently. This advocacy is complemented by the Emir's speeches at the UN, which emphasise the importance of national dialogue and the cessation of foreign interference, especially highlighted in the UN speech in 2019. The Foreign Minister of Qatar took a more direct approach, criticising foreign parties for contributing to the "meaningless stalemate" and the "humanitarian catastrophe" in Yemen, as seen in [his] speech in November 2017 and his

tweet on August 15, 2019. Qatari policymakers consistently supported international efforts to resolve the Yemeni crisis, pointing to the necessity of adhering to Security Council resolutions and the Gulf Initiative in the Emir's UN speeches. Similarly, the Foreign Minister's tweets in 2018 called for collective international action to meet Yemen's humanitarian needs.

This analysis demonstrates Qatar's roles in its Yemen policy as follows: (1) an independent actor not aligning itself with other intervening foreign powers, (2) an advocate of state sovereignty upholding the principle that Yemeni affairs should be settled by Yemenis, (3) a supporter of international cooperation endorsing collective efforts and initiatives, and (4) a humanitarian agent, emphasising the provision of aid and addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. These roles, as identified in the analysed data, frame Qatar's multifaceted position in the context of the Yemeni civil war.

2.3. The UAE's Foreign Policy and NRCs in Yemen: Unprecedented Involvement and Ideational Conflicts

The Emirati side of the story demonstrates a set of divergent NRCs. In April 2015, immediately after the decision to launch Operation Decisive Storm (GCC's intervention in Yemen) was taken, Emirati foreign minister Abdullah bin Zayed (2015) explicitly stated his country's commitment to the coalition, criticising the Houthis and Iran's expansionist policies in the region. His speeches at the UN General Assembly were structured almost in the same way each time, as follows: he firstly criticises Houthis and Iranian support for them as well as other Al-Qaeda-affiliated militant groups; he then expresses his country's support and commitment to the Saudi-led coalition and celebrates Saudi leadership; and finally he expresses his support for the UN resolutions by reminding that the political path is the best option to address issues and calls for humanitarian aid to Yemeni people (see UNGA 2016, 2017a, 2018). Even after the decision to withdraw its forces from Yemen in 2019, the content of the speeches did not visibly change. The only changes were the level of criticisms against Iran based on the then-relations between countries, references to Qatari funding for terrorist groups after June 2017 and increased emphasis on the significance of political solution in Yemen, notably in the 2019 and 2020 UN speeches (UNGA 2019b, 2020a). Nonetheless, foreign minister Abdullah bin Zayed continued to affirm that his country "commends the tremendous efforts made by the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" as reflected in his 2020 UN speech (UNGA 2020a).

The speeches of MBZ paralleled those of Abdullah bin Zayed in substance and tone. On March 21, 2015, at a GCC meeting, MBZ (2015a) articulated the importance of Yemen's stability for the Gulf's security. A month later, speaking to UAE forces in Taif on April 26, he reiterated the UAE's commitment to the security of the Arab region and its readiness to confront changes affecting Arab national security, highlighting solidarity with regional allies (Mohammed bin Zayed 2015b). At the GCC-USA Summit in Camp David in May 2015, MBZ (2015c) linked Gulf security with global stability and spoke of the GCC states' awareness and responsibility to uphold regional integrity, implying that the coalition's intervention in Yemen was part of this broader responsibility. Subsequent addresses by MBZ (2015d, 2015e, 2015f, 2019) echoed these sentiments, emphasising the need for regional stability and security (August 12 and October 15, 2015; July 15, 2019), the war in Yemen as an Arab issue requiring a unified Arab response (December 21, 2015; July 15, 2019), and the UAE's humanitarian efforts in Yemen (March 19, 2018).

The social media engagement from UAE policymakers concerning Yemen reflects the country's significant involvement in the conflict. Anwar Gargash, who served as the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, was particularly active on this front, with over 800 tweets about Yemen during the period in question. This high level of engagement on social media correlates with the UAE's active role in the Yemeni crisis and indicates a strategic use of digital platforms to communicate their foreign policy stance and actions.

MBZ posted 46 English and 66 Arabic tweets about Yemen. The English tweets were translations of Arabic ones. A notable number of Arabic tweets without English translations were posted during the Qatar crisis, a trend also observed in the tweets from the Qatari foreign minister. Upon reviewing the content of these Arabic tweets, there seems to be no significant distinction when compared to those published before or after the crisis. Thus, it remains difficult to infer any specific insights or conclusions from the absence of translations for these tweets.

The majority of MBZ's tweets were posted in 2015 and 2016, after the beginning of the Arab coalition's intervention in Yemen. These tweets predominantly discuss the rationale for the intervention and the UAE's role within the coalition. On May 5, 2015, he tweeted about the UAE's broader policy objectives, stating, "Our participation in restoring hope and eradicating

extremism in Yemen reflects our policy of preserving security and stability in GCC states." The commitment to counteract the forces causing destruction was clear in his tweet from September 4, 2015: "To defeat the rebellious and aggressive militias who caused all destruction and corruption in Yemen is a goal we shall continue to uphold." This sentiment was further enforced following a deadly attack on coalition forces, as he expressed on September 5, 2015: "Our heroes in the battlefields have become more determined and resilient to liberate Yemen from the Houthi thugs." The unity within the coalition and the objective of safeguarding Yemen's Arab identity were emphasised on October 15, 2015, with MBZ tweeting, "UAE, KSA, and the rest of the coalition will stand together until Yemen regains its Arab identity and is liberated from aggressors." Finally, on November 7, 2015, he highlighted the coalition's role in regional self-determination: "Coalition has proven Arabs have the capability and will to preserve their sovereignty, territorial integrity, prevent interference in their affairs." These tweets collectively reinforce the UAE's commitment to the security of the GCC, the goal of liberating Yemen from Houthi influence and external interference, and the protection of Arab sovereignty.

On July 15, 2016, MBZ attended a lecture by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash, whose tweets will be analysed in the following part, concerning the crisis in Yemen. Seven tweets, six of which were translated into English, were posted by quoting Gargash's statements from the lecture on MBZ's Twitter account. Initially, Gargash reflected on the inception of military operations, as one tweet relayed, "Gargash: Having exhausted all political means in the Yemeni crisis & with the Iranian support becoming clear, a decisive move had to be made." Another tweet conveyed the objectives of Operation Decisive Storm: "Gargash: Op Decisive Storm had 3 objectives: returning to political path, restoring legitimacy, responding to Iranian interference." After stating how the UAE's military and political performance surprised observers and how Emirati support was major for Saudi Arabia, MBZ posted a shocking tweet by directly quoting Gargash: "Our standpoint today is clear: war is over for our troops; we're monitoring political arrangements, empowering Yemenis in liberated areas." In the following days, as a response to the reaction on Twitter and other media channels regarding this controversial tweet, Anwar Gargash had to give several statements and post eleven tweets about how this sentence was understood out of context and to clarify the Emirati position in Yemen as a committed coalition partner. The final tweet from MBZ's Twitter

account regarding the lecture addressed the operation's nature as an autonomous Arab response to regional changes affecting Arab security. Notably, this was the sole tweet not provided with an English translation, possibly due to its pronounced focus on Arab identity.

Most of MBZ's tweets on Yemen in the rest of the period involved sharing updates about his bilateral talks with various political figures from Yemen, the UN, or other coalition members, as well as the UAE's humanitarian aid to Yemen. On May 5, 2019, MBZ posted three tweets to commend the Riyadh Agreement between the Yemeni government and the Emirati-backed Southern Transitional Council, expressing gratitude for Saudi Arabia's role in facilitating this agreement. The last two tweets by MBZ on Yemen were posted one day before the fifth anniversary of the UAE's participation in the coalition to congratulate and celebrate the efforts of the Emirati soldiers in the coalition. This could have been surprising given that it was posted almost one year after the UAE had announced its withdrawal from Yemen. Also, it was the first tweet posted by MBZ to celebrate the coalition on any of its anniversaries. Yet the tweets of the other three decision-makers revealed that it was also the day that most of the Emirati soldiers returned from Yemen. Finally, the second tweet of this flood underlined the UAE's role in the region: "The UAE will remain a bridge to peace & stability, supporting the region's progress of hope for a better life & a better tomorrow."

Prime Minister and the Emir of Dubai Mohammed bin Rashid posted 16 Arabic and 7 English tweets (all of them were translations of Arabic tweets) on Yemen during this period. First, four tweets were posted after the cabinet meeting on March 29, 2015. In these tweets, the UAE's pivotal role in maintaining the security and stability of the GCC, its commitment to the coalition's operation in Yemen that aims to stabilise Yemen and restore constitutional legitimacy in the country, the cabinet's appreciation for the "historic role of Saudi Arabia and its leadership protecting Arab soil from foreign interference and dominance" and wishes for Yemen to overcome the turmoil quickly were stated. Second, again, four tweets were shared after the Houthi attack on September 4, 2015, to express condolences and the UAE's strengthened determination to achieve victory under the leadership of Saudi Arabia. Third, on November 7, 2015, three tweets were posted to congratulate the return of the first group of soldiers from Yemen and their heroic performance in this war. Fourth, like MBZ, Mohammed bin Rashid shared a tweet to celebrate the Riyadh Agreement by underlining the efforts of Saudi Arabia on November 11, 2019. Finally, one day before the anniversary of the UAE's

participation in the coalition, Mohammed bin Rashid shared a tweet. But differently from MBZ, Mohammed bin Rashid's tweet put the main emphasis on the returning soldiers from Yemen and their military, political and humanitarian achievements during the war.

Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed posted 8 tweets, only in Arabic, related to Yemen between 2011 and 2021. The first four of them were posted in 2011 and 2012 to state his concerns about the turmoil in the country and his country's efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people. The following three tweets were shared in 2015: one to appreciate Saudi leadership in the coalition and criticise previous President Saleh's actions against the Hadi government supported by the coalition; one to celebrate the victory against Houthi forces in Aden; and the last one to announce the meeting with his Saudi counterpart on Yemen. He posted his last tweet on Yemen to praise the efforts of the Emirati soldiers who returned to their homeland in February 2020, like the then-Crown Prince and the Prime Minister.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (2008-2021) Anwar Gargash posted 846 tweets (633 Arabic and 213 English) about Yemen in this period. However, unlike others, almost none of these English tweets were translations of Arabic ones, necessitating an individual examination of all tweets. On the other hand, Gargash's Twitter presence was distinct in its informal tone compared to other policymakers, suggesting that he likely authored his tweets personally rather than delegating this task to advisors. This provides a more direct window into Gargash's own perspectives on the unfolding events in Yemen, rather than a mere echo of the UAE government's official statements. His active engagement on Twitter also makes him the most vocal policymaker among the leaders analysed on the subject of Yemen, with a higher volume of tweets than all other policymakers combined.

From the onset of the uprisings in 2011 to the GCC's military involvement in 2015, Gargash's tweets on Yemen were mostly about the GCC initiative for facilitating a political reconciliation process in the country and the Houthi coup in 2014. The tweets related to the initiative concentrated on the importance of stability in Yemen for the region (15.01.2012) and the UAE's commitment to facilitate the political process and ensure stability in Yemen (12.03.2013). Following the Houthi occupation of Sanaa, Gargash escalated his critique of the Houthis, labelling them a violent, sectarian group and drawing parallels between their

ideology and that of the MB, denouncing both for their partisan and exclusionary stances (26.09.2014). In early 2015, Gargash's criticism of the Houthis intensified as he highlighted Iranian support for the group as part of a broader sectarian agenda in the region. He shared a series of tweets, over 10 in the first quarter of 2015, emphasising the growing significance of the Yemeni crisis for Gulf countries and the urgency of a unified Arab stance in support of the legitimate Yemeni government and against Iranian influence (19.03.2015).

The frequency of Anwar Gargash's tweets about Yemen surged in 2015, coinciding with the commencement of Operation Decisive Storm by the GCC countries in March and the UAE's prominent role within the coalition. His tweets served to elucidate the rationale for the intervention and, more critically, the reasons behind the UAE's active participation. On April 21, 2015, Gargash outlined the coalition's objectives: "Our goals remain fixed; to end Iran's strategic threat & ensure regional security & restore legitimate gov. & political process in Yemen." He emphasised in a tweet on April 3, 2015, that Yemen's stability is integral to Gulf security, justifying the UAE's involvement in the coalition as a means to uphold Arabian Gulf security. In subsequent years, Gargash consistently underlined the significance of the Yemeni crisis to the Gulf, stating on August 19, 2018, "The Yemen crisis and its war are among the priorities fundamentally related to the future security and stability of the Arab Gulf and are not a secondary issue to us."

Given the substantial volume of tweets from Anwar Gargash during 2015-2021, an efficient approach to analysis involves categorisation under thematic subheadings rather than an exhaustive, individual examination. As previously mentioned, one segment of these tweets elucidates the UAE’s goals for joining the coalition. Second, Gargash persistently emphasised the partnership and alliance between the UAE and Saudi Arabia throughout this era. For instance, on July 15, 2015, he stated, "Yemen's test confirms that the UAE is the brave ally and loyal friend." This sentiment was reiterated on August 1, 2015: "The Yemen exam established an exceptional Saudi-Emirati relationship." He maintained this narrative on May 13, 2017: "The Emirati role in Yemen is supportive of Saudi Arabia…" and further clarified the UAE's stance on January 28, 2018: "The UAE's position on the events in southern Yemen is clear and principled in its support for the Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia, and there is no consolation for those who seek sedition." These statements collectively underscore the UAE's unwavering commitment to its alliance with Saudi Arabia within the context of the Yemeni conflict.

Third, in his tweets, Gargash accused six parties of being responsible for the Yemen crisis. He described Iran as the top threat to Yemen's and the Gulf's security and stability (05.04.2015). In addition to Iran, Gargash criticised Houthis and previous President Saleh, who allied with the Houthis against the Hadi government between 2014-2017, repeatedly as being the parties that dragged the country into the civil war (10.07.2015; 22.09.2015; 16.06.2016; 11.02.2017). Besides, he described the MB (31.08.2015; 22.11.2015; 12.05.2016) and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (12.05.2016; 06.08.2018; 13.08.2018) as the threats to both Yemen and the entire region. Finally, after the outbreak of the Qatar crisis, Gargash posted several tweets criticising Qatar's ties with Iran and the "campaign launched by the Qatari media against the UAE's role in Yemen…" (11.10.2017). For instance, just two months after the beginning of the crisis, Gargash posted the following tweet to point out the ties between Iran and Qatar: "The Qatari decision to return the ambassador to Tehran is accompanied by a broad and confused justification campaign. This is the case of the diversion practised by Doha in its stance towards Yemen and Iran." (25.08.2017). Additionally, Gargash targeted Qatari media, especially Al Jazeera, by accusing them of conducting an anti-coalition campaign:

> "Through the course of events and the Qatari media line, Doha became involved in the Yemeni crisis, a position that glorifies the Houthis and bets on the Brotherhood and seeks to compensate for the lack of international interest in the Qatar crisis by targeting Saudi Arabia and the UAE via Yemen, a twisted logic, but it is not surprising" (29.09.2019).

Fourth, Anwar Gargash's tweets frequently articulated the principle of "Arab solutions for Arab problems." This viewpoint was especially pronounced in a series of tweets where he addressed the positions of Turkey and Pakistan regarding Iran and their stance on the Yemeni civil war. On April 10, 2015, he concluded a discussion on this topic by stating, "The ambiguous and contradictory position of Pakistan and Turkey is the best evidence that Arab security from Libya to Yemen has an Arab title. The experience of neighbouring countries is the best witness to that." Additionally, he characterised the situation in Yemen as more than a Yemeni issue but an Arab confrontation with Iran's sectarian aggression involving various regional players and opportunistic regimes (10.10.2015). On the anniversary of the Gulf intervention in Yemen, Gargash shared a tweet thread underscoring how the Gulf countries carried "the banner of Arabism" (25.03.2016). Gargash highlighted the significance of the Saudi leadership's role in

the coalition, stating that its bold decision marked a critical juncture in history. He expressed confidence that the combined political resolve and the sacrifices by the coalition would outweigh the efforts of any insurgency or rebellion, ensuring the security of Arab capitals. Furthermore, he praised the coalition as its efforts would lead Yemen to “return to its natural Arab position thanks to this firm decision” (25.03.2016). In another tweet, Gargash stated that the UAE's participation in the coalition had both "strategic and nationalistic" motivations (13.05.2017).

Fifth, Gargash's evolving stance towards the Yemeni government is evident in his tweets over time. Initially, he frequently affirmed his and the UAE's support for the Yemeni government, often mentioning President Hadi by name during the first three years of the intervention. However, since March 2017, Gargash stopped including President Hadi's name in his tweets, aligning with the UAE's pivot from backing the Hadi government to supporting the Southern Transitional Council starting in 2017. This shift and the increasing Emirati control in Aden coincided with President Hadi labelling the UAE as an "occupier" in a May 2017 interview, reflecting rising tensions. Yemeni officials continued to express discontent, culminating in the Yemeni Foreign Minister's condemnation of the UAE's support for the Southern Transitional Council during his 2019 UN General Assembly speech, where he accused the UAE of attacking Yemeni forces. Gargash posted two tweets (21.05.2018 and 30.09.2019) to respond to such accusations of Yemeni officials and reiterated his country's commitment to the coalition in its war against the Houthi forces. Finally, Gargash started to mention the Southern forces or directly the Southern Transitional Council alongside the Yemeni government as a part of the negotiations when posting tweets about the political process in Yemen since the second half of 2019.

Sixth, as mentioned above, Gargash posted 633 Arabic and 213 English tweets in this period. However, while Gargash mostly tweeted in Arabic between 2011 and 2017 (504 Arabic, 61 English), he began to share both English and Arabic tweets almost equally (129 Arabic, 152 English) between 2018 and 2021. This change likely correlates with the heightened international efforts to initiate negotiations among the Yemeni parties, notably through UN-facilitated processes in Geneva and Stockholm in 2018. Gargash's supportive stance towards these diplomatic efforts was reflected in his tweets, many of which were in English, perhaps to reach a global audience. Moreover, the escalating humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which

gained increasing international prominence, may have influenced Gargash to tweet more in English to communicate with and justify the UAE's position to an international audience. Throughout this period, Gargash frequently called for an end to the conflict, urged participation in the political process, and highlighted the significant humanitarian contributions made by the UAE and Saudi Arabia, as exemplified in his tweet from July 19, 2019.

Lastly, In alignment with the shift towards emphasising a political resolution to the Yemeni conflict, Gargash began explicitly stating in his tweets from late 2018 that a military solution in Yemen was not viable, and only a political process could bring about lasting peace (16.01.2019) (also see 08.09.2018 and 11.01.2019). Despite this acknowledgement, Gargash also asserted that the military pressure exerted on the Houthis by the coalition was instrumental in driving the political dialogue, suggesting a justification for the UAE's military engagement in the conflict (13.12.2018, 30.01.2019. These statements were followed by the UAE's decision to withdraw most of its soldiers from Yemen in July 2019. As might be expected, this decision was perceived as a consequence of a rift between the coalition partners, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. To address these comments, Gargash posted several tweets underscoring that the UAE is still a member of the coalition and its commitment to its partnership with Saudi Arabia remains solid and strong (21.07.2019, 31.07.2019, 04.08.2019, 14.08.2019). From 2019 to 2021, Gargash has continued to emphasise the close ties between the UAE and Saudi Arabia and support the political process led by the UN and Saudi Arabia through the Riyadh Agreement. Finally, Gargash's following tweet posted in February 2021 summarises his country's current discourse regarding the Yemeni war:

> "The UAE ended its military involvement in Yemen in October of last year. Eager to see the war over, the UAE has supported UN efforts & multiple peace initiatives. Throughout the UAE has remained one of the largest providers of humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people" (04.02.2021).

With the lens of role theory, the most salient NRC that appears in all the policymakers' tweets or statements at least one time is its commitment to the alliance with Saudi Arabia which corresponds to the "faithful ally" NRC. As specified before, this NRC appears in MBZ's and

Mohammed bin Rashid's speeches and statements, the Foreign Minister's UN speeches and Gargash's tweets repeatedly, as being one of the most frequently stated NRC.

Also, as mentioned earlier, these leaders position the UAE as a significant partner of the bloc against the Iranian and even Turkish threat (see Gargash's tweet on 01.01.2019) to the Arab and especially Gulf countries. In a similar vein, protecting the security and stability of the GCC countries emerges as one of the most stated commitments in these statements. MBZ (2015d, 2015e, 2019 and tweets on 05.05.2015) stressed this commitment multiple times during the period. Furthermore, the word "stability" is mentioned 74 times and the word "security" 76 times in Gargash's 846 tweets. In this sense, these speeches attribute the "defender of the bloc" NRC to the country. Related to this role, highlighting the Iranian threat to the region on almost every occasion, they portray the UAE as a "bulwark against Iran/Iran's expansionism" (see UNGA 2016; Gargash's tweets on 21.03.2015, 10.10 2015, 16.06 2016). As an umbrella NRC, being ‘bulwark against Iran’ can be also classified as ‘bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs’.

The available data indicate that Emirati policymakers assume the "advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity" NRC for their countries as well. MBZ's (2015f, 2019) speeches underlining how the war in Yemen is an Arab cause and therefore requires a unified Arab stance and his tweets drawing attention to the Emirati efforts to preserve Arab identity against external interference (15.10.2015; 07.11.2015) demonstrate how this NRC finds a place in the UAE’s foreign policy narrative.

Anti-terrorist discourse occupies a significant place in these statements. These policymakers highlight the Emirati efforts in Yemen and other parts of the region to fight against terrorism, not only against "Houthi terror" but also against Da'esh (ISIS), Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda (and AQAP as its Yemeni branch) and finally the MB (UNGA 2017a, 2019; Gargash's tweets on 25.04.2016 and 06.08.2018). Accompanied by this "Anti-terrorism agent" NRC, Gargash's repeated emphasis on the UAE's capability to become an honest partner for the international and regional actors to protect security and stability as well as international shipping and global energy supplies in the region and also to fight against terrorism shows the embracement of "regional ally" NRC (12.03.2016; 13.04.2019; 07.06.2019).

Lastly, another NRC that appears in the discourses of Emirati foreign policymakers is the "humanitarian agent" role. As previously discussed, particularly in the last several years, the salience of this NRC increased in the statements, perhaps in accordance with the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Yemen and the increasing visibility of this issue on the international agenda.

As a conclusion of this section, the following table lists the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE in the Yemeni civil war. According to the table, while Qatar has four, the UAE has eight NRCs. The stark difference between the number of roles assumed by these countries demonstrates how active they were in Yemen. The high number of roles articulated by the Emirati leaders shows their countries' high level of involvement in the Yemeni civil war, especially compared to Qatar.

Table 3. NRCs of Qatar and the UAE in Yemen

United Arab Emirates' NRCs	Qatar's NRCs
Faithful Ally	Independent
Defender of the Bloc	Humanitarian Agent
Advocate/Facilitator of Arab Solidarity	Advocate of State Sovereignty
Bulwark against Iran	Supporter of International Cooperation
Bulwark against External Intervention in Arab Affairs	
Anti-terrorism Agent	
Humanitarian Agent	
Regional Ally	

2.4. Socialisation: Different Responses to the Same Expectations from the Common Socialiser

In examining the process of socialisation for Qatar and the UAE within the context of the Yemeni conflict, it is essential to consider the role of Saudi Arabia. As the largest and most populous country in the GCC, Saudi Arabia exerts influence on the foreign policy decision-

making of the other member states, though this influence varies from one country to another (Gervais 2019: 34). Within this framework, Saudi Arabia established a coalition that included all GCC members, barring Oman, as well as a number of other Sunni states, including Senegal, Sudan and Eritrea, to counter the Houthi movement in Yemen (Hokayem and Roberts 2016).

Unlike the other two civil wars that will be analysed in the following chapters, external intervention in the Yemeni civil war was relatively limited during the study period. Notably, Turkey, which was assertively involved in the civil wars in Syria and Libya, did not play any significant role in Yemen. Similarly, major international powers such as the US, Russia, and the EU did not intervene in Yemen, neither by providing game-changing financial and political support to any of the warring parties nor by deploying troops or mercenaries as they did in Syria and Libya. Consequently, the less internationalised nature of the war in Yemen allowed Saudi Arabia to remain the dominant actor influencing the foreign policies of other involved countries.

Considering the Saudi leadership in Yemen, two main roles appear to manifest themselves: regional leader/protector and bulwark against Iranian expansion. As Darwich (2018) puts forward, the motivations behind Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen were to assert its leadership status in the region and counter the Iranian presence in Yemen, as an extension of the region-wide rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. These motivations reveal themselves in the statements of the leading figures of Saudi Arabia, including the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman and the then-Foreign Minister Adel el-Jubeir. Saudi leaders repeatedly emphasised that Tehran stands as Riyadh's principal adversary. In June 2016, Adel al-Jubeir asserted that the exportation of the Islamic revolution is fundamental to Iran's geopolitical ambitions. He contended that this objective underpins Iran's support for terrorism, its meddling in the internal affairs of other nations, and its efforts to destabilise the region (Willner 2022). Referring to Iran's armed support for the Houthis, Mohammed bin Salman accused Iran of attempting to conquer the world and expand its "pure evil" ideology and underlined his country's aim to prevent that (Goldberg 2019).

Laub (2015) notes that Saudi Arabia's efforts to bring together a group of Sunni-majority Arab countries, consisting of all GCC members excluding Oman, were also aimed to serve Riyadh's goal to strengthen its leadership in this bloc. Consolidating its leadership increasingly became

a matter of concern for Saudi Arabia given that the bloc was divided on various issues unfolded across the region since the beginning of the Arab uprisings. In this context, Saudi Arabia attempted to socialise the members of the coalition to strengthen its position in assuming these roles that addressed its attempts to reinforce its leadership in the Arab Sunni bloc, particularly the GCC countries, and counter the Iranian expansion in the region. Thus, the roles suitable for these small countries were the faithful ally and the member of the anti-Iran coalition from the stance of Saudi Arabia.

As evidenced earlier by the statements, the UAE demonstrated a strong willingness to accommodate Saudi Arabia's expectations by presenting itself as a close ally of Saudi Arabia in its war against the Houthis in Yemen and the alleged Iranian expansionism in the region. The UAE leaders repeatedly emphasised the significance of Saudi leadership in Yemen, which came with its advantages that enabled the UAE to avoid international criticisms, at least not the level of international reaction Saudi Arabia faced when the humanitarian situation deteriorated in Yemen during the war (Dogan Akkas 2021b; Mason 2023). The recurring emphasis on the "faithful ally" role within these statements underscores the UAE's alignment with Saudi Arabia's socialisation efforts. Moreover, the "bulwark against Iran" role is manifested in the consistent backing of Saudi leadership and in the persistent critique of Iranian influence in Yemen and across the broader region, indicating the UAE's readiness to embrace and conform to these roles.

However, the case was different for Qatar. Although Qatar joined the coalition forces with 1000 soldiers and more than 200 armoured vehicles in 2015, as claimed by Al Jazeera (2015), its discourse towards the war was never shaped around a strong alliance with Saudi Arabia and an anti-Iranian stance. Instead, as presented above, there was no reference to Iran in the statements and tweets of the Qatari leaders. Furthermore, after Qatari forces were expelled from the coalition by Saudi Arabia, the Qatari defence minister declared that his country found itself obliged to join the coalition (Lennie 2017). Establishing the Saudi activities in the region with the Gulf Crisis, the Qatari Minister of Economy asserted that it is Saudi Arabia, not Iran, that is destabilising the region through its war in Yemen, its political involvement in Lebanon attacking Lebanon's sovereignty, and leading the full-scaled blockade and embargo on Qatar (Cochran 2019). Thus, this stance suggests that Qatar challenged the Saudi attempts to socialise itself as a faithful ally and a member of the anti-Iranian coalition. Assuming the

independent and supporter of international cooperation roles, it rather pursued a more independent foreign policy in its approach to the Yemeni civil war and Iran. The vocal critique of the Arab coalition's actions in Yemen and the advocacy for a national dialogue, reflective of the "advocate of state sovereignty" role, further demonstrate Qatar's reluctance to align with Saudi Arabia's socialisation strategies in the Yemeni context.

In other words, Qatar's decision to not align with Saudi Arabia in Yemen, particularly towards Iran resulted in punitive measures from its regional socialiser. The Gulf crisis in 2017 manifested as responses from Qatar's neighbours, led by Saudi Arabia, due to its hesitation to conform to their expectations. This case underscores that socialisation involves not just the acceptance and enactment of expectations by the socialisee but also includes discord and "punishment" when the recipient fails to comply (Thies 2012, 2013).

3. Conclusion

This chapter sought to explore the foreign policy approaches of Qatar and the UAE towards the Yemeni civil war through the lens of role theory. The analysis was structured in two phases: initially identifying the NRCs of each country, followed by an examination of their socialisation experiences with a focus on Saudi Arabia's socialisation endeavours. The findings on socialisation present that whereas the UAE assumed a compromising approach to the roles expected by Saudi Arabia, Qatar followed a divergent policy and undertook different and even conflicting roles despite the Saudi expectations, which finally led to the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis in June 2017.

This role location process showed its reflections when NRCs were identified. The two roles expected by Saudi Arabia for these countries to follow (faithful ally, bulwark against the Iranian expansion) appeared to be among the most stated NRCs in the speeches of the Emirati foreign policymakers. Furthermore, the NRCs of advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity, defender of the bloc and anti-terrorism agent strongly support these two NRC. The advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity NRC mainly manifested itself as a response to the Iranian interference in Arab affairs. Similarly, the anti-terrorism agent NRC had references to the war against Iranian-backed Houthis as well as MB-affiliated groups and AQAP. The defender of the bloc NRC was

a representation of siding with Saudi Arabia to react against Iran and other militant groups that pose a threat to the region's security and stability, according to this coalition.

For Qatar, on the contrary, a strong emphasis on the alliance with Saudi Arabia or the Saudi-led coalition and an anti-Iranian discourse did not reveal themselves, even between 2015 and 2017 during which Qatar was a part of the coalition in Yemen, in the statements of Qatari foreign policymakers. Instead, the analysis showed that independent, advocate of state sovereignty and supporter of international cooperation NRC became dominant in the Qatari foreign policymakers' discourses, particularly after the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis in 2017. This attitude demonstrates that Qatar not only assumed a neutral position after the crisis but also followed a critical approach to the Saudi-led coalition by stressing the significance of respecting Yemen's national sovereignty and an international endeavour to bring the armed conflict to an end.

Revisiting the title of this chapter, the Emirati intervention in Yemen stands as the country's most assertive military action in its history. This assertiveness, coupled with its strategic alignment with Saudi Arabia, was driven by a shared commitment to countering Iranian expansion in the region. Additionally, the UAE pursued diversified goals by establishing ties with regional groups to secure more geopolitical and economic gains from the civil war, while also targeting Islamist elements such as AQAP and the MB, as it has done in other parts of the region.

Qatar joined the Arab coalition in March 2015, although Qatari foreign policymakers never indicated an intention to counter Iran or MB-affiliated political Islamist groups in Yemen. In other words, Qatar was never fully aligned with its coalition partners regarding the objectives of the intervention in Yemen. The Gulf Crisis prompted Qatari leaders to openly express their country's disagreements with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Qatar's critical stance towards the coalition's intervention became evident as it repeatedly called on coalition members to cease military activities that were causing a humanitarian disaster in Yemen and to respect the country's sovereignty. Positioning itself as an independent actor, Qatar advocated for an end to the war and the creation of an environment conducive to local actors beginning peace negotiations.

To sum up, these findings show that these two countries were socialised by the same actor, but they located their roles in the opposite way; whereas the UAE compromised with the expectations, Qatar challenged them, and this process led to the Gulf Crisis in 2017. Looking at the statements of the foreign policymakers demonstrates that these countries identified their role conceptions differently towards the war in Yemen. These divergent role conceptions led them to follow different and, to some extent, opposing foreign policies.

CHAPTER V

LIBYAN CIVIL WAR: THE UAE'S ANTI-ISLAMIST AGENDA AND QATAR'S ADVOCACY FOR THE LEGITIMACY OF TRIPOLI GOVERNMENT

1. Introduction

Following the end of Muammar Gaddafi's four-decade rule, Libya's transitional government and subsequent elected national assembly struggled to cement security and stability. This tumultuous period culminated in escalated tensions, precipitating a civil war in 2014. The war broke out between the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) located in the capital, Tripoli, and the Tobruk-based Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Khalifa Haftar. As the armed conflict escalated and took on a highly political and ideological character, it transformed into an international conflict due to the intervention of external actors. Turkey and Qatar have taken the lead in supporting the Government of National Accord (GNA), which reportedly includes political Islamist elements associated with the MB. In contrast, Russia, Egypt, and the UAE are the principal countries providing military and political support to the forces of General Haftar, who is known for his anti-Islamist stance.

Building on the previous chapter's exploration of the civil war in Yemen, the situation in Libya presents an opportunity to analyse how Qatari and Emirati foreign policies were shaped when engaged in a conflict geographically distant from their borders. Specifically, this case may reveal changes in the nature or extent of the roles they adopt, contingent upon the unique aspects of the conflicts and how these relate to Qatar and the UAE. This chapter will mirror the structure of the prior one, beginning with an overview of the existing literature concerning the foreign policies of these two countries in the Libyan conflict. Subsequently, it will delve into their NRCs and experiences of socialisation. The chapter will conclude with an analysis based on role theory to elucidate the reasons behind the differences in their Libyan policies.

Qatar's approach to Libya underwent a significant shift following the collapse of the Qaddafi regime, particularly in terms of its level of activeness and assertiveness. Initially, Qatar's political, economic, and military help to NATO and local rebel factions during the early stages of the revolution later gave way to a more restrained foreign policy stance, notably after the

change in leadership with the new Emir in 2013. One contributing factor to this policy shift was the failure of Qatar's strategic calculations (Krieg 2021a). Evidence of these misjudgements was clear from the changing attitudes towards Qatar in North African countries: In 2011, protestors carried and displayed Qatar's national flag through the streets, a gesture of gratitude for Qatar's significant support (Zhdannikov, Doherty, and Abbas 2011). By 2013, however, the mood had shifted dramatically; those same streets saw the Qatari flag being burned by protestors, signalling a stark reversal of public sentiment (Walt 2013). Ulrichsen (2016a, p. 119) attributes this policy change to Qatar's overestimation of its capacity to "trigger far-reaching changes to regional structure." Since 2019, however, Qatar has re-engaged more actively in the Libyan conflict. This time, adopting a multilateral approach, Qatar has been aligning its policies with various actors, including the internationally recognised government in Tripoli, Turkey, the United States, and the European Union (Krieg 2021a).

Qatar's support for political Islamist groups post-Qaddafi regime is viewed as being driven by ideological alignment. Yet, some researchers consider its alliance with these groups, and ultimately with the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), known to include political Islamist parties with alleged MB ties, as a strategic move influenced by power dynamics in Libya. Cafiero (2020) contends that Qatar's engagement with these political Islamist factions was not ideologically motivated but was based on the groups' effectiveness as revolutionaries. In a similar vein, Krieg (2021a) suggests that Qatar's policy in Libya is pragmatic, stating, "The selection of partners on the ground followed a rationale of operational effectiveness and not ideological alignment" (54).

After the uprising broke out, the UAE also followed the path of supporting protestors against the Qaddafi government. After the regime fell, the UAE's policy shifted to actively oppose political Islamist groups within Libya, a stance reflective of its broader regional approach. Badi (2020) underlines Khalifa Haftar's obsession with Islamism as one of the primary motivations that pushed the UAE to support his forces. In doing so, Badi notes, the UAE desired to see the establishment of a military dictatorship that would crush any forms of political Islamist groups in the country. In a similar vein, Hedges (2021) discusses this attitude around the ideological motivations revealing themselves through the "counterterrorism" narrative as often used by Emirati policymakers. Bakir (2020) highlights the UAE's strict position against all the elements

of political Islamism, especially the MB and the affiliated groups, in the region. Bakir identifies four main factors driving the UAE's policy in Libya: (1) the anti-democratic stance towards the uprisings all around the region, (2) the aim to establish the Egyptian model in Libya with the installation of an ally military dictatorship, (3) interests in the ports of Libya which has a long coast in the Mediterranean, (4) and the general material interests (military and economic) to bolster its power region-wide.

These works in the literature seek to elucidate the factors influencing Qatar and the UAE's policymaking during the Libyan civil war. The analyses suggest various ideational and material motivations, such as the Emirati resistance to any form of potential Islamist governance in the region and both countries' financial stakes in Libya. This study aims to conduct a systematic examination of these motivations, creating a nuanced and comprehensive account that extends beyond Libya to include Yemen, as discussed in the previous chapter, and Syria, which will be covered in the next chapter. To achieve this, the current chapter will employ role theory to compare Qatari and Emirati foreign policies in Libya. This approach will allow for an exploration of the interplay between agents and structures and the dynamic relationship between them that influenced their positions in the Libyan civil war. Accordingly, the next section will analyse the statements from key foreign policymakers in both countries to discern their expressed NRCs regarding Libya. This will be followed by an evaluation of the socialisation processes experienced by the two states. The final section will synthesise these insights and present an analysis of the findings.

2. Role Theoretical Analysis

This section will utilise role theory to interpret the data previously collected and analysed. The analysis will unfold in two phases. Initially, it will establish the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE by examining the official statements made by their principal foreign policymakers. Subsequently, it will explore the socialisation processes of the two countries, scrutinising their diplomatic engagements with other nations involved in the Libyan conflict.

2.1. Keywords to Identify NRCs

Following the methodology chapter, content analysis was conducted on the statements, ranging from the interviews given to the speeches they made at different platforms regarding

the Libyan civil war, of the previously stated foreign policymakers. After selecting these figures and finding the official sources to reach their statements, all references to the civil war in Libya in all speeches on the official and personal websites were searched, including all speeches given by the Emir of Qatar and the Foreign Minister of the UAE at the UN General Assembly since 2011. As a result, 47 documents were collected in this process, 31 for Qatar and 16 for the UAE.

Tweets posted by these policymakers were also included in this analysis. The following 12 keywords were specified to search in these tweets: Libya (ليبيا), Qaddafi (القذافي)[14], National Transitional Council (المجلس الوطني الانتقالي المؤقت)[15], General National Congress (المؤتمر الوطني العام)[16], Government of National Accord (GNA) (حكومة الوفاق الوطني)[17], House of Representatives

[14] Previous Libyan President whose rule came to an end on 20 October 2011, after the Arab uprising.
[15] The transitional government, which was formed following the onset of the protests, remained in power until elections were held. After the July 7, 2012, elections, this government transferred authority to the elected General National Congress.
[16] Internationally recognised legislative authority in Libya from the July 2012 elections to the June 2014 elections.
[17] The government of Libya, recognised by the UN and based in Tripoli, which was in power from December 2015 until March 2021. This government was internationally regarded as the legitimate executive authority in Libya for those six years. The Government of National Accord (GNA) was also one of the two principal factions engaged in the Libyan civil war. Supported predominantly by Turkey and Qatar, the GNA faced allegations from domestic opposition forces and countries backing anti-GNA groups, including the UAE, of being heavily influenced by Islamist factions, many of which were associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

مجلس النواب)[18], Libyan National Army (LNA) (الجيش الوطني الليبي)[19], Tripoli (طرابلس)[20], Tobruk (طبرق)[21], Benghazi (بنغازي)[22], Sarraj (السراج)[23] and Haftar (حفتر)[24].

As in the preceding chapter, the approach to specifying these keywords was to include actors, events and locations relevant to the case. The actors, events and locations were selected through a review of the literature on the Libyan civil war. For this conflict, the keywords identified to compile the tweets included the mentioned actors (Qaddafi, National Transitional Council, General National Congress, Government of National Accord, House of Representatives, Libyan National Army, Sarraj and Haftar) and events/locations (Tripoli, Tobruk and Benghazi). Events and locations were grouped under these three locations in this case, as the names of the major events that occurred during this war already included these three locations or Libya itself, such as the Western Libya Campaign or the Tripoli Offensive. Also, the tweet threads in which at least one of the tweets includes one of these keywords to the analysis in order to avoid missing tweets that do not involve any of these words but are still

[18] The legislative authority in Libya that was formed after the June 2014 elections. However, the House of Representatives shifted its base from Tripoli to Tobruk following the outbreak of the civil war in August 2014. Until the reconciliation in March 2021, the House of Representatives supported the Libyan National Army led by General Khalifa Haftar in opposition to the Tripoli-based GNA in the war.

[19] The Libyan National Army is a faction in the Libyan civil war that primarily represents the eastern part of Libya, with its leadership based in Tobruk. It was formed in 2014 by General Khalifa Haftar and positioned itself as the armed force of the House of Representatives, which opposed the Tripoli-based GNA. The LNA espouses an anti-Islamist and secular ideology, promoting itself as a bulwark against Islamic extremism, which put it at odds with the GNA, as the GNA was perceived to be supported by Islamist factions. Internationally, the LNA has received varying degrees of support from countries such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Russia, who view Haftar's forces as a stabilising influence in the region and a check against Islamist groups. The conflict between the LNA and the GNA was a central axis of the broader Libyan conflict, contributing significantly to the country's ongoing instability and fragmentation.

[20] The capital of Libya that hosted the UN-recognised and Turkey and Qatar-backed GNA during the civil war.

[21] Tobruk is a port city in eastern Libya that served as the base for the House of Representatives and the Libyan National Army during the Libyan Civil War. The terms "Tripoli" and "Tobruk" were included in the search keywords because, in the literature and official discourse, the Government of National Accord is often referred to as the "Tripoli government" or simply "Tripoli," while the House of Representatives and the LNA are referred to as the "Tobruk government," or just "Tobruk."

[22] Benghazi, Libya's second most populous city, served as a stronghold for militant Islamist groups that united under the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries from the outset of the civil war in 2014 until 2017. Both domestic and international actors involved in the conflict, including the Libyan National Army (LNA) and the UAE, highlighted the significance of Benghazi to emphasise their commitment to combating extremism and terrorism throughout the war.

[23] Fayez el-Sarraj, the Prime Minister of the GNA between March 2016 and March 2021.

[24] Khalifa Haftar is a key figure in the Libyan civil war as the commander of the (LNA), aligned with the eastern-based House of Representatives. He positioned himself as a staunch opponent of the GNA, advocating for a militaristic approach to governance and pledging to rid Libya of Islamist militias and extremists. Haftar's efforts to take control of the country, including a protracted and unsuccessful campaign to capture Tripoli, have received support from international actors like Egypt, the UAE, and Russia.

related to Libya contextually were added. In total, 167 tweets were collected, 52 for Qatar and 115 for the UAE.

2.2. Qatar's Foreign Policy and NRCs in Libya: Emphasis on State Sovereignty and Multilateral Efforts

Reviewing the statements of Qatari foreign policymakers, one explicitly observes their consistent support for the internationally recognised government in Tripoli. This stance is evident in various speeches, statements, or tweets during the period analysed, with the support intensifying at times, particularly during offensives against the Tripoli government, as was witnessed in 2019. Such support is commonly coupled with criticisms of foreign interventions in the conflict. While these criticisms explicitly target specific countries on several occasions, such as when a high-level Qatari foreign policy officer at the UN General Assembly in 2017 accused the UAE of violating the Security Council's resolution on Libya, the majority are articulated without naming any country (UNGA 2017b). For example, at the opening of the 48th Advisory Council in 2019, the Qatari Emir underscored:

> "We affirm that the support of some countries for those who are outside the political process and international legitimacy is the main impediment to achieving stability in Libya" (Tamim bin Hamed 2019).

In a similar vein, when asked about Qatar's stance on Libya at the World Policy Conference in 2019, the Qatari Foreign Minister responded:

> "There are many other countries that you did not mention here who are funding various groups and militias, undermining the legitimate government. Qatar does not align with any political party and does not pursue a specific agenda in the region. Our goal is to see stability in the region. Qatar is not a political party." (Mohammed bin Abdurrahman 2019).

Furthermore, the data gathered shows that the level of criticism escalated after the Gulf Crisis began in 2017. Specifically, the conflict between Qatar and the UAE manifested in Libya through their support for opposing factions and, on some occasions, through direct criticisms of each other. These confrontations were primarily over their stances on Islamist groups and

their relations with non-Arab regional powers, namely Turkey and Iran. This dynamic has been noted in the literature review and was also apparent in the analysis of the Yemen case, especially regarding their divergent views on Iran and the MB, along with its domestically affiliated parties. In this context, the same trend has been observed in Libya.

The third key element in the statements of Qatari foreign policymakers is an emphasis on the necessity of international support to resolve the Libyan crisis. Qatar frequently underscored its role in collaborative international efforts, aligning itself with UN resolutions that sought to establish peace and stability in Libya. The focus was on creating a strategy that would encourage dialogue among local parties and prevent the escalation of the war by external third-party involvement. This discourse aligns with Qatar's broader multilateral approach, which became prominent following the ineffectiveness of its earlier direct support to certain factions in the initial two years after Qaddafi's regime. Moreover, Qatari officials did not shy away from critiquing the broader international community. They expressed concern over a perceived hesitance to confront crises in the Middle East and accuse the global powers of a selective application of international law with a double standard, which they argued contributes to ongoing turmoil, as Emir Tamim stated at the UN General Assembly in 2019 (UNGA 2019a).

The Qatari Foreign Minister highlighted his country's mediation efforts among Libyan factions during his remarks in 2016 and 2017 (Mohammed bin Abdurrahman 2016, 2017c). He carefully steered clear of any language that would suggest an active Qatari role in Libyan affairs. For example, at the Joint High Committee meeting in 2016, Mohammed bin Abdurrahman (2016) emphasised that Qatar's role was strictly that of a facilitator, providing a neutral venue and acting as a host for dialogue. This stance likely stems from a strategic shift towards a more understated policy Qatar adopted after acknowledging the negative consequences of its pronounced engagement in Libya from 2011 to 2013. This more reserved approach coupled with a consistent reaffirmation of Libyan sovereignty and a vocal stance against foreign interference.

Viewed through the lens of role theory, the most pronounced NRC that emerges from Qatari policymakers' discourse, especially more saliently after the 2019 offensive against the Tripoli government, is the 'advocate of state sovereignty'. The speeches delivered by the Emir of

Qatar at the UN General Assembly consistently highlighted Qatar's dedication to upholding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each member nation, advocating for non-interference in their domestic affairs. This stance became increasingly pronounced following the onset of the Gulf Crisis. The blockading countries were seen as intruding on Qatar's internal matters, which likely led Qatari foreign policymakers to draw parallels between their situation and those countries experiencing internationalised civil conflicts. Criticism aimed at those who meddled in Libya's internal matters was, for the most part, issued without direct reference to specific countries. Yet, as previously mentioned, there were instances where countries like the UAE were singled out by name. Following these criticisms, there was a palpable call for support of the internationally recognised Tripoli government, which Qatari officials argued was crucial for the attainment of peace and stability in Libya. These two themes, support for the Tripoli government and criticism of foreign intervention, feature prominently in the discourse.

Qatari policymakers consistently emphasised the NRC of 'supporter of international cooperation'. This NRC was manifested through persistent calls to the international community, with a particular emphasis on the UN, to invest efforts in forging a pathway for internal parties towards a political process aimed at resolving the crisis. Furthermore, these statements serve to remind the international community of Qatar's active participation in past collaborative efforts and reaffirm its readiness to contribute to any forthcoming international initiatives.

In several statements, Qatari foreign policymakers have articulated their nation's role as a mediator in the Libyan conflict (see (Mohammed bin Abdurrahman 2016, 2017c). As previously mentioned, these declarations carefully avoided any implications of Qatar being an active participant in Libyan internal affairs. Instead, they underscored Qatar's position as a facilitator or host, offering a neutral ground for Libyan factions to engage in dialogue towards a resolution. This subdued approach aligns with a broader, multilateral strategy, suggesting a pivot from Qatar's more direct involvement during the period of 2011 to 2013. It reflects a deliberate policy choice to favour diplomatic avenues that support collective efforts to resolve the crisis, rather than taking on a more conspicuous role. By advocating this approach, Qatar reinforced its commitment to regional stability through collaboration.

Taking into account the three NRCs, it becomes evident that Qatar carved out a position for itself as a proponent of diplomatic efforts. This is demonstrated by its consistent calls to the international community for increased engagement in peacebuilding initiatives and by offering itself as a facilitator, providing a venue where conflicting parties can convene for dialogue. This diplomatic tact was further reinforced by a multilateral policy that lent support to the internationally recognised government in Tripoli. Qatar's role as a mediator was not limited to providing logistical support; it extended to advocating for a coherent and unified international response that underscores the principles of sovereignty and self-determination, criticising external actor's involvement deepening the crisis and extending the war.

2.3. The UAE's Foreign Policy and NRCs in Libya: Anti-terrorism Discourse and Alignment with Anti-Islamist Actors

The narrative from the UAE perspective prominently featured discourses condemning terrorism, expressing concerns over the rise of political Islamism, and the activities of the MB or affiliated groups in Libya. These topics were recurrently intertwined in the statements of Emirati policymakers. Anwar Gargash characterised the MB as a catalyst for exclusion and conflict in the region in his tweets (31.08.2015; 18.10.2015). Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed (UNGA 2018) articulated that the Emirati engagement in Libya was driven by an imperative to liberate cities from the grip of extremism and terrorism, as stated in his speech at the UN General Assembly in 2018. Gargash, in a tweet dated 29.05.2018, emphasised Khalifa Haftar's critical role in Libya and denounced efforts to discredit him, suggesting that such actions would undermine his effectiveness in the fight against extremism and terrorism. Furthermore, the Emirati stance was wary of the presence of Islamist factions in Libya, especially those associated with the government in Tripoli. Gargash expressed concerns regarding extremist militants commandeering the capital in both a newspaper article and tweets (Gargash 2019; 02.05.2019).

Support for international efforts was another prominent topic in these statements. Emirati policymakers affirmed their country's commitment to the United Nations' initiatives to facilitate a political process in Libya. They endorsed internationally mediated dialogues and conferences, as evidenced by Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed, who consistently supported these endeavours in his United Nations speeches (see UNGA 2018, 2019). MBZ

(18.01.2020) and Gargash (17.01.2020) signalled their approval of the Berlin Conference, which gathered global and regional powers to discuss a ceasefire and a political solution to the Libyan conflict in January 2020. Furthermore, Gargash highlighted the UAE's harmonious policy with France regarding Libya, stating:

> "The UAE will always act with good intentions and alongside like-minded partners such as France to protect the best interests of the region and its people" (Gargash 2019).

He also reinforced this partnership by tweeting:

> "We join our voice with the clear French position against foreign interference, and we prioritize a comprehensive political solution for the Libyans" (21.06.2020).

Another recurring subject in these statements is the critique of Turkey's intervention in Libya. At the 2020 UN General Assembly, the Foreign Minister articulated his country's 'deep concern regarding Turkey's military interference in Libya' (UNGA 2020a). He characterised this as a disturbing aspect of the regional meddling in Arab nations that aggravated the humanitarian crisis, impeded the pursuit of a peaceful resolution, and destabilised the wider region. Additionally, during a conversation with the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, he declared that 'Turkey's current role in the Arab region is not welcome' (Khalid, 2020). Gargash's denunciations of Turkey were even more strident. He accused Turkey of crafting a regional policy that sought to revive its 'imperialistic past.' Following French President Macron's condemnation of Turkey for purportedly transporting jihadists from Syria to Libya and labelling Turkish actions in Libya as 'criminal,' Gargash (2020a) penned a newspaper article criticising Turkey's 'Neo-Ottoman expansionism' and its affiliations with the MB and Qatar. Furthermore, Gargash branded the Turkish Defence Minister's comments about Libya as 'provocative' and as representing 'a new low in his country's diplomacy.' He argued that 'relations are not managed by threats, and there is no place for colonial illusions in these times,' advocating for Turkey to cease its interventions in Arab affairs (01.08.2020).

Related to the previous topic, the discourse of "Arab solutions for Arab problems" occupied an important place in these statements. In his newspaper article published in March 2019 and titled "Our solution for Libya", Gargash noted:

> "No outside country will any longer guarantee regional security, as Britain once did, and as the United States did until recently. We must step up… the new reality is that Arab states are taking more responsibility for their own and the region's security" Gargash 2019).

He was vocal on social media about the need for Arab unity in addressing the Libyan crisis, stating his support for President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's Libya-related speech as evidence of the Arab world's commitment to sovereignty and resistance to violation by regional actors. He tweeted his concerns about the urgency of strengthening the Arab system and upholding principled positions that preserve stability and sovereignty (21.06.2020). Further expressing these sentiments, Gargash mentioned the collective Arab effort to reclaim the initiative in regional matters, acknowledging the challenges ahead but affirming the growing strength of this endeavour:

> "The growing Arab tendency to regain the initiative after our field became positive and permissible. The road is still bumpy, but the battle to fortify the Arab regional system is getting stronger every day" (29.07.2020).

Gargash (2020b) also conveyed a strong stance against external intervention in Arab affairs during his speech at the UN Security Council's Libya Session in July 2020, where he advocated for an Arab-led political solution and condemned the use of mercenaries and militias. He stressed the criticality of the Arab role when he discussed the UAE's support for the Berlin Conference and subsequent processes aimed at facilitating a political resolution in Libya. He highlighted that the participation of Arab entities like Egypt, Algeria, the UAE, and the Arab League at the Berlin conference was a crucial factor in ensuring that the Arab perspective is integral to the peace and stability efforts in Libya (19.01.2020). He warned against the marginalisation of the Arab role, referencing the situation in Syria as a lesson that should not be replicated. Gargash underscored the involvement of the UAE in the ministerial follow-up meeting of the Berlin Conference on Libya in Munich, reaffirming his country's collaboration with international partners to forge a political solution that tackles extremism and terrorism, and asserted the indispensability of the Arab contribution to these efforts (16.02.2020).

The dataset reviewed reveals a distinct NRC frequently portrayed by Emirati foreign policymakers, designated as the 'anti-terrorism agent'. These statements framed the UAE's involvement in Libya as part of a broader campaign against terrorism and extremism. The UAE justified its support for specific local groups by highlighting these groups' alignment with anti-extremism efforts. For example, during the 2017 UN General Assembly, the Foreign Minister levelled criticism against Qatar, accusing it of destabilizing the region by backing groups opposed by the UAE (UNGA 2017a). This narrative extended to criticisms of Turkey's actions in Libya as well, where Emirati officials accuse Turkey of forming alliances with groups deemed terrorist by the UAE and some other Arab nations, including the MB. In addition, they ground their support for the Haftar forces, underlining their stated mission of fighting against terrorism or Islamist extremism, referring to the Islamist elements reportedly affiliated with the MB in the Tripoli government. Further examining these statements, the Emirati 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC can be perceived as a fundamental aspect of their foreign policy doctrine. This doctrine goes beyond mere military engagement and incorporates a broad strategy to counteract ideologies and networks that they consider extremist. It also involves diplomatic efforts to rally international support against such groups and entities that the UAE identifies as threats to regional stability. Through these varied efforts, the UAE seeks to assert its position as a key player in the international struggle against terrorism, aiming to project a narrative of dedication to security and stability not only in Libya but across the broader Middle East and North African region.

Related to that, being a "defender of the bloc" and acting as a member of the coalition against external intervenors in Arab affairs are other visible NRCs in these statements. In the Libyan case, this mainly reveals itself against Turkey's increasing involvement in the civil war in favour of the Tripoli government. As mentioned above, Emirati foreign policymakers stated their unwelcoming attitude towards "Turkey's current role in the Arab region." Criticisms are generally shaped around Turkey's imperialistic ambitions and efforts to realise its "Neo-Ottoman" goals and policies in the region. These NRCs find themselves a place in various statements, ranging from UN speeches to news articles and tweets.

In conjunction with the aforementioned 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC, Emirati policymakers have also embraced the NRCs of being a 'defender of the bloc', 'bulwark against Turkey' and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs'. These NRCs were particularly apparent

in the context of the Libyan conflict, where the UAE was vocally critical of Turkey's growing involvement in support of the Tripoli-based government. The Emirati stance was consistently characterised by a clear opposition to what they describe as 'Turkey's current role in the Arab region,' as previously discussed. The criticisms primarily revolved around Turkey's perceived imperialistic aims and its pursuit of 'Neo-Ottoman' objectives within the region. Expanding on these roles, the UAE's discourse frequently invoked historical and geopolitical contexts, positioning itself as a guardian of Arab sovereignty against perceived neo-imperialist encroachments by regional actors. This stance was not limited to rhetoric but was echoed in the UAE's broader strategic posture and diplomatic initiatives, which are aimed at consolidating a regional block of Arab states that seeks to maintain internal stability and counteract external non-Arab influences, as also seen in the Yemen case against Iran. This narrative was consistently presented through diverse platforms, from speeches at the United Nations to various media publications and social media channels, thereby reinforcing the UAE's self-perceived role as a supporter of Arab unity and sovereignty in the face of external pressures.

Emirati foreign policymakers also adopt the NRC of 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' in their statements, an NRC that goes hand in hand with being a 'protector/provider of security and stability' in the region. These NRCs gained significance in the narrative of Arab countries like the UAE stepping up to fill the security vacuum left by the withdrawal of traditional powers such as the UK and the US. Gargash emphasised that 'Arab states are taking more responsibility for their own and the region's security,' suggesting a shift towards regional self-reliance. The reinforcement of the 'Arab regional system' was a recurrent theme, highlighting the importance of defending Arab nations' borders and sovereignty against encroachments by other regional actors. Emirati policymakers also stress the crucial and necessary contribution of Arab states in the collective international efforts to resolve the Libyan crisis. They pointed to past efforts lacking Arab inclusion as ineffective, reinforcing the argument that the Arab dimension was not just complementary but essential to the success of peacebuilding measures. Building on these roles, the UAE positioned itself as a champion of regional cohesion, advocating for a collaborative Arab approach to regional challenges. This entailed not only concerted security measures but also a strategic alignment in diplomatic arenas. The Emirati narrative underscored that the strength and unity of Arab countries were

indispensable for sustainable peace and stability in the Middle East and North Africa, suggesting that any resolution to crises, like the one in Libya, must have Arab countries at the forefront, both in strategic planning and execution.

Emirati policymakers articulated a 'regional ally' NRC in various statements, particularly in the context of the escalating civil war in Libya following the offensive by Khalifa Haftar's forces in 2019. In the midst of this conflict, the UAE strategically aligned itself with key regional and international powers, notably Egypt and France. These statements highlighted the UAE's cooperation with France in combating terrorism and extremism and their joint opposition to foreign interference in Libya. Furthermore, this alliance was described as actively seeking to contribute to a political resolution of the Libyan conflict.

To conclude, the following table shows the NRCs assumed by Qatar and the UAE related to the civil war in Libya. In this context, seven NRCs for the UAE and three NRCs for Qatar were identified, as illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4. NRCs of Qatar and the UAE in Libya

United Arab Emirates' NRCs	Qatar's NRCs
Anti-terrorism Agent	Supporter of International Cooperation
Defender of the Bloc	Advocate of State Sovereignty
Advocate/Facilitator of Arab Solidarity	Mediator
Protector/provider of Security and Stability	
Bulwark against External Intervention in Arab Affairs	
Bulwark against Turkey	
Regional Ally	

2.4. Socialisation: Between Three Regional Powers from Different Regions

In assessing the socialisation of Qatar and the UAE during the Libyan crisis, the roles of France and Turkey need to be incorporated into the analysis due to their significant involvement in

supporting opposing factions. The policies of these two countries in Libya are pivotal to the section on socialisation, owing to the fact that these regional powers have each aligned their support with opposing factions in the Libyan civil conflict. Qatar and the UAE have thus shaped their discourses by either supporting or criticising the involvement of these countries in the Libyan civil war. Turkey openly supported the Tripoli-based government, providing both diplomatic and military assistance, while France faced accusations of rendering intelligence and military support to Haftar's forces (Harchaoui 2017; Taylor 2019; Mezran and Fasanotti 2020). These allegations stood in stark contrast to the consistent denials from French officials, who affirmed their nation's support for the internationally recognised government in Tripoli. The disparity between France's public declarations and the reported undercover activities underscored the complexity of international engagement in the Libyan conflict.

The rift between Turkey and France deepened after Turkey's military intervention in the Libyan war, which was in support of the Tripoli government. Turkey began its involvement by transferring military equipment and personnel in January 2020. Subsequently, French President Macron accused his Turkish counterpart, President Erdogan, of 'breaking his promise' made at the Berlin Conference on Libya (Stamouli 2020). In response, the Turkish Foreign Ministry criticised France's connections with Haftar, labelling France as the principal instigator of the Libyan crisis (Al Jazeera 2020b). The bilateral relations further deteriorated in the months that followed. President Macron declared that 'France will not tolerate Turkey's military intervention in Libya,' accusing Turkey of engaging in a 'dangerous game' (France 24 2020). Matching the rhetoric, Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoglu responded that 'France is playing a dangerous game by exceeding its role in Libya' (Yuzbasioglu 2020). Çavuşoglu's subsequent statements intensified the accusations, first alleging that France sought to re-establish colonial rule in Libya and then branding French policy in Libya as destructive, invoking the nation's colonial history (Al Jazeera 2020c; The Defense Post 2020). The following month, France temporarily suspended its participation in a NATO maritime security operation following an incident involving French and Turkish warships in the Mediterranean, with France also accusing Turkey of breaching the arms embargo against Libya (BBC 2020).

In July 2020, two articles were published on the Atlantic Council, an American think tank's website, authored by Nathalie Loiseau, a Member of the European Parliament and former French Minister for European Affairs under President Emmanuel Macron, and then by Faruk

Kaymakci, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs of Turkey. Loiseau accused Turkey of violating the arms embargo, exhibiting overtly hostile behaviour towards France, which she evidenced by citing the naval crisis in the Mediterranean, engaging in a proxy war in Libya through the deployment of Syrian militants, conducting unauthorised gas explorations in the Eastern Mediterranean, and fundamentally opposing European security, interests, and sovereignty. Furthermore, Loiseau (2020) suggested that President Erdoğan's actions challenge internationally recognised borders, which she interpreted as a form of retaliation against the West for the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, marking the demise of the Ottoman Empire. In retort, Kaymakci argued that France and Greece had skewed the enforcement of the arms embargo against Libya to solely disadvantage Haftar, thereby enabling him to continue receiving military supplies. He condemned France's backing of Haftar, remarking that the uncovering of mass graves by Haftar's forces in Tarhuna added "another layer of shame to France's policy" (Kaymakci 2020).

In the ongoing dispute, the UAE and Qatar took opposing stances. The UAE openly aligned with France in both its Libyan policy and in levelling criticism against Turkey, as previously noted. Conversely, Qatar bolstered its support for the Tripoli government in conjunction with Turkey's increased involvement in Libya. Badi (2020) contends that the UAE's influence in Libya extended beyond military support to Haftar, noting its ability to shape the diplomatic narrative through its ties with influential countries, especially France. Ugarte (2020) points out that despite the UAE being implicated in violations of the Libyan arms embargo, it avoided criticism from President Macron, possibly due to the UAE being one of France's major military customers, with purchases of French military equipment totalling 1.5 billion euros in 2019 alone. Additionally, France and the UAE share a common perspective on political Islam and Turkey's regional policies (Bakir 2020). French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who was instrumental in devising the 'back-Haftar' strategy (Taylor 2019), subtly endorsed Haftar by depicting his forces as combatants against terrorism (Bakir 2020, 168). Duclos (2020) observes that French policy in Libya prioritises counterterrorism efforts by forming alliances with local authoritarian figures like Haftar and with certain Gulf countries that are ideologically united in their 'anti-MB' stance. Within this framework, France appears to have cast the UAE in two distinct roles in Libya: as an 'anti-terrorism agent' and a 'regional ally'.

Qatar augmented its presence in Libya following Turkey's military intervention. In August 2020, the defence ministers of Turkey and Qatar made a visit to Libya, underscoring their support for the internationally recognised government in Tripoli and to sign a military agreement with Libya (France 24 2020). This visit by Qatari Defence Minister Khalid bin Muhammed al-Attiyah marked Qatar's first high-profile engagement in Libya in several years (El-Mahrouki 2020), signifying the impact of Turkish involvement on Qatar's shifting policy towards Libya. During the meeting, Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar reaffirmed their commitment, stating they were there at the invitation of the UN-recognised Tripoli government and that they would continue to offer support. This stance has been a cornerstone of Turkish rhetoric regarding their role in Libya, with Turkish officials consistently maintaining that their involvement was at the request of the legitimate GNA, committing to 'do everything necessary for the integrity, security, and prosperity of Libya and its people' (Hurriyet Daily News 2020). As a result, Turkey attributed two roles to Qatar in relation to Libya: as an advocate of state sovereignty and as a regional ally.

Russia's involvement in Libya became pronounced after the civil war erupted in 2015, coinciding with an increase in its presence elsewhere in the region, especially in Syria. While Moscow initially took on a mediator role, making efforts to unite the warring factions in 2016 and 2017, the Wagner Group, Moscow-backed Russian mercenaries, aligned with Haftar's forces during their advance on Tripoli beginning in 2019 (Chuprygin 2019; Chuprugin 2021; Chuprygina and Matrosov 2021). During this period, relations between Russia and the UAE also flourished. A strategic partnership agreement was signed following MBZ's visit to Russia in June 2018, which saw an increase in collaborations, including the UAE's reopening of its embassy in Syria, Russia's diplomatic engagement with Yemen's Southern Transitional Council, backed by the UAE, and their joint support for Haftar's forces. Furthermore, Pentagon reports suggested that the UAE financed the Wagner Group and facilitated the transfer of military equipment that assisted Russian mercenaries in their approach to Tripoli (Mackinnon and Detsch 2020; Rondeaux, Imhof and Margolin 2021; Badi 2022). Ramani (2020) characterises the Russia-UAE relationship as 'ideational', highlighting their shared opposition to all forms of extremist Islamism and Islamist groups, from ISIS to the MB, and their counterrevolutionary stance following the Arab uprisings. As will be discussed in the following chapter, Anwar Gargash openly praised Russia's intervention in the Syrian civil war, acknowledging their

mutual struggle against what he termed 'a common enemy', referring to ISIS (Ahram 2015). Thus, the convergence between Russia and the UAE was rooted in their joint 'anti-terrorist agent' role, which underpinned their strengthening ties and culminated in the signing of a strategic partnership agreement.

3. Conclusion

This chapter has endeavoured to explore Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies towards the Libyan civil war. First, it has given the studies on these two countries' foreign policies in Libya and presented the relevance of this chapter, building on the literature. The rest of the chapter has proceeded in two stages. Initially, it has outlined how the role theory analysis was conducted with an insight into the leaders and keywords selected. Then, it identified the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE by looking at the statements and tweets given by the selected foreign policymakers. In the second stage, the chapter delved into the socialisation influences exerted by external actors, specifically France, Turkey and Russia.

The findings on the socialisation process reveal that France presented two NRCs for the UAE in Libya: anti-terrorism agent and regional ally, with the former role further reinforced by the Emirati and Russian partnership over their shared stance on terrorism. The UAE's role conceptions suggest an accommodation to these NRCs, with Emirati policymakers presenting their country as an integral part of the anti-terrorism bloc, working in tandem with Western powers, predominantly France, and Russia. These collaborations stemmed from a joint concern over political Islam, particularly the MB and associated entities, and a unified critique of Turkish actions in Libya. Emirati officials emphasised the formation of a bloc that seeks to safeguard regional security and stability against terrorism and unwarranted external intervention. They also accentuated the necessity for an Arab regional system as a cornerstone for addressing regional instability. Ultimately, seven role conceptions for the UAE were discerned, two aligning with the expectations of its socialiser in the Libyan context: 'anti-terrorism agent', 'defender of the bloc', 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity', 'protector/provider of security and stability', 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs', 'bulwark against Turkey' and 'regional ally'.

Conversely, Turkey has emerged as Qatar's primary socialiser in Libya. Since Turkey's intensified involvement from January 2020, it has consistently asserted that its support for the Tripoli government stemmed from an official invitation, with the mission to aid the government in its conflict with Haftar's forces until Libya achieves integrity and stability. Turkey thus delineated two key roles for its allies, including Qatar: 'advocate of state sovereignty' and 'faithful ally'. The former has prominently featured in the discourse of Qatari foreign policymakers. Despite Qatar's deepening ties with Turkey, particularly post the Gulf Crisis, and its similar responses to regional conflicts and groups, the explicit alignment with Turkey in the Libyan affair was not as prominently featured in Qatari policy statements. Besides the 'advocate of state sovereignty', two additional roles identified for Qatar were 'supporter of international cooperation' and 'mediator'. The former is significantly aligned with their support for the internationally recognised Tripoli government, considering that the Qatari foreign policymakers constantly called international actors and particularly the UN to take actions siding with the legitimate government of Libya. These statements pictured Qatar as an actor that supported multilateral actions and diplomatic efforts for the solution of the crisis. The mediator role appeared as an extension of this multilateral approach and Qatar's region-wide mediation endeavours.

Revisiting the chapter's title, Qatar and the UAE's respective stances towards Islamism, particularly the political Islamist factions mainly affiliated with the MB, significantly influenced their policies during the Libyan civil war. The Emirati discourse was crafted around Abu Dhabi's commitment to combat political Islamism, which it equates with terrorism, specifically referencing the MB. The MB-associated elements within the Tripoli government underpinned the UAE's support for the Tobruk government and Haftar's forces. Similarly, its alliances with external powers like Russia and France, and its opposition to Turkey stemmed primarily from these countries' approaches towards the Libyan political Islamist groups and the UAE's role as an anti-terrorist agent in the region. Conversely, Qatar maintained its policy of supporting the MB-related Islamist groups in Libya, despite the debated motivations behind this approach, whether ideational or strategic.

In conclusion, both accommodating to the roles presented by their socialisers and enacting their roles identified by the policymakers, Qatar and the UAE followed divergent foreign policies towards the Libyan civil war by supporting opposing parties. Qatar put emphasis on

the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country and, therefore, repeatedly declared its support for the UN-recognised Tripoli government, whereas the UAE put its support behind Khalifa Haftar's forces, prioritising its fight against terrorism and extremism, which was associated with political Islam by the UAE and its allies, and insistingly criticising Turkish intervention in favour of the Tripoli government. While Qatar positioned itself as a supporter of multilateral actions in order to provide help for the Tripoli government without ignoring its sovereignty, the UAE mostly stressed the need to fight against terrorism and interference in Arab affairs by the regional actors.

CHAPTER VI

SYRIAN CIVIL WAR: THE UAE'S SHIFTING ROLE WITH AN EMPHASIS ON ARAB IDENTITY AND QATAR'S OPPOSITION TO THE ASSAD REGIME WITH A MULTILATERAL APPROACH

1. Introduction

The Syrian civil war has evolved into a significant regional and international crisis due to the involvement of numerous global and regional actors. Sparked by the Arab Spring uprisings that began in Tunisia in December 2010, anti-government protests erupted across Syria against President Bashar al-Assad's regime in March 2011. The government's harsh crackdown on demonstrators intensified the situation, leading to widespread condemnation of the Assad regime by various countries. This influx of foreign involvement transformed the conflict into a full-scale international war, bringing about profound global consequences.

Firstly, the conflict displaced millions, triggering an international refugee crisis as countless Syrians sought safety in foreign countries. Secondly, the power vacuum created by the lack of centralised governance in parts of Syria facilitated the rise of militant organisations such as ISIS. These groups have perpetrated terrorist attacks not only within Syria but also globally, further complicating the security landscape. Thirdly, the internationalisation of the conflict has seen the participation of major powers, including the United States, Russia, Iran, and Turkey, each pursuing their strategic interests. Most tragically, the war has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe, with hundreds of thousands killed and millions more displaced, necessitating a global response to address the immense human suffering and geopolitical instability it has caused.

Qatar and the UAE have been among the actors involved in this conflict. This chapter delves into the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE concerning Syria, a conflict that not only surpasses the national confines of Syria but extends beyond the regional scope of the Middle East. Investigating the positions of these two countries in this international crisis is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of how they tailored their diplomatic approaches and defined their international roles through complex interactions with a host of regional and international actors. The analysis begins by examining existing literature to gather established explanations

of Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policy actions towards the Syrian civil war. This sets the foundation for a deeper examination using role theory, where statements from principal foreign policy figures of both countries are scrutinised to discern the roles they have adopted. The chapter aims to offer a detailed synthesis and analysis of these findings, providing an explanation of the distinct differences in how Qatar and the UAE formulated their respective policies in response to the Syrian conflict.

Qatar has been among the key players in the Syrian conflict, notably supporting anti-regime groups, especially during the first two years of the crisis. Initially, the leaders of Syria and Qatar enjoyed a strong personal relationship before the uprisings began. Consequently, there was hope within Syria that President Assad would act in accordance with Qatari advice, which suggested implementing necessary reforms to address the protests (Boyce 2013). However, events took a different turn. As the regime began cracking down on protesters, Qatar adopted a firm stance against the Syrian government. Qatar was the first country to close its embassy in Damascus and played a pivotal role in the Arab League's decision to suspend Syria's membership. Additionally, Syrian opposition forces were permitted to open an embassy in Doha (Nuruzzaman 2015; Gorgulu 2018).

Qatar became vocal in expressing its support for opposition forces and urged international actors to take action in Syria. The then Prime Minister and Foreign Minister suggested an intervention similar to Libya's in a 2012 interview: "I think for such a situation, to stop the killing, some troops should go to stop the killing" (Nuruzzaman 2015, 229). He also emphasised that Qatar would do "whatever necessary to help them (the Syrian rebels), including giving them weapons to defend themselves" (Nuruzzaman 2015, 229). Qatar's assistance to these forces reached $3 billion by March 2013, which was far more than any other country's contribution (Watkins 2020, 667).

Although Qatar reportedly supported various opposition groups in Syria, its primary support went to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and affiliated groups (Phillips 2017; Watkins 2020). This preference led to friction between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as both countries supported rebel factions, though Saudi Arabia opposed the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated forces (Blanga 2017). Despite this alignment, Qatar maintained a broad range of options by offering arms and financial aid to multiple Islamist opposition groups, regardless of their radicalism or

moderation (Baylouny and Mullins 2018). This inclusive approach drew criticism from regional and international actors alike. In June 2013, the then-Qatari Foreign Minister addressed such criticism, stating:

> "I am very much against excluding anyone at this stage, or bracketing them as terrorists, or bracketing them as al-Qaeda … we should work on them to change their ideology" (Watkins 2020, 667).

This position reflected Qatar's view that engagement, rather than exclusion, could potentially influence extremist ideologies. Qatar's support for diverse opposition factions highlighted its strategic flexibility and willingness to explore various avenues of influence within the Syrian conflict, albeit at the cost of facing criticism from various quarters.

According to Baylouny and Mullins (2018), Qatar's support for the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated forces in Syria did not originate from ideological affinity with such forces but was primarily a pragmatic choice. From an operational standpoint, backing the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood was logical, as it was the most organised group among the rebels. Moreover, Qatar had established contacts with them due to its policy of welcoming Islamist political dissidents domestically (Baylouny and Mullins, 2018). Furthermore, Qatar did not face internal conflict with the MB, unlike its Gulf neighbours, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Consequently, supporting the MB did not conflict with its domestic security policies.

In this context, Qatar's ambitions and restrictions in the Syrian civil war diverged from those of other members of the anti-Assad camp in the region. For example, in addition to its comfort in dealing with Islamist groups due to its stable domestic relationship with them, Qatar did not face significant issues from its Shia population. This population was smaller and better integrated into the country's socio-economic structure compared to Saudi Arabia, allowing Qatar to feel more at ease with Iran and Iran-backed groups in the region, including in Syria. Khatib (2019) highlights that, while Saudi Arabia's primary concern was to mitigate any potential threat from Syria to its regime security, Qatar's deep involvement was driven by its desire to enhance its regional leverage. Similarly, Watkins (2020) interprets Qatar's policy in Syria as an effort to extend the monarchy's political influence across the region. Qatar sought to present itself as a progressive Gulf state by emphasising democracy and freedom, despite

its lack of democratic features. A member of the Qatari royal family underscored Qatar's stance, stating, "We believe in democracy, we believe in freedom, we believe in dialogue, and we believe in that for the entire region" (Nuruzzaman 2015, 230). This inconsistency between Qatar's external discourse on democracy and its internal practices highlights its strategic use of promoting democracy to enhance its standing in the international community while supporting anti-regime forces. The country aimed to leverage this narrative to position itself favourably on the global stage.

Qatar’s active and vocal policy in Syria began to change and slow down in the second half of 2013. Two main developments contributed to this shift. Firstly, the then-Emir Hamad bin Khalifa stepped down, transferring power to his son, Tamim bin Hamad, who aimed to scale back the country's assertive foreign policy and focus more on domestic affairs (Ulrichsen 2014; Baylouny and Mullins 2018). Secondly, Saudi Arabia started taking a more active role in Syria, surpassing Qatar's influence over opposition groups. By uniting around 50 Islamist opposition forces under the umbrella of an armed organisation named the Army of Islam, Saudi Arabia replaced Qatar as the leader of the anti-Assad camp in 2013 (Nuruzzaman 2015). Additionally, Saudi Arabia increased its financial and arms support to opposition groups, leading the Syrian National Council to elect a Saudi-backed candidate over the one supported by Qatar in July 2013.

Finally, the influence of Qatar and other Gulf countries on the war and the subsequent negotiation process in Syria waned following Russia's substantial involvement on the side of the Syrian regime, which eventually led to the initiation of the Astana Process by Russia, Iran, and Turkey (Gorgulu 2018). The relative success of regime forces against opposition groups, bolstered by Russian and Iranian support, coupled with Turkey's military intervention in Syria in August 2016, reduced the roles of other regional powers in the conflict. This shift in power dynamics significantly altered the balance in Syria, as the Astana Process marked a new phase in diplomatic negotiations. The process, driven by the three key powers, redefined the conflict's direction and overshadowed the earlier influence exerted by Gulf countries.

Although the UAE initially aligned itself with the anti-Assad camp as the conflict between the regime and rebels intensified, it adopted a relatively passive and cautious approach compared to Qatar and Saudi Arabia. During the first two years of the war, the UAE's involvement was

primarily as a junior partner to Saudi Arabia in aiding rebel groups (Steinberg 2020). This support was limited to relatively secular groups with no affiliation to the MB or similar Islamist organisations (Khatib 2019). However, when Saudi Arabia took a leading role in unifying the rebel groups and began supporting some Islamist elements in 2013, the UAE's policy in Syria started to diverge from that of its Gulf partner. Reflecting its opposing stance towards Islamist organisations, the UAE openly criticised Qatari and Saudi support for such groups (Watkins 2020). The UAE's cautious involvement highlighted its differing approach to foreign policy in the Syrian conflict. Its alignment with Saudi Arabia, initially based on mutual interest in opposing Assad, was later challenged by divergent attitudes towards Islamist factions.

The UAE's diminishing support for rebel groups, driven by concerns about the increasing Islamist elements among the opposition, coincided with its active participation in anti-ISIS operations led by the United States in 2014 and 2015. During this period, the UAE became the second country, after the US, to deploy aircraft in these operations (Steinberg 2020). Additionally, Russia's intervention in the war on the side of the regime, which hindered the progress of opposition groups, and the beginning of the Arab coalition's intense military intervention in Yemen in March 2015 prompted the UAE to reduce its presence in Syria.

In this context, the motivations behind the UAE's involvement in Syria can be characterised by two primary concerns that have emerged since the onset of regional uprisings: safeguarding itself against Iran and its expansionism by aligning on the opposite side, and curbing the rise of Islamist groups in any form (Cher-Leparrain 2017). The shift in the balance of power towards the regime, bolstered by Russian support, and the dominance of Islamist groups among the opposition, prompted the UAE to normalise its relations with the Assad regime. In 2018, the UAE reopened its embassy in Damascus and even encouraged its Gulf allies, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, to follow suit (Hassan 2018).

The literature indicates that the foreign policy approaches of both Qatar and the UAE towards the war in Syria were influenced by various domestic and international factors, including perceptions regarding certain groups and shifting power dynamics resulting from increasing external intervention in the war. This chapter aims to explore their foreign policies in Syria with a focus on these factors, using role theory as the analytical framework. The chapter proceeds as follows. The next section presents data gathered from statements made by

policymakers from both countries. This data is then analysed in two stages using role theory. First, the NRCs of both countries are identified through an examination of the statements, speeches, interviews, and tweets of selected foreign policymakers. Next, the dynamic relationship between Qatar and the UAE and the countries involved in the war is analysed in the section on socialisation. By doing so, this chapter aims to identify the roles assumed by these two countries in the Syrian civil war and, ultimately, how these roles led them to pursue different foreign policies in Syria from the outbreak of protests in 2011 up to the Al-Ula Meeting in 2021.

2. Role Theoretical Analysis

This section will use role theory to analyse the collected data in order to identify NRCs of both countries and their socialisation experiences during the Syrian civil war. In the first stage, the NRCs of both countries will be identified by analysing the collected statements from both countries' main foreign policymakers. Second, it will look at the socialisation experiences of these two countries in the context of the Syrian civil war.

2.1. Keywords to Identify NRCs

As in the previous two empirical chapters, the statements, speeches, and interviews of foreign policymakers regarding the Syrian civil war were examined to identify the NRCs of each country. In total, 54 speeches, statements, or interviews were gathered for Qatar, while 23 were collected for the UAE. Additionally, a list of 10 keywords was developed for searching tweets about the Syrian civil war to capture all aspects of this internationalised conflict. These keywords include Syria (سوريا), Assad (أسد)[25] Damascus (دمشق)[26], Aleppo (حلب)[27], Idlib (إدلب)[28],

[25] President of Syria since succeeding his father in July 2000. When protests against his regime began and escalated into a civil war due to the government's harsh response, the Assad government fought against the rebels, primarily with the support of Hezbollah, Iran, and Russia.
[26] Damascus is the capital of Syria. It is mostly used in statements to refer to the Syrian/Assad government.
[27] As the second most populous city of Syria, Aleppo was divided between two powerhouses in July 2012 between the rebel forces and the Syrian regime. The fighting between the parties lasted for four years. After the involvement of Russia and the increasing support of Hezbollah for the Assad regime, the government's forces recaptured the city in December 2016, defeating the rebels. The Battle of Aleppo and its recapture by the Syrian regime marked one of the milestones of the civil war and occupied a significant place in the global agenda due to the high death toll, alleged usage of chemical weapons and the changing power dynamics in the war.
[28] Syrian city that was captured by the rebel forces in 2015. Following the Syrian regime's advancements and the fall of Aleppo, Idlib emerged as a critical stronghold for various rebel forces, including Islamist groups like Tahrir al-Sham and relatively secular factions such as the Free Syrian Army. As the only major city still held by the rebels, Idlib became the focal point of intense confrontations between the regime and opposition forces. Idlib also

ISIS (الدولة الإسلامية)[29], al-Nusra (جبهة النصرة)[30] Geneva (جنيف)[31], Vienna (فيينا)[32], Astana (أستانا)[33]. As followed methodologically in the previous two chapters, the selected keywords include actors, events and locations related to the case. The actors, events and locations were identified after a review of the literature on the Syrian civil war. For this conflict, the keywords selected to collect the tweets consist of the stated actors (Assad, ISIS, al-Nusra) and events/locations (Damascus, Aleppo, Idlib, Geneva, Vienna, Astana). Similar to the Libya case, events and locations were combined as the given titles of the events also included the names of the locations such as the Astana Process, the Geneva Conference and the Vienna Peace Talks. In addition, the analysis also included tweet threads where at least one tweet contained one of these keywords to avoid missing contextually relevant tweets that did not feature any of the specified terms. In total, 74 tweets were collected for Qatar and 318 tweets for the UAE.

became a significant topic during the summits held about the Syrian civil war, especially at those convened between Turkey, Iran, and Russia.

[29] Extremist Islamist military organisation that received global prominence after its terror attacks and territorial expansion in 2014-2015 in Iraq and Syria. The political and military coalition formed against ISIS included the UAE and Qatar.

[30] Having pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda until 2016, al-Nusra Front emerged as a prominent extremist Islamist rebel force in the Syrian civil war. Although they publicly announced their separation from al-Qaeda and joined forces with Tahrir al-Sham, an umbrella organisation for Islamist elements within the rebel forces, in 2017, al-Nusra Front continued to maintain a significant presence in the context of the Syrian civil war. In relation to Qatar and the UAE, while the UAE designated al-Nusra Front as a terrorist organisation and included this stance as part of its anti-terrorism discourse, Qatar was accused by other countries, including the UAE, of being among the financiers of al-Nusra.

[31] Geneva refers to the efforts of international actors to bring the warring parties in Syria together to resolve the conflict and end the war. It was first initiated by the UN as the 'Geneva Action Group' in 2012, and more than eight peace talks were held in the following years, some involving the participation of the warring parties and some not. The Geneva talks marked the UN-led international efforts to bring the war to an end. Despite their intentions, these talks did not yield successful results, paving the way for alternative discussions initiated by other countries as seen in Astana and Sochi between Russia, Iran, and Turkey.

[32] Vienna refers to a series of meetings involving various international (United States and Russia) and regional (Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey) actors aimed at laying the groundwork for peace talks between the warring parties in Syria. Despite convening three sessions, the talks failed to produce any resolutions due to disagreements among the involved parties regarding the appropriate representatives of the opposition forces and the future role of President Assad in Syria.

[33] Astana refers to a series of meetings involving Turkey, Russia, and Iran, arguably the countries most involved in the Syrian civil war, with the aim of producing tangible outcomes to halt the conflict in Syria. Since January 2017, more than 20 rounds of talks have been convened where the parties discussed various aspects of the crisis in Syria, focusing primarily on changing borders, the relations between President Assad and the opposition forces, and finally, the situation in Idlib, which hosts almost all the rebel forces and is experiencing a humanitarian crisis due to the siege by the regime. Astana talks represented a set of alternative talks to the Geneva process, involving the countries that have been able to talk with at least one party of the war.

2.2. The UAE's Foreign Policy and NRCs in Syria: Opposition to Turkey and Iran, Stress on Arab Identity and Anti-Islamist Stance

Reviewing the statements of Emirati foreign policymakers reveals that the emphasis shifted over time in response to the Syrian civil war. In the early years of the conflict, the main discourse centred around criticism of the regime and the international community's failure to address the conflict effectively. There was a strong emphasis on the need for humanitarian assistance for those affected. The UN speeches delivered by the Emirati Foreign Minister from 2011 to 2015 predominantly condemned the violence inflicted on the Syrian people by the Assad government and criticised the lack of sufficient international involvement, including by the UN, in efforts to stop the war. This is exemplified by his 2013 speech:

> "The United Arab Emirates is deeply disappointed at the international community's inability to put an immediate end to the worsening tragedy of the brotherly Syrian people caused by continual military actions and indiscriminate and systematic bombings by Syrian forces in Damascus" (UNGA 2013)

These speeches also urged the international community to act immediately to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people by providing humanitarian support and stopping the regime. At the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference on January 30, 2013, MBZ (2013) highlighted the importance of relieving the suffering experienced by the Syrian people and called on the international community to provide humanitarian assistance and security for civilians.

In his interview with the BBC in January 2014, Prime Minister Mohammed bin Rashid suggested that his country merely helps the people suffering from the war without straying from its "non-interference" policy towards Syria (BBC 2014). This "we should help but not interfere" discourse might be a consequence of Emirati concerns regarding support for opposition groups in Syria, particularly after Islamist elements began to dominate among the rebel forces. This concern manifested itself in Emirati criticisms towards Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which had taken the lead in aiding various Islamist groups in Syria.

In the subsequent years, the focus of Emirati leaders' statements evolved due to various developments. The predominance of Islamist elements among the rebel groups, the rapid

expansion of ISIS, increased Iranian involvement in Syria, and Turkey's military operations in Northern Syria prompted the Emirati leaders to reassess their policies in Syria. Starting from the second half of 2014, their statements increasingly centred on combating ISIS, with the UAE ready to collaborate with coalition powers to defeat it. Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed's UN speeches between 2014 and 2016 strongly condemned ISIS and similar terrorist organisations (UNGA 2014, 2016). In 2014, he expressed grave concerns about extremism, terrorism, and sectarian divisions in the region, which he described as severe threats to international peace and security. He emphasised:

> "The current collective action against the threat of ISIS and other terrorist groups reflects the international community's shared conviction of the need to confront this imminent danger. Civilised communities have no other option than to stamp out that threat. It is a test in which we must succeed" (UNGA 2014).

In 2015, the UAE's commitment to addressing extremism in all its forms was a central theme of his speech:

> "We have been committed to supporting regional and international efforts, including those aimed at combating ISIL. We have also contributed to hosting the Hedayah Centre to assist the international community in building capacities and exchanging best practices to counter all forms of extremism" (UNGA 2015).

This was complemented by efforts to address increasing Islamist extremism through the establishment or funding of think tanks and centres and convening forums and conferences aimed at raising awareness both regionally and internationally. The UAE played an active role in the coalition against ISIS. In addition to its significant contributions to the coalition's air forces, Anwar Gargash stated in 2016 that the UAE was prepared to send ground troops to Syria as part of the coalition against ISIS (Reuters 2016).

Another rhetoric that began to increasingly feature in statements during 2015 and 2016 was the condemnation of Iranian involvement in Syria. Gargash vehemently criticised Iranian presence and activities in Syria through his tweets. For example, he strongly condemned Iranian expansionism in the Arab world, particularly in Syria and Yemen (01.04.2015, 19.04.2015) and described Iranian attempts to gain a sphere of influence in the Arab region

as a failure because it was based on sectarianism and Persian nationalism (16.09.2015). He also accused Iran and Hezbollah of being responsible for the Syrian nightmare (11.01.2016). Additionally, this anti-Iran discourse was evident in the UN speeches. In 2016, the Foreign Minister stated:

> "The (Syrian) crisis has been further complicated by interference on the part of Iran and its terrorist militias in Syrian affairs. That has distorted the vision of Syria and derailed it from the existing path" (UNGA 2016).

The increase in anti-Iran rhetoric coincided with the intervention of the Arab coalition in Yemen against the Iran-backed Houthi forces in March 2015. Following this intervention, the volume of criticisms against Iran and Iran-backed groups escalated, particularly because the UAE became significantly involved in the war in Yemen. This marked the first time the Emirati army confronted Iran or an Iran-backed group on the ground. As a result, Emirati leaders intensified their critiques of Iranian expansion in the region, linking their policies in both Yemen and Syria. The anti-Iran discourse continued to feature prominently in their statements in subsequent years. As will be discussed in the following sections, criticisms towards Iran were evident when Emirati leaders expressed concerns about the interference of external actors in Arab affairs, particularly after Turkey's military operations in Syria began in August 2016.

The tone of criticism towards the Syrian regime also changed over time, as observed in the UN speeches. While criticism and condemnation of the regime formed a substantial part of the speeches from 2011 to 2015, these were notably absent from 2016 to 2020. During this period, relations between the UAE and Syria underwent a process of mitigation, culminating in the reestablishment of diplomatic ties in 2018. Gargash explained this policy shift by highlighting the necessity for an Arab presence in the political path to be implemented in Syria. Additionally, he noted that maintaining open communication channels with Syria would help prevent Iran from gaining more leverage over the Syrian regime and consequently curtail its involvement (Al-Arabiya, 2018).

The UN speeches in 2017, 2018, and 2019 indicated a significant development in the Emirati perspective regarding the Syrian civil war. While Syria was prominently featured and detailed

in these speeches in previous years, its presence decreased during these three years. It was only referred to while listing conflict zones in the Middle East or highlighting how Iran and several terrorist organisations gained a presence in various parts of the Arab world. In 2020, Syria received more detailed attention. In this speech, the Foreign Minister condemned external interventions in Syria by non-Arab forces as well as the activities of terrorist organisations in the country (UNGA 2020a). The decreased focus on Syria in these speeches could be seen as a reflection of the altered Emirati policy towards the crisis. They ceased criticising the Syrian regime as they had done previously in the process of normalising relations and focused on condemning any attempts at intervention in Syria by a non-Arab country, particularly Iran and Turkey.

In this context, Emirati policymakers began to emphasise the importance of an Arab role in managing the negotiation process in Syria. The exclusion of Arab countries and the Arab League from the Geneva and Astana processes was strongly criticised by Emirati leaders (Al Wasmi and MacMillan 2018). Gargash repeatedly underscored the cruciality of the Arab role in resolving the Syrian crisis and attributed the stalemate in the negotiation process to the lack of such involvement:

> “With the faltering of international and regional political efforts to come up with an effective mechanism to resolve the bloody Syrian crisis, the Arab role must be restored and activated. The marginalisation and absence of the Arab institutional effort cannot continue.” (01.05.2018).

Citing the failed attempts to resolve the crisis, Gargash proposed the Arab role as a “new approach” to the Syrian civil war and highlighted its significance (07.11.2020).

In Gargash’s tweets, the statements emphasising the criticality of the Arab role also targeted the Turkish and Iranian presence in Syria:

> "The Arab role in Syria has become more necessary in the face of Iranian and Turkish regional aggression, and the UAE is seeking today, through its presence in Damascus, to activate this role, to have Arab options present, and to contribute positively towards ending the war and enhancing opportunities for peace and stability for the Syrian people" (27.12.2018).

> "Syria is foremost an Arab tragedy; complications surrounding this sad episode prove an active Arab role is necessary. The Turkish aggression will only add to the human tragedy; it is essential that the Arab states re-engage for the sake of peace and stability" (17.10.2019).

The firm stance against the Turkish military operations and, eventually, Turkish presence in Northern Syria gained prominence in these statements, especially after 2018. In addition to giving speeches and interviews as well as tweeting against Turkey's role in Syria, Emirati policymakers highlighted how Kurdish forces, against whom Turkey carried out most of its military incursions into Northern Syria, were constructive during the war against ISIS (Ramani 2019). In this context, Gargash noted that Turkey's military intervention in Syria would "only lead to the strengthening of terrorists", although Turkey would claim otherwise (The National 2019).

In summary, Emirati foreign policymakers initially focused their criticisms on the Syrian regime and the international community for their incapacity and unwillingness to resolve the crisis during the early years of the conflict. Over time, the tone and frequency of these critiques decreased, eventually shifting towards discussions about the necessity of involving the Assad government in the negotiation process. From 2014 onwards, the fight against terrorism became a significant theme in these statements, reflecting the rise of terrorist organisations such as ISIS and al-Nusra in Syria. Additionally, intertwined with the Arab coalition's intervention in Yemen, anti-Iran rhetoric became increasingly prominent from 2015 onwards. The presence of Iran and repeated Turkish military operations in Syria led to a rise in statements openly criticising any involvement in Arab affairs, especially by regional powers. Finally, Emirati policymakers consistently urged the international community to aid civilians in Syria and highlighted the UAE's contributions to humanitarian assistance in the region.

For the UAE, one of the most noticeable NRCs is the "bulwark against Iran" NRC. The UAE, aligning with Saudi Arabia, positioned itself in opposition to Iran and its policies in Syria. Particularly following the Arab coalition's intervention in Yemen, the tone of criticism intensified, with Iran being accused of expanding into Arab lands by supporting and arming groups across the region, from Yemen to Syria. Furthermore, concerns regarding the Iranian presence in Syria were highlighted when the UAE decided to normalise its ties with the Assad

government. As discussed earlier, Gargash asserted that normalising relations with the Syrian government would reduce Damascus' dependency on Tehran and diminish the Iranian role in this crisis.

Another prominent NRC that repeatedly emerged in these statements is the "advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity." The Emirati policymakers highlighted the importance of an Arab role in Syria as crucial for achieving positive outcomes during the negotiations. This role was frequently mentioned in criticisms of peace efforts such as the Astana process, which did not include any Arab states and instead involved two non-Arab regional powers, Iran and Turkey. Thus, this role is deeply interlinked with acting as a "bulwark against Iranian and Turkish expansionism" into Arab lands.

In addition, the UAE positioned itself as an “anti-terrorism agent” from the onset of the war against ISIS, with Emirati air forces becoming the most active regional members of the coalition. Beyond the war on ISIS, the UAE collaborated with other international and regional countries, primarily Russia and Egypt, to counter other Islamist groups in the region, such as the MB and affiliated groups, by designating them as terrorist organisations. In this context, the number of groups on the Emirati terrorist list was substantially higher compared to Qatar, even including groups that had close ties with Qatar. Qatar’s alleged ties with such groups later became one of the main issues between Qatar and the UAE, leading to the Gulf Crisis in June 2017.

Like many wealthy Gulf states, the UAE positioned itself as a “humanitarian agent,” providing aid to people in Syria since the outbreak of the civil war. Particularly in UN speeches, the foreign minister frequently highlighted the UAE’s humanitarian assistance efforts for Syrians both within and outside their country. The UAE's support included not only emergency aid but also long-term assistance projects aimed at improving living conditions and supporting the resilience of Syrian communities affected by the conflict. These initiatives underscore the UAE's role in addressing the humanitarian aspects of the crisis, reflecting its commitment to alleviating human suffering. The re-establishment of ties with the Syrian regime, the advancement of regime forces since 2015 due to significant support from Russia and Iran, and the prevalence of Islamist elements within the rebel forces seemingly led Emirati rhetoric to

emphasise the need to end the war that has caused suffering for the Syrian people for more than a decade.

In addition, Emirati policymakers expressed their country's support for international efforts aimed at delivering a solution in Syria. However, this "supporter of international cooperation" NRC primarily pertained to initiatives led by the UN, such as the Geneva and Vienna processes. The Astana Process, which did not include any Arab country, did not get any support or commendation from the Emirati leaders. Even, this process was criticised as it ignored the necessity of including Arab countries to solve a crisis in the Arab world. In other words, the UAE was reluctant to endorse negotiation processes that involved other regional powers like Turkey and Iran, consistent with its stance of criticising the intervention of other countries in the region in Arab affairs.

In line with their role as a bulwark against Iranian expansion, UAE leaders also positioned themselves as part of the “bulwark against Turkey” in the Arab world, harshly criticising Turkish military presence in the region, including Syria, at various platforms from the UN to the Arab League. Turkey’s military intervention in Syria was condemned and described as a dangerous adventure that could deteriorate the situation in Syria and undermine efforts to secure peace in the country. Similarly, implicitly referring mainly to Turkey and Iran, Emirati policymakers emphasised that the UAE opposes any attempts to meddle in Arab affairs and the sovereignty of Arab countries. In this context, building on the previous chapter on Libya, the NRCs of 'bulwark against Iran' and 'bulwark against Turkey' can be collectively understood under the broader NRC of 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs'. The primary challenge with stating this NRC as such is that the opposition to these alleged intervenors in Arab affairs mainly involved the two non-Arab regional powers, Turkey and Iran. The statements did not include criticisms towards Russia and the United States, which were also heavily involved in the war. Even the Emirati foreign policymakers welcomed the interventions of these countries in this war, as will be discussed in the socialisation section.

2.3. Qatar's Foreign Policy and NRCs in Syria: Stable Opposition to the Assad Regime and Emphasis on Multilateral Approach

In the statements of Qatari policymakers, certain elements persist regardless of developments and the passage of time, while others fluctuate depending on regional and international events. Firstly, criticisms towards the Syrian regime consistently appeared as a significant part of the statements throughout this period. For example, each speech delivered at the UN from 2012 to 2020 criticised the Syrian regime for the alleged violence it perpetrated against Syrian protestors and opposition forces, and for its reluctance to engage in a political negotiation process:

> "Hundreds of innocent Syrians are killed every day, under the fire of a regime that does not hesitate to use all sorts of weapons against its own people" (UNGA 2012).

> "After more than nine years since the Syrian crisis, which has witnessed unprecedented humanitarian tragedies with serious negative impacts that intensify year after year, it is still impossible to reach an end to this crisis due to the intransigence of the Syrian regime and the inaction of the international community, especially the Security Council, in assuming its duty to maintain international peace and security and protect civilians" (UNGA 2020b).

When the Qatari Foreign Minister was asked about his country's stance on normalising ties with the Syrian regime, he responded that his country has no plans to do so as they "do not see any serious steps by the Assad regime showing his commitment to repair the damage he has inflicted on his own country and people." (Al Jazeera 2021).

Secondly, Qatar's humanitarian aid for Syria was a focal point in the speeches of Qatari leaders during this period. In addition to Qatar's own contributions, policymakers utilised various platforms, from UN speeches to bilateral discussions with other leaders, to urge the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, whether residing inside or outside their country. The Foreign Minister reiterated these points at relevant summits and conferences, noting that the total humanitarian assistance provided by the State of Qatar amounted to approximately $1.6 billion (see Mohammed bin Abdurrahman 2017d). This aid was channelled through international humanitarian organisations and donor

conferences to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, as stated during the Brussels Conference on Supporting Syria and the Region on 5 April 2017. Furthermore, during the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 26 February 2018, he called on the international community to put efforts into procuring humanitarian aid for the people of Syria and reiterated Qatar's commitment to providing all necessary humanitarian assistance to meet the urgent needs of the Syrian people (Mohammed bin Abdurrahman 2018b).

The third prominent theme in these statements was a call for international bodies and the community to act to stop the violence committed by the regime and to help find a solution in Syria. This discourse critically addressed the incapacity and unwillingness of international actors to intervene effectively and stressed Qatar's readiness to contribute to any effort to resolve the Syrian crisis. At the 35th GCC Summit, Emir Tamim bin Hamad (2014) expressed a strong appeal for international and regional agreement and urged the Security Council to adopt necessary resolutions to halt the acts of killing and crimes against humanity committed by the regime and to achieve a political solution that aligns with the aspirations of the Syrian people. Additionally, during the Ministerial Meeting on the Syrian Crisis on 21 September 2017, the Qatari Foreign Minister reaffirmed Qatar's support for efforts to find a political resolution to the crisis, based on the Geneva Declaration 1 and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2254, to support the Syrian people's desires for security, stability, territorial integrity, and self-determination without external pressure (Mohammed bin Abdurrahman 2017e).

On the other hand, some themes in the statements were prominent only for a specific period, influenced by the relevant developments. One such discourse that faded from the speeches after a time was the emphasis on the need for an Arab-led intervention in Syria. Specifically, the then-Emir Hamad bin Khalifa, who handed over power to his son in June 2013, often discussed this issue in his speeches. In his 2012 UN speech, he advocated for intervention by Arab countries to fulfil their national humanitarian, political, and military duties, to stop the bloodshed in Syria, prevent the killing and displacement of innocent people, and ensure a peaceful transition of power (UNGA 2012). He referenced historical precedents, noting that Arab forces had successfully intervened in Lebanon in the mid-1970s to halt internal fighting, and he urged all countries that support the Syrian people's cause to provide comprehensive support until they secure their legitimate rights. Furthermore, in his speech at the 41st

Advisory Council, the then-Emir highlighted the inaction in the Arab world regarding Syria, questioning whether the cries of suffering from Syrians, which resonated throughout the Arab world, had reached the Arab League states (The Peninsula Qatar 2012).

This discourse gradually diminished in the statements made by Qatari leaders. At times, any mention of a potential Arab endeavour was framed in terms of its international characteristics and objectives to implement decisions taken by international bodies, as observed in Emir Tamim bin Hamad's speech at the 36th Gulf Summit:

> "Arabs, as part of the international community, should stop the disaster, protect regional security, and help implement the decisions of Geneva" (Tamim bin Hamed 2015b).

At other times, it was not mentioned at all. Several factors likely contributed to this shift in discourse. Firstly, Qatar lost its dominant influence over the Syrian opposition to Saudi Arabia and subsequently found itself isolated by other Arab actors involved in Syria in 2014 due to the diplomatic crisis in March of that year. Additionally, the increasing involvement of Russia, Turkey, and Iran in the crisis since 2015 diminished the Arab sphere of influence in Syria. Moreover, the diplomatic crisis in 2014, followed by a full-scale embargo on Qatar by a coalition of Arab countries in 2017, prevented Qatar from promoting a collective Arab effort to end the war in Syria. Instead, the Qatari discourse primarily revolved around criticising Arab countries, particularly the Arab League, for their failure to provide any fruitful resolutions for the crisis.

The last theme that occasionally emerged in these statements is Qatar's willingness to act as a mediator or facilitator of dialogue. Emir Tamim (UNGA 2013a) articulated his country's readiness to take on this role, emphasising at the UN in 2013 that Qatar aims to serve as a hub for dialogue and discussion among various parties to conflicts rather than being a party to the conflicts themselves. However, as previously mentioned, Qatar gradually lost its influence in Syria due to the increasing involvement of other external powers, which limited its ability to fulfil this role effectively. In 2021, nearly a decade later, Qatar joined trilateral efforts with Turkey and Russia to facilitate peace in Syria, indicating a re-engagement and continued commitment to mediating in the region (Doha News 2021).

In the case of Qatar, two NRCs prominently emerge from the statements of the policymakers. The most stated and consistent NRC is that of the “supporter of international cooperation.” The support was primarily directed towards UN-led initiatives. However, Qatar also underscored the importance of the efforts of other countries to end the crisis. Moreover, Qatar took the initiative to host a trilateral meeting in Doha with Turkey and Russia in 2021, demonstrating its support for any effort to resolve the crisis and also to reactivate its role in the negotiation process. In this regard, Qatar's approach differed from that of the UAE, which criticised the initiatives of other regional countries in Syria, referring to the Astana Process.

The second NRC consistently expressed by Qatari policymakers in their statements is that of the “humanitarian agent”. This role was steadfastly stated and maintained by Qatar throughout the crisis. In this capacity, Qatar provided humanitarian aid to Syrians both within and outside of Syria, focusing on improving their living conditions. The aid efforts did not only include basic necessities but also extended to the construction of schools and hospitals to enhance healthcare and education opportunities for Syrian refugees. Moreover, Qatar actively participated in various international donor conferences, pledging significant financial support aimed at stabilising and rebuilding affected communities. This sustained humanitarian effort underlines Qatar's commitment to addressing the immediate and long-term needs of the Syrian people during the ongoing crisis.

Additionally, two other NRCs identified in the statements are "anti-terrorism agent" and "mediator." While Qatar joined the coalition forces fighting against ISIS, it did not play as active a role as the UAE. However, its firm condemnation of extremist groups and its support for efforts to wage a war against them were consistently reflected in the policymakers' discourses. Furthermore, Qatar also positioned itself as a facilitator of dialogue or a mediator. This NRC was particularly highlighted when there was a need to facilitate discussions among opposition groups in Syria during the first two years of the conflict. Qatar also offered to host summits between the negotiating parties and successfully convened one in March 2021.

To conclude, based on the analysis of the texts (speeches, statements, tweets etc.) in this section, seven NRCs for the UAE and four NRCs for Qatar have been identified, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. NRCs of Qatar and the UAE in Syria

United Arab Emirates' NRCs	Qatar's NRCs
Bulwark against External Intervention in Arab Affairs	Anti-terrorism Agent
Bulwark against Iran	Supporter of International Cooperation
Advocate/Facilitator of Arab Solidarity	Humanitarian Agent
Anti-terrorism Agent	Mediator
Humanitarian Agent	
Supporter of International Cooperation	
Bulwark against Turkey	

2.4. Socialisation: Hyper Internationalisation of Syria and Ranging Expectations in Time

Although how active they were changed in time during the war, the following two international and three regional powers could be counted here as the actors that intervened substantially in the Syrian civil war: United States, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey (Hinnebusch 2019). The US policy in Syria can be analysed in four phases. Firstly, the US openly criticised the Assad regime and its brutal reaction to the protests and called on him to step down on August 18, 2011 (Washington Post 2011). In the following months, it lobbied for a UN sanction on Syria which was vetoed by Russia and China. The tone of criticism intensified after the brutality shown by the regime increased. President Obama specified that the use of chemical weapons would be a “red line”, implying that it could end up with military intervention (Gani 2019). After the Syrian regime launched a devastating attack on the city of Ghouta using chemical weapons in August 2013, the intervention came to the agenda. However, Russia interfered at this stage and the potential intervention was averted by Moscow’s proposal to dismantle Syria’s chemical weapons. Three months later, the US administration started an armament and training programme for the Syrian rebels (Gani 2020). During this time, the Emirati and Qatari policies composed of involving an anti-Assad position and financing opposition forces went in parallel with those of the US. The third phase in the US policy against Syria was the forming of a US-led coalition against ISIS in 2014 and finally intervening in Syria, not against the regime but against ISIS. The expectation of the US

from its Gulf allies, including the UAE and Qatar was to join the coalition against ISIS. The UAE, as mentioned earlier, got heavily involved in and became the most active Arab country in this coalition. Even though Qatar did not join the airstrikes, it played a part in the coalition by carrying out combat air patrol operations (Ardemagni 2016). The degree to which they participated in the coalition against ISIS revealed itself in the frequency of the usage of anti-terrorism discourse by the foreign policymakers of Qatar and the UAE. As discussed before, this discourse occupied a significant place in Emirati policymakers' statements more frequently.

With President Trump's announcement of the US withdrawal from Syria, the visibility and influence of other foreign actors in Syria, particularly Russia, as well as Turkey and Iran, increased. Russia, having vetoed all attempts at UN Security Council sanctions against the Syrian government, became militarily involved in the Syrian civil war in 2015. Russia articulated its role as fighting against terrorism and protecting Syria's territorial integrity (Borshchevskaya 2020). This stance on anti-terrorism resonated with other regional actors, like the UAE, which typically oppose foreign interference in Arab countries. Anwar Gargash expressed approval of Russian military actions against al-Qaeda and ISIS in Syria, remarking that the bombardment of these recognised terrorist groups, which he referred to as a common enemy, should not upset anyone (Middle East Eye 2015).

The increasing influence of Russia over the Syrian regime and its strengthening position in Syria, particularly following the diminished presence of the US, prompted other countries in the region to enhance their ties with Moscow. Security cooperation between Russia and the UAE in Syria expanded in subsequent years, culminating in the UAE normalising its ties with Syria. Meanwhile, Qatar engaged in the negotiation process by hosting a trilateral meeting in Doha with Russia and Turkey in March 2021 (Ramani 2021). Additionally, ideological alignment between Russia and the UAE against various Islamist groups brought these countries together in conflicts in both Libya and Syria. In June 2018, President Putin and MBZ signed the Declaration of Strategic Partnership, which called for the creation of a broad international coalition to fight terrorism and extremism, emphasising respect for the sovereignty of states directly affected by terror attacks (Russian News Agency 2018). Although not explicitly stated by Russian leaders, the defence agreement and Russia's substantial support for the Damascus regime against opposition forces, which include a significant number of political Islamist

groups, suggest that Russia expected regional countries to combat these groups, which it considered terrorists. In this context, the UAE and Russia shared a common stance towards such groups, ultimately facilitating their collaboration in combating terrorist factions that have been opposing the Assad regime since 2011. Russia's calls for alignment against the Islamist groups siding with Damascus seemingly failed to resonate with Qatar's approach. Qatar continued to support a multilateral approach, championing resolution efforts, and maintained close ties with Turkey, one of the major players in the anti-Assad camps.

Saudi Arabia was the leading Arab force in Syria, with its active support for the opposition forces until 2015. However, the Russian involvement in Syria and the Saudi-led Arab coalition's intervention in Yemen changed its impact and attention in Syria. Apart from fighting against terrorist organisations such as ISIS, the main discourse developed and employed by Saudi Arabia in both Syria and Yemen was its anti-Iran stance. Heavily aligning with Saudi Arabia in both the coalition in Yemen and also its anti-Iran stance, the UAE repeatedly criticised Iranian expansionism in the Arab world, particularly in Yemen and Syria, as discussed earlier. Qatar's ties with Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, witnessed a varying trend. Qatar's intense involvement in Syria, which caused a rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Qatar over influence and control among the rebel forces, was replaced with a more passive policy with the advent of Tamim bin Hamed to power. However, this change could not avert the diplomatic crisis between Qatar and four Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, in 2014. Even though Qatar took part in the coalition that intervened in Yemen, it was not enough to mend the ties between these two countries, and this process ended with the Gulf Crisis in June 2017. In this process, Qatar never positioned itself within the anti-Iran camp. In January 2014, the Qatari foreign minister described Iran's role in Syria as "crucial" at an international meeting on Syria (Al-Monitor 2014). Although Qatar withdrew its ambassador from Iran after the attack on the Saudi embassy in Iran in 2016, their ties again enhanced after the Gulf Crisis.

Similar to Qatar, Turkey initially kept its communication channels open with President Assad at the onset of the protests, leveraging the close ties between the leaders of the two countries. However, as the Assad regime continued its harsh response to the protests, Turkey shifted its policy and began supporting opposition groups. Turkey and Qatar often aligned with similar groups, primarily those affiliated with the MB (Battaloglu 2021), which has been designated as a terrorist organisation by Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Following the rise

of ISIS and Kurdish groups in Northern Syria and a series of terror attacks in 2015, Turkey launched its first military operation in Syria in August 2016, followed by additional operations in 2018 and 2019. While most countries in the region, including the UAE, strongly criticised Turkey's military interventions in Syria, Qatar was one of the few countries that supported Turkey, asserting that Turkey had the right to protect itself from terrorist organisations (Baskan 2019). Phillips (2013) suggests that since 2013, when Saudi Arabia assumed a dominant role over the Syrian opposition groups, Qatar's role in Syria has been minor, largely echoing and supporting Turkish policy. The UAE, on the other hand, positioned itself against Turkey, as it did against Iran, describing Turkish incursions into Syria as a "dangerous development and a blatant and unacceptable aggression against the sovereignty of an Arab state in contravention of the rules of international law" (The National 2019).

Overall, while they were on opposing sides during the civil war, the most prominent NRC the US and Russia tried to socialise the regional countries into was that of an anti-terrorism agent. The US's efforts were primarily limited to the fight against ISIS, whereas Russia's attempts including not only countering ISIS but also the Islamist groups, including the MB and those affiliated with the MB, which have been fighting against the Assad forces. Both countries engaged in shuttle diplomacy in the region, rallying support for the war against terrorism. Both Qatar and the UAE participated in the coalition against ISIS, with the UAE being notably more active than Qatar. Additionally, the UAE enhanced its cooperation with Russia in combatting other Islamist forces, including the MB and its affiliated groups, not just in Syria but also in other parts of the region, notably in Libya.

Saudi Arabia positioned itself as a bulwark against Iranian expansion, with Emirati policymakers keen to align with Saudi Arabia in countering Iran's growing influence from Syria to Yemen. In contrast, Qatar was hesitant to join the anti-Iran bloc, repeatedly highlighting the importance of Iranian involvement in Syrian negotiations. Turkey significantly influenced Qatari policy in Syria, especially from 2013 onwards. Turkey's increasing military and diplomatic involvement in Syria and its leadership role in the anti-Assad camp led Qatar to align with Turkish policies. On the other hand, the UAE sharply criticised Turkish involvement in Syria and its broader role in Arab affairs, similar to its stance against Iran.

3. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to comparatively analyse the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE in the Syrian civil war. Initially, it has presented the existing literature on Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies in Syria after the outbreak of the civil war. Following that, role theory has been applied to the collected data in two stages. Firstly, the NRCs of these two countries were identified. Then, the policies of two international (United States and Russia) and three regional powers (Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey) that got involved in the Syrian civil war and had a dynamic relationship with Qatar and the UAE have been specified within the context of socialisation.

The findings on the socialisation process reveal that the US defined two roles for the countries in the region during its involvement in the Syrian crisis from roughly 2013 to 2017: to collaborate with the US in the anti-Assad and anti-ISIS or anti-terrorism campaigns. While both Qatar and the UAE aligned with US expectations, the extent to which they embraced and implemented these roles differed. Regarding their NRCs, Qatar actively positioned itself in the anti-Assad camp, whereas the UAE became deeply engaged in the coalition against ISIS. Specifically, while Qatar was among the most eager participants in the anti-Assad efforts in the region, the UAE emerged as the most active force in the anti-ISIS coalition after the US, even though it recovered its ties with the Syrian regime in the ongoing process.

Similarly, when Russia intervened in Syria in 2015, it placed a strong emphasis on countering terrorism. Besides ISIS, its anti-terrorism role also targeted other groups opposing the Syrian regime, including those affiliated with the MB, which it designated as a terrorist organisation. The UAE welcomed this approach, leading to a normalisation of ties with the Syrian regime, predicated on the assertion that the opposition groups were dominated by extremist Islamists. On the other hand, Qatar not only remained indifferent to Russia's call but also maintained its close ties with MB-affiliated groups.

Among the regional powers, Saudi Arabia's firm stance against Iranian expansion in the region, particularly through its significant presence in Syria, called on other countries, especially GCC members, to join the anti-Iran camp. This movement was closely linked with the intervention of the Arab coalition in Yemen against the Iran-backed Houthis. The UAE aligned itself with

Saudi Arabia, becoming a leading member of the bloc against Iran. This alignment was evident both in discourse, as reflected in its NRCs, and in action, considering its deep involvement in the Arab coalition. Although Qatar joined the Arab coalition formed in 2015, its level of activity remained limited, and it continued to show reluctance in confronting Iran, either in Syria or Yemen. Instead, having consistently identified itself as a supporter of international cooperation, Qatari policymakers emphasised the importance of Iran in reaching a resolution for Syria.

As Turkey increased its military and diplomatic involvement in Syria, Emirati policymakers criticised Turkey's assertive presence in Syria and began to group Turkey with Iran when condemning foreign interventions in Arab affairs. With strong political and financial ties to Turkey, Qatar supported Turkey's role in Syria by endorsing negotiation initiatives involving Turkey and supporting Turkish military operations in Northern Syria, setting itself apart from almost all other countries in the region.

Revisiting the title of this chapter, although Qatar and the UAE initially aligned themselves with the anti-Assad camp during the early years of the Syrian civil war, their policies evolved mostly impacted by the involvement of external powers. The UAE, giving its support to rebel forces against the Syrian regime initially, shifted its efforts towards fighting Islamist extremism, aligning more closely with the policies of major global powers. This shift led to the UAE adopting strong anti-Iran and anti-Turkey stances, reinforcing its support for a significant Arab role in resolving the Syrian crisis. Conversely, Qatar maintained its anti-Assad stance during this period and remained cautious about adopting anti-Turkey and anti-Iran positions. Instead, it continued to support international efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis, whether those efforts were initiated by the UN or by countries like Turkey and Iran.

CHAPTER VII

COMPARATIVE ROLE THEORY ANALYSIS: NRCs, SOCIALISATION EXPERIENCES AND THE LEGACY OF HISTORICAL TIES

1. Introduction

This study aims to examine the divergent and often conflicting foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE from the onset of the Arab uprisings in 2011 to the Al-Ula Meeting in 2021. To achieve this, the study focuses on three civil wars that erupted following the uprisings in the Middle East. These conflicts are characterised by differing geographical proximities to the Gulf, the number and identity of the countries involved, and their interactions with Qatar and the UAE. These varied cases allow the study to explore whether, and if so, how the changing variables influenced Qatari and Emirati foreign policies. In other words, examining these three distinct cases enhances the study's scope and strengthens its ability to discern the differences between the foreign policies of these two countries.

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the previous three empirical chapters. The comparative investigation is structured into six sections. The first section examines the differences between the empirical chapters, resulting from the varying availability of data for each case. The second section offers a comprehensive analysis of NRCs in two sub-sections. In the first sub-section, a discussion on the number of NRCs for each country is presented, initially considering the similar and conflicting NRCs, and then questioning whether the number of NRCs indicates the degree of activeness of the countries. The second sub-section investigates the NRCs of the countries comparatively, focusing on the differences between the cases, the salience of the NRCs across the cases, and whether the NRCs assumed by both countries represented the same meanings for them.

The third section presents the findings from the analysis of the socialisation experiences of Qatar and the UAE. The fourth section then utilises the discussions from the rest of the chapter to address the research question of this thesis. It combines the findings from the NRCs and socialisation analyses to explain why these two similarly structured countries pursued different and even conflicting foreign policies. The subsequent section revisits the historical

context chapter to determine whether the key factors that diverged Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies originated in the pre-2011 period or emerged in response to the Arab uprisings and subsequent events. The final section concludes with a general analysis of the chapter.

2. Data Availability

The cases varied significantly in terms of data availability. First, the lengths of the chapters differed based on the availability or existence of data. The Yemen and Syria chapters were longer than the Libya chapter. The availability of data was initially impacted by the removal of speeches from MBZ's official Crown Prince website. After collecting speeches on Yemen, MBZ became the president, and the speeches he had given as Crown Prince were removed from the website. Although some speeches once published on the website were retrieved using the Wayback Machine[34], not all statements could be recovered. This limitation prevented the collection of all MBZ's speeches on Syria and Libya.

Second, the existence of data was directly related to the number of speeches, interviews, or tweets concerning the cases. It depended on how often foreign policymakers addressed these countries in their statements. This difference is particularly evident when comparing Yemen and Libya. In the Yemen case, a high number of statements by foreign policymakers, especially from the UAE, provided this study with a substantial amount of data. Conversely, the civil war in Libya did not prominently feature on the agendas of foreign policymakers from both countries. The Syria case fell somewhere in between the other two cases.

The variance observed in the involvement and attention levels of different countries in civil wars across Yemen, Syria, and Libya is primarily attributed to their geopolitical interests and the nature of their involvement in these conflicts. Yemen's geographical proximity to Qatar and the UAE, coupled with the intervention by GCC countries, heightened the focus of Qatari and Emirati officials on the Yemeni civil war. The UAE emerged as a major player in Yemen, becoming the second-largest contributor to the Arab Coalition following Saudi Arabia, while

[34] The Wayback Machine is a digital archive of the World Wide Web, maintained by the Internet Archive, a nonprofit organisation. It allows users to see how websites looked at various points in time by capturing snapshots of web pages. Arora and their colleagues (2016)'s work clearly provides a methodology to conduct research through using the Wayback Machine.

Qatar withdrew its forces after the onset of the Gulf Crisis in 2017, further highlighting the Emirati role in the region.

In contrast, the Syrian civil war initially commanded significant attention from both Qatar and the UAE, aligning themselves with the anti-Assad forces and supporting the opposition. Notably, Qatar was a prominent financial backer of the rebels in the early years of the Syrian conflict. However, as Qatar's influence scaled down and the UAE shifted its focus toward combating extremist Islamist groups, leading to eventual diplomatic normalisation with Syria, the prominence of their statements concerning Syria diminished.

Regarding Libya, both Qatar and the UAE initially supported NATO and the rebel factions aiming to overthrow the Qaddafi regime. Their involvement saw a decline until the resurgence of conflict in 2014, with the UAE notably backing Haftar's forces against the Islamist-influenced Tripoli government. Qatar’s involvement in Libya became more pronounced with the Turkish military intervention in 2019, which renewed its interest in the conflict. This analysis reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of foreign policy and military involvement influenced by regional geopolitics and strategic shifts.

In this context, it becomes apparent that the levels of activeness exhibited by Qatar and the UAE varied significantly across the examined cases, reflecting the degree to which these conflicts were prioritised in their foreign policy statements. Over these ten years, their shifting engagement in the civil wars in Syria and Libya notably influenced this trend. Specifically, by examining each country's engagement level with the civil wars, one can discern variations in the current data across the cases, providing insights into the differences both within and between these instances. Yemen, followed by Syria, consistently held a more prominent position in the foreign policy agendas of these countries for the reasons stated earlier. In contrast, Libya received less emphasis in their foreign policy statements and decisions, attributable to similar factors.

The extent of activity by foreign policymakers on Twitter significantly influenced the volume of documents collected for this analysis. The then-Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the UAE Anwar Gargash was particularly active on his Twitter page, sharing both personal opinions and official statements from his ministry throughout the period under review. In stark

contrast, Qatari foreign policymakers did not use their Twitter accounts nearly as actively. Specifically, Gargash posted a total of 846 tweets concerning the war in Yemen alone, both in Arabic and English. What distinguishes Gargash's Twitter engagement further is his approach to using the platform, where he often shared his personal views on crises rather than limiting himself to official statements. This resulted in a richer dataset from the UAE compared to Qatar in almost all cases studied, despite Qatar having a higher total number of formal statements, such as speeches, interviews, and public declarations, especially in the context of Syria. For Qatar, the situation differed; Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad only opened a Twitter account in December 2017, and Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdurrahman joined Twitter in March 2016 upon his appointment. Although the Foreign Minister has been quite active since then, the Emir posted only 175 tweets from December 2017 to January 2021, up to the Al-Ula Meeting. This limited engagement resulted in fewer tweets available for analysis from Qatar during this period.

To summarise, the volume of documents available for this analysis was predominantly influenced by several factors: the accessibility of data sources, the extent of each country's involvement in the crises, and the degree of activity by foreign policymakers on their social media accounts. As a result, more Twitter data was obtained for the UAE across all cases, largely due to Anwar Gargash’s prolific use of Twitter and the sporadic tweets from the Qatari Emir during the period in question. However, in the case of Syria, where Qatar showed greater involvement and continued support for the rebel forces, a larger number of non-Twitter documents were collected for Qatar compared to the UAE. Conversely, in the cases of Yemen and Libya, the UAE's more pronounced engagement resulted in a richer compilation of sources for analysing Emirati narratives relative to those of Qatar.

3. Analysis of NRCs

This section offers a comparative analysis of the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE, drawing on the empirical data accumulated throughout the thesis to highlight key findings relevant to the research question. The discussion is structured into two main parts. In the first part, the analysis begins by examining the number of NRCs identified for each country, exploring both the similarities and discrepancies between them. It also includes an examination that seeks to determine if the quantity of NRCs correlates with the level of each country's activeness in the

contexts studied. The inquiry delves into whether a higher number of NRCs implies greater engagement and visibility in these crises. The second part engages with a comparative evaluation of the NRCs, focusing on the differences observed across various case studies. This section assesses the prominence of NRCs in each case, exploring how salient these conceptions were within the broader narrative frameworks of both countries. Additionally, it evaluates whether the NRCs adopted by Qatar and the UAE carry identical interpretations and meanings within each context, or if they diverge in perception and impact.

3.1. Investigation into the Number of Different NRCs

This section examines the reasons behind the differing numbers of NRCs between two countries, observing that the UAE consistently exhibited more NRCs than Qatar in each case. To explore this discrepancy, the analysis initially focuses on similar NRCs to determine whether certain NRCs can be grouped under a single overarching NRC. As an extension of this analysis, the section also investigates contradictory NRCs that could potentially disrupt the consistency of foreign policy approaches within or across the cases studied. Identifying such contradictions is crucial for assessing the integrity and coherence of each country's foreign policy narratives. Finally, the section opens a discussion on the reasons behind and the potential implications of the number of NRCs assumed by Qatar and the UAE.

3.1.1 Similar and Conflicting NRCs

The UAE had a higher number of NRCs compared to Qatar in each case. As shown in Table 6, the UAE expressed eight NRCs in Yemen and seven in both Syria and Libya, whereas Qatar had four in Yemen and Syria and three in Libya. Similar to earlier observations, the more robust involvement of the UAE in the civil wars of Yemen and Libya, as opposed to Qatar's engagement, likely serves as a primary reason for the disparity in the number of NRCs adopted in these instances. However, the situation in Syria diverged, characterised by a comparable level of intervention and activity from both countries. The categorisation of similar NRCs as distinct individual conceptions might account for this variance. This is particularly evident in the UAE, where Emirati foreign policymakers adopted multiple NRCs for their country in each case.

Table 6. Number of NRCs in Each Case

Cases/Countries	United Arab Emirates	Qatar
Yemen	8	4
Libya	7	3
Syria	7	4

A detailed examination of these NRCs reveals that several NRCs are closely intertwined or can be subsumed under a broader role. The most salient example is the similarity between the NRCs of 'bulwark against Iran', 'bulwark against Turkey', and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs'. In some statements, Emirati foreign policymakers directly mentioned Iran and Turkey, criticising these countries' expansionist policies in the region and positioning their country as a member of the Arab coalition against these interventions. In others, the statements were more general, only underlining the opposition of the UAE against the interventions in Arab affairs by other regional powers without naming any of them. In essence, 'bulwark against Turkey' and 'bulwark against Iran' NRCs can be brought together under the umbrella of 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs'. The reason why they were given separately is that it is significant to understand which countries were targeted when the UAE declared its opposition to non-Arab interference in the region. Only stating that the UAE was against any intervention in Arab affairs would not make it clear that the main concern was the regional non-Arab countries, not Russia, the US or several other European countries, some of whose presence in the region was welcomed by the UAE, as discussed in the Syria case. It is also important to know which countries were referred to conduct an analysis of the drivers that pushed these leaders to assume such NRCs. For instance, while there was almost no mention of Turkey in Yemen and Iran in Libya, both of the countries occupied a place in the criticisms of the Emirati leaders in the Syria case.

Similarly, the 'protector/provider of security and stability' NRC is strongly related to the 'defender of the bloc' NRC. The former mainly emphasises the actor's commitment to fight against any entity, from countries to non-state militant groups, deemed a threat to the region’s security and stability, specifically the Arab region. The latter is primarily concerned with how the actor is dedicated to being a member of the coalition that protects the bloc, which mainly

refers to the Arab Gulf and allied Arab countries, against external threats and interventions. In the statements given by Emirati leaders, these two NRCs were present. They were categorised separately because, in some speeches, the emphasis was on the importance of the security and stability of Arab lands and the UAE's assumed role in collaborating with allies to provide peace against those regarded as threats and destabilisers. However, in other instances, the focus was primarily on being a member of the bloc fighting against external interventions and terrorism, specifically from regional countries like Turkey and Iran, and Islamist forces such as ISIS and even MB-affiliated groups. The variation in emphasis in these statements led to these NRCs being presented individually.

Based on this debate, another question arises: Are there any two NRCs of one of the countries that conflict with each other? Put in other words, is it observed that an NRC in one case for a country contradicts another NRC assumed in another case? Role conflict in role theory research concerns analysing situations where the actor is expected to assume two roles that are contradictory (Holsti 1970; Walker 1987; Thies 2009; Harnisch 2011). For instance, a country might be expected to undertake the roles of a faithful ally and a neutral mediator simultaneously. However, since these two roles are not compatible, one requiring alignment with one camp while the other presumes a neutral stance, it creates a conflict for a country assumed to practice both simultaneously. This type of conflict is called 'inter-role conflict'. Another type of conflict is 'intra-role conflict', which refers to a situation where different perspectives are presented regarding how to assume a certain role (Brummer and Thies 2015).

A review of the NRCs in each case demonstrates that the NRCs assumed by both countries are not contradictory. They all appear to be aligned with each other. An insight into NRCs across the cases also does not reveal any conflicting NRCs. The only issue that could be mentioned here is that while the 'advocate of state sovereignty' NRC is highlighted in the Yemen and Libya cases, it was not assumed by Qatar in Syria. The 'supporter of international cooperation' NRC, on the other hand, was only stated by Emirati leaders in the Syria case. These examples could be associated with role conflict for the countries across these cases. The reason behind this can be linked to their approaches to these crises. For Qatar, the 'advocate of state sovereignty' was strongly emphasised in Yemen and Libya by foreign policymakers as they either opposed countries intervening against the central governments of these countries or they maintained positive ties with the elements within the central governments of the civil war-affected

countries. In Yemen, the intervening actors included the Arab coalition, comprising Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with whom Qatar experienced a region-wide conflict that culminated in the Gulf Crisis of 2017. In Libya, however, Qatar had close ties with the UN-recognised Tripoli government and deteriorating relations with some anti-Tripoli government actors such as the UAE and Egypt. In Syria, however, Qatar's anti-Assad stance and close relationship with some Islamist rebel forces prevented the foreign policymakers in Doha from portraying their country as an advocate of state sovereignty.

While the UAE positioned itself against the Tripoli government by supporting local and international allies, Emirati policy in Yemen was shaped around creating its own sphere of influence by aligning with local groups such as the Southern Transitional Council, rather than the central government, despite initial collaboration with the Hadi government following its ally, Saudi Arabia. The unfolding events in the Syria case, on the other hand, prompted the UAE to adopt more of a supporter of international cooperation role as Islamist elements gained dominance among the rebel forces opposing the central government. Consequently, it joined the international coalition fighting against terrorist organisations such as ISIS and al-Nusra and eventually restored its relations with the Assad government in Damascus. In other words, these developments in Syria led Emirati foreign policymakers to present their country as a proponent of multilateral actions devised by international powers.

As a result, a comparative investigation across the three cases demonstrates that there are some NRCs that exhibit similarities to some extent, and also some NRCs that are present only in specific cases, which can be perceived as contradictions in the context of the general approaches of these two countries in these wars. While the similar NRCs exist as a consequence of different emphases in the statements, the NRCs that may be considered as creating conflict in the overarching stances of Qatar and the UAE are the products of case-based policies of these countries. These similar NRCs are one of the reasons why the UAE had more NRCs in each case compared to Qatar.

3.1.2. Relationship between the Number of NRCs and the Activeness of Countries

The similar NRCs that could be consolidated under one umbrella NRC are among the reasons the UAE had more NRCs than Qatar. However, even with an adjustment to merge these NRCs,

the UAE still maintains a higher total count of NRCs than Qatar. What could explain this difference, and how does role theory scholarship address it? Role theory research suggests that countries with a higher number of NRCs tend to operate in more complex international environments, reflecting their diverse interactions and the varied expectations placed upon them by both domestic and international actors (Holsti, 1970; Walker, 1987). These countries often have broader and more multifaceted foreign policies, enabling them to engage in a wide range of activities on the international stage, including roles such as regional leader, mediator, and global advocate (Aggestam, 2004; Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012). In his seminal article, Holsti (1970) observed that the countries with the highest number of NRCs, notably Egypt (United Arab Republic) and the USA, were actively involved in international and regional affairs, leading them to assume more NRCs than other countries.

Countries with numerous NRCs must effectively manage these roles, often necessitating sophisticated foreign policy strategies and a flexible diplomatic approach to navigate the varying expectations and responsibilities (Thies, 2010). Such nations may benefit from greater diplomatic leverage and the capacity to influence a broader range of issues. However, they also face the challenge of maintaining consistency and coherence in their foreign policy (Harnisch, 2011; Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012).

In contrast, countries with fewer NRCs might utilise a clearer and more consistent foreign policy direction, potentially leading to more predictable and stable international relations (Barnett, 1993; Aggestam, 2004). These countries often pursue a more focused foreign policy agenda, which can streamline the decision-making process and diminish the likelihood of internal and external conflicts over foreign policy roles (Holsti, 1970; Harnisch, 2011). However, they may also face limitations in their scope for influence and exhibit less flexibility in responding to global challenges, which can make it more challenging to adapt to changing international dynamics (Thies, 2010).

Building on the literature discussed earlier, the UAE was more actively involved in the civil wars of Yemen and Libya. In Syria, while Qatar's involvement was more pronounced than the UAE's, particularly in the first two years of the conflict, its presence diminished in the subsequent years. Conversely, the UAE joined forces with the US and other international and regional allies to combat terrorism in Syria and Iraq in 2014 and 2015, which bolstered its role

in this region as an anti-terrorism agent. After consolidating the NRCs that are closely related or those that could be grouped under an umbrella NRC, the UAE's and Qatar's NRCs in Syria stand at five and four, respectively. This variation in the levels of involvement by these two countries reflects the number of NRCs they maintained in these civil wars. In essence, the results reached after the analysis validate the expectation in the literature regarding the relationship between the number of NRCs and the level of activeness of the countries in the cases studied.

Regarding the second part of the discussion above, the UAE having more NRCs did not result in role conflicts within individual cases. The across-case analysis also does not reveal any significant conflict that could be attributed to contradicting NRCs for the UAE. Conversely, Qatar, having fewer NRCs, provides a clearer picture for understanding the main perceptions of Qatari foreign policymakers regarding their country's roles in these civil wars. The only point to discuss for Qatar is its presence with four NRCs in Yemen and Syria, compared to only three in Libya. The subsequent part, which includes a comparative analysis of the NRCs, taking into account the different characteristics of these cases in terms of their ties, political features, and geographical proximities to Qatar and the UAE, will further illuminate this issue.

3.2. Investigating NRCs Comparatively

This second part of the section conducts a comparative investigation into the NRCs, initially focusing on the divergent features of the cases in relation to Qatar and the UAE. It then examines the prominence of the NRCs by exploring how frequently the NRCs were assumed across the cases. In other words, this analysis presents findings on which NRCs were articulated by foreign policymakers in all cases, potentially representing the general foreign policy perspective of the countries during this period. Additionally, it considers the NRCs that were mentioned in only one or two cases, investigating whether they represent more of a case-based approach. In the subsequent section, this section engages in a discussion on whether the NRCs assumed by both countries were interpreted by foreign policymakers in a similar manner, with the aim of determining whether stating the same NRCs necessarily meant that they attributed the same meanings to them. Finally, it delves into the NRCs that were stated by countries in all cases.

3.2.1. Different Cases

The case selection section in the methodology chapter emphasised the importance of choosing these three civil wars for this research and detailed the differences between them across four categories: (1) their geographical proximity to Qatar and the UAE; (2) the degree of internationalisation of the civil wars; (3) the level of involvement by Qatar and the UAE in these conflicts; and (4) the extent of coverage that Qatari and Emirati policies received in the literature. This section aims to analyse the NRCs adopted by Qatar and the UAE in each civil war, focusing on how the differences between these cases might have influenced these NRCs. It addresses only the first two categories, as the level of involvement by Qatar and the UAE in these wars was discussed in the previous section, and the extent of literature coverage of these countries' policies was only mentioned to highlight one of this research's contributions. Table 7 illustrates the NRCs assumed by Qatar and the UAE in these cases. In this context, a total of 15 discernible NRCs were identified in the analysis of three empirical chapters.

Table 7. NRCs of Qatar and the UAE Comparatively

NRCs	Yemen	Libya	Syria
Advocate of State Sovereignty	Qatar	Qatar	
Advocate/Facilitator of Arab Solidarity	UAE	UAE	UAE
Anti-terrorism Agent	UAE	UAE	UAE and Qatar
Bulwark against External Intervention in Arab Affairs	UAE	UAE	UAE
Bulwark against Iran	UAE		UAE
Bulwark against Turkey		UAE	UAE
Defender of the Bloc	UAE	UAE	
Faithful Ally	UAE		
Humanitarian Agent	UAE and Qatar		UAE and Qatar
Independent	Qatar		
Mediator		Qatar	Qatar
Protector/Provider of Security and Stability		UAE	
Regional Ally	UAE	UAE	

Supporter of International Cooperation	Qatar	Qatar	Qatar and UAE

Qatar and the UAE's geographical proximity to the cases was expected to influence these countries' motivations in intervening in these civil wars. None of the civil war countries are neighbours of either Qatar or the UAE. However, Yemen and Syria are geographically closer to them than Libya. In this sense, the expectation was that Qatar and the UAE would be more active, for instance, by assuming a larger number of NRCs in the cases of Yemen and Syria compared to Libya. As discussed in the previous section, the UAE had eight NRCs in Yemen and seven in both Libya and Syria, whereas Qatar had three in Libya and four in the other two. The NRC of 'faithful ally' was assumed by the UAE in only Yemen case. This NRC was an articulation of the Emirati commitment to its alignment with Saudi Arabia, the two most actively involved countries in the Yemeni civil war. In other words, the UAE deeply cooperated with its GCC ally, which perceived the expansion of Iran-backed Houthis in its immediate neighbourhood as a threat to be countered, in the military interference in Yemen, the closest conflict to UAE soil among these three cases. The NRC that Qatar assumed in the Syria and Yemen cases, but not in the Libya case, was the 'humanitarian agent' NRC. It also applies to the UAE, as it did not assume this NRC only in the Libya case. There were humanitarian needs in Libya, as there were in both Syria and Yemen during the civil wars, but this NRC did not appear in the statements of both countries. This could stem from Libya being geographically distant from Qatar and the UAE. In other words, Qatar and the UAE concentrated their humanitarian activities on the more immediate countries in need during this period.

The second difference between the cases was the degree of internationalisation of these civil wars. This item primarily concerns the analysis of socialisation; however, it is also possible to examine the NRCs in relation to the countries involved in each civil war. The wars in Syria and Libya saw the intervention of both regional and international actors, either by sending soldiers or mercenaries, or by directly supporting local groups financially, militarily, and politically. In contrast, the Yemen conflict was less internationalised, primarily becoming a battleground between regional powers, Iran on one side and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other. This second item significantly influenced the NRCs of Qatar. Qatar's 'independent' NRC was only present in the Yemen case. In other words, Qatari foreign policymakers felt the need to specify

this NRC in this civil war due to its relations with the countries involved. Following the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis in June 2017, Qatari forces were expelled from the Arab coalition, and Qatar positioned itself separately from its fellow GCC neighbours, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. The 'independent' NRC was a result of this positioning of Qatar in the statements. Put differently, since the extent of internationalisation in the Yemen civil war and the countries involved in the Yemeni crises were mainly limited to Qatar's neighbours, the crisis between them led Qatar to assume a specific NRC that was only mentioned in this context.

In conclusion, the divergencies between the cases influenced the NRCs established by the foreign policymakers of both countries. For example, while differences in geographical proximity affected these countries' 'humanitarian agent' NRC, focusing their humanitarian assistance on neighbouring conflicts, the level of internationalisation in Yemen led Qatar to adopt the 'independent' NRC, unique to this case. Moving from the effect of divergent cases on the NRCs, the following section aims to present a detailed comparative analysis of the NRCs specified in two or all cases.

3.2.2. Saliency of the NRCs

This section seeks to investigate the frequency of NRCs in the statements of foreign policymakers across the cases. In doing so, it aims to identify the NRCs that were strongly assumed by the countries based on whether they were present in all cases for these countries. Some NRCs found themselves present in every case for the countries, as demonstrated in Table 7. For the UAE, these NRCs included the 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity', 'anti-terrorism agent', and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs', which presented itself against Iran or Turkey (in the Syria case, both). For Qatar, the NRC of 'supporter of international cooperation' was mentioned in each case by the foreign policymakers. Additionally, some NRCs were assumed by these countries in two of the cases: 'defender of the bloc' and 'regional ally' by the UAE, and 'advocate of state sovereignty', 'humanitarian agent', and 'mediator' by Qatar. The NRCs that were referred to in the statements of the policymakers only once included 'faithful ally', 'humanitarian agent', and 'protector/provider of security and stability' for the UAE, and 'independent' and 'anti-terrorism agent' for Qatar.

Here, another question to address is how the different frequencies of these NRCs should be assessed, referring to the main question of this research. The ones repeated in all cases indicate that these NRCs were central to the countries in the post-Arab uprisings era. Thus, the other NRCs, especially those mentioned only in one of the cases, might be regarded as case or civil war-based. Some of the NRCs that were only mentioned once in the statements of either country's leaders were already discussed in the previous section. These include 'faithful ally' and 'humanitarian agent' for the UAE, and 'independent' for Qatar. They have been identified as the products of case-based approaches, influenced by the specific characteristics of either the countries experiencing the civil war, the countries involved in the war, or both.

The other two NRCs in this group are the 'protector/provider of security and stability' for the UAE and the 'anti-terrorism agent' for Qatar. The UAE's 'protector/provider of security and solidarity' NRC was also related to how Emirati foreign policymakers perceived the actors they were opposing in Yemen. The opposition in this civil war against the Arab coalition consisted of the Iran-backed Houthis and extremist militant Islamist groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The prospect of these actors gaining power near the GCC's largest member, Saudi Arabia, led Emirati policymakers to portray their nation as the protector of security and stability in the Arabian Peninsula. In other words, the significant presence of these militant groups and Iran in proximity to the GCC was perceived as a threat to the sub-region's security and stability, which ultimately prompted Emirati leaders to adopt this NRC. On the other hand, Qatar's 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC was used by Qatari foreign policymakers to articulate their commitment to fighting ISIS in Syria. This NRC particularly became prominent in statements when an international coalition was formed to launch military operations against ISIS in 2014 and 2015. Qatari foreign policymakers did not focus on this NRC for their country in the other two cases.

The NRCs that were mentioned by countries in two cases were the 'defender of the bloc' and 'regional ally' for the UAE, and the 'advocate of state sovereignty', 'humanitarian agent' and 'mediator' for Qatar. Both the 'defender of the bloc' and 'regional ally' NRCs for the UAE were only absent in the Syria case. These two NRCs' absence in the Syria case was essentially concerned with the relatively passive attitude of the UAE in this civil war compared to other two cases. The UAE did not engage with the main parties warring against each other, the Assad

government and the Free Syrian Army, in a significant way, particularly following the increasing internationalisation of the civil war. The UAE's remarkable intervention in Syria merely took place when a coalition against ISIS was established in 2014. Therefore, the Emirati foreign policymakers seemingly did not feel the need to emphasise these two NRCs in the Syria case as they did in the other two civil wars.

For Qatar, the 'advocate of state sovereignty' and the 'humanitarian agent' NRCs were already discussed in the previous section. The absence of the former in the Syria case was due to Qatar's strong opposition against the Syrian regime, the Assad government, during the civil war. The 'humanitarian agent' NRC, on the other hand, may not be present in the NRC list for Doha in Libya because this country is geographically distant from Qatar, especially compared with the other two cases. The 'mediator' NRC was present in the Libya and Syria civil wars but absent in Yemen. Initially, Qatar was a member of the Arab coalition at the beginning of the intervention in March 2015. Although it was not one of the most active members of this coalition, Qatar's joining forces with its GCC allies positioned Doha on one side of the war. Following its expulsion from the coalition due to the Gulf Crisis in June 2017, Qatar's diplomatic ties with both Saudi Arabia and the UAE, two active members of the coalition, were cut. Thus, Qatar was initially on one side of the Yemen war until June 2017, and then found itself in a deep crisis with one of the sides of the Yemen civil war. Moreover, even if Qatar had intended to assume such a role, as it did in Libya and Syria, it lacked the requisite level of diplomatic relations with the countries comprising one side of the war.

Finally, the NRCs mentioned in all cases were the 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity', 'anti-terrorism agent', and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs', which manifested either against Iran or Turkey (in the Syria case, against both) for the UAE, and the 'supporter of international cooperation' for Qatar. Despite the differences among the cases, as discussed in previous sections, these NRCs were consistently present. Therefore, it can be suggested that these NRCs were not adopted by the countries ad hoc or on a case-by-case basis. Instead, they represent the set of NRCs that Qatari and Emirati foreign policymakers have consistently assumed as the roles for their countries. An in-depth analysis of these four NRCs will be conducted in subsequent sections, following a discussion in the next chapter on whether the NRCs stated by both countries at least once represented the same meanings or were interpreted differently by the foreign policymakers.

3.2.3. NRC's Meanings Across Cases and Countries

This section examines the NRCs of Qatar and the UAE, focusing on how they are perceived by foreign policymakers. For example, Qatar and the UAE might share an NRC, but their interpretations of it could differ. While some NRCs were adopted by only one of the countries, such as the 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' and 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' by the UAE or 'mediator' and 'advocate of state sovereignty' by Qatar, others, like the 'anti-terrorism agent' and 'humanitarian agent', were stated by the foreign policymakers of both countries. It is essential to investigate these NRCs to understand whether the leaders attributed different meanings to them.

The 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC was adopted by both the UAE and Qatar; however, while the UAE mentioned it in three cases, the foreign policymakers in Doha only referenced it in the Syria case. Reviewing the Syria chapter, Qatar's 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC was present only after the formation of the international coalition against ISIS in 2014 and 2015. Therefore, when referring to terrorists and their commitment to fighting them, they specifically mentioned ISIS. Conversely, the UAE's interpretation of this NRC was broader, encompassing more actors. Although being a member of the coalition against ISIS was a significant aspect of this NRC for the UAE, in all cases considered, the 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC also appeared in statements addressing other groups, most notably the MB and affiliated groups, as well as case-specific groups such as AQAP in Yemen. The UAE has designated the MB as a terrorist organisation, and thus, its activities in Yemen, Syria, and Libya were viewed as the expansion of a terrorist organisation by Emirati leaders. When addressing their concerns regarding the UN-recognised Tripoli government in Libya and the opposition groups against the Assad government in Syria, their primary emphasis was on the threat from the MB's growing influence following the Arab uprisings. This NRC was not merely case-based for the UAE, considering its prominence in all cases and the UAE's strong opposition to the MB in other countries, including Egypt. For Qatar, the 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC was only applicable in Syria and did not refer to the MB or any affiliated groups across the region.

The other two NRCs that were evident at least once in the statements for the countries are the 'humanitarian agent' and the 'supporter of international cooperation'. These two NRCs were regarded similarly by the countries' foreign policymakers. The 'humanitarian agent' NRC

was presented in a manner that promoted their countries as humanitarian donors, focusing on their contributions such as food and medical equipment supplies, and construction projects to repair areas devastated by ongoing wars, including residential places, hospitals, and schools. The ‘supporter of international cooperation’ NRC was highlighted in statements when these foreign policy figures emphasised their countries' preference for a multilateral approach to resolving the ongoing civil wars. This approach included supporting existing peace processes or calling for the international community, primarily addressing the UN, to devise plans to end the crises.

While Qatar assumed this NRC in all crises, the UAE only mentioned this NRC in the Syria case. The reason why the UAE exclusively mentioned this NRC in the Syria case is due to their role as either a participant or a supporter to one of the warring sides in the other two conflicts, Libya and Yemen. However, in Syria, the UAE was not heavily involved in the civil war between the Syrian government and opposition forces, and its involvement was primarily limited to its initial support for opposition groups in the early years. Its intervention in Syria in 2014 and 2015 was as part of the coalition formed to fight against ISIS, after which the UAE normalised its relations with Damascus. During this period, Emirati foreign policymakers portrayed their country as a supporter of international efforts to resolve the war. The key difference between Qatar and the UAE regarding this NRC was that Qatar also endorsed and declared its support for the Astana process, initiated by Russia, Turkey, and Iran. However, the UAE's support for international cooperation was confined to efforts under the UN umbrella, as discussed in the Syria case. The UAE's sceptical approach to the Astana process was primarily due to its opposing stance towards Turkey and Iran, two of the three initiators of this process.

To summarise, only three NRCs were stated by both Qatar and the UAE at least once: ‘anti-terrorism agent’, ‘humanitarian agent’, and ‘supporter of international cooperation’. Among these, the ‘humanitarian agent’ NRC carried the same meaning for both countries, referring to their efforts to aid people suffering from civil wars through food and medical equipment donations and construction plans to rebuild cities, including houses, hospitals, and schools.

The ‘anti-terrorism agent’ NRC was consistently used to emphasise both countries' commitment to combating terrorism in the region. However, a detailed examination of their statements shows that Qatar primarily articulated this commitment in the context of the

coalition against ISIS, while for the UAE, the term had a broader scope. In addition to their involvement in the coalition against ISIS, the UAE used this NRC to assert their stance against other Islamist factions, notably the MB and affiliated groups across the region, which they classify as terrorist.

The ‘supporter of international cooperation’ NRC, similar to the ‘anti-terrorism agent’ NRC, generally implied a preference for a multilateral approach to resolving civil wars. However, the contexts in which it was mentioned by Qatari and Emirati policymakers varied slightly. In Syria, where Emirati policymakers exclusively highlighted their country’s support for international cooperation, they endorsed efforts led by international organisations like the UN and remained sceptical about alternative platforms such as the Astana process, due to their opposition to some of the initiators of this process. Qatar, in contrast, expressed support for both UN-led initiatives and alternative platforms during this period.

In conclusion, while the ‘humanitarian agent’ NRC carried the same meaning for both countries, the interpretation of the ‘supporter of international cooperation’ and especially the ‘anti-terrorism agent’ NRCs differed significantly between the two, reflecting their distinct approaches to defining terrorism. The difference mainly stemmed from the actors that they associated these NRCs with, not substantially what they meant when giving the statements that were attributed to the mentioned NRCs.

3.2.4. The NRCs Stated in all Cases

As mentioned previously, Qatar had one, and the UAE had three NRCs that were assumed in all three cases: 'supporter of international cooperation' for Qatar, and 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity', 'anti-terrorism agent', and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' for the UAE. The presence of these NRCs across all cases indicates that they were not merely assumed based on case-specific choices, such as the countries' ties with the parties involved in the civil wars. Instead, these NRCs provide valuable insight into understanding the consistent behaviours and strategies of these countries during this period. This last section of the ‘Investigating NRCs Comparatively’ part intends to examine these four NRCs to better understand their reflections on these countries’ foreign policies.

The 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC was already discussed earlier. Emirati foreign policymakers firmly positioned their country as an actor committed to fighting groups they designate as terrorist organisations by various means, militarily, politically, and culturally. As Gargash stated in his tweets, which are included in the empirical chapters, their fight against fundamentalist Islamism was not merely limited to military might and alliances with political groups opposing these entities but also involved establishing and funding intellectuals and think tanks to promote Islam as a peaceful religion. Emirati foreign policymakers accused the MB, which played a significant role during the Arab uprisings and subsequent periods, of causing instability and spreading violence across the region. For example, their political and military support for Haftar's forces against the Tripoli government in Libya was strongly motivated by the presence of Islamist, predominantly MB-affiliated figures in this government. Beyond these cases, another instance is their support for the July 2013 coup in Egypt, orchestrated against the MB-backed Morsi government that came to power in 2012 (al-Zo'by and Baskan 2015). Al-Qaeda was also another prominent group featured in the statements of Emirati leaders, with opposition expressed through tweets and speeches against al-Nusra in Syria and AQAP in Yemen.

The 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' NRC was mentioned in the statements across all cases. It is important to note that this NRC encompasses both the 'bulwark against Iran' and 'bulwark against Turkey' NRCs. The UAE has consistently articulated its opposition to the interference of these two non-Arab Middle Eastern countries in Arab affairs. When this NRC was referenced in the statements, Iran was specifically mentioned in the context of Yemen, Turkey in Libya, and both countries in Syria. Additionally, this NRC was highlighted when Emirati foreign policymakers expressed their concerns about Iranian and Turkish presence in Arab lands, distinctly from other non-regional and non-Arab countries such as Russia and the US. This stance by the UAE underscores a deep concern about the expansion of these two regional powers' spheres of influence, which could potentially pose a security threat to the Gulf region.

An analysis of the UAE's relationship trajectory with these two countries clearly shows deteriorating ties. To quickly recap, the UAE viewed Iran's influence in the region with increasing suspicion, particularly due to Iran's support for proxy groups and its active involvement in conflicts across the Middle East. The UAE's alignment with Saudi Arabia against

Iranian influence became more pronounced as they jointly pursued policies to counteract Iran's regional ambitions. This alignment was clearly evident in the UAE's active participation in the Saudi-led coalition against the Houthi rebels in Yemen, who are backed by Iran (Ulrichsen, 2017). The UAE's diplomatic and economic measures, including the downgrading of ties and the imposition of sanctions, were aimed at curtailing Iran's influence in the Gulf region, reflecting a deepening strategic rivalry (Young, 2017). Similarly, relations between the UAE and Turkey soured, particularly over divergent political and ideological stances following the Arab uprisings. Turkey's support for Islamist groups and political movements, notably the MB, emerged as a major point of contention (Bazoobandi, 2019). Turkey's military base in Doha and its military interventions in Syria and Libya were viewed by the UAE as destabilising actions that further complicated regional conflicts, as discussed in Gargash's articles presented in previous chapters.

The last NRC of the UAE to be discussed here is the 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity'. Emirati leaders frequently underscored the importance of Arab solidarity in countering external threats and in addressing crises, particularly civil wars in the Middle East. This NRC shares similarities with the 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' NRC in terms of promoting Arab unity and advocating for a collective Arab effort to address destabilising actors in the region. Furthermore, it extends beyond merely opposing the external interventions of non-Arab regional countries in Arab affairs; it also criticises international efforts that lack Arab participation in resolving civil wars in Arab countries. Emirati foreign policymakers voiced their criticisms regarding international meetings that failed to include any Arab representatives in their statements. To summarise, the involvement of non-Arab countries in these civil wars, the sides of the war receiving support from such countries (like the Houthis in Yemen backed by Iran, and the Tripoli government in Libya), and the exclusion of Arab countries from some UN-led Syria meetings and the Astana process were instances when Emirati leaders felt compelled to assert their country's commitment to the 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' NRC.

Finally, the 'supporter of international cooperation' NRC illustrates Qatar's multilateral approach to the civil wars in the Middle East. It is important to note that this NRC did not hold a central role at the onset of the crises across all cases. Various developments, detailed in the case chapters, led Qatari foreign policymakers to position their country as a proponent of

international efforts to resolve these conflicts. For instance, in the initial two years of the Syrian civil war, Qatar pursued an active foreign policy by politically, financially, and militarily supporting opposition groups. However, the increasing influence of Saudi Arabia, followed by interventions from Russia and Turkey, altered Qatar's approach to the war. Another factor that deterred Qatar from adopting a stance of 'Arab solutions to Arab problems' was the diplomatic crisis in 2014, culminating in the embargo imposed on Qatar by its Arab neighbours, including GCC allies such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain, in 2017. These events reinforced Qatar's support for international initiatives over a purely 'Arab role', distinguishing its approach from that of the UAE. Qatari foreign policymakers showcased their country as a willing mediator, humanitarian donor, and consistent supporter of all international platforms, encompassing both UN-led efforts and the Astana process. In other words, they attributed a diplomatic country role to Qatar, looking for the solutions through diplomatic means.

This part of the chapter aimed to analyse Qatar's and the UAE's NRCs in all cases. It first investigated how the differences between the cases influenced these countries' NRCs. Then, it looked at the saliency of the NRCs to understand which ones of them were more central to these countries' foreign policy positionings than others in the period studies. It continued with a debate on whether both countries' foreign policymakers used the NRCs, that were assumed by both countries, in the same meaning. Finally, the NRCs assumed by countries in all cases were examined to understand their foreign policy positions in this period based on these central NRCs. The subsequent part seeks to deal with the findings of the socialisation experiences of countries in these three cases.

4. Socialisation: Acceptance and Compliance vs. Discord and Punishment

This research includes the socialisation experiences of both Qatar and the UAE to better understand how the NRCs articulated by their primary foreign policymakers were shaped, and how the dynamic ties with relevant international and regional actors influenced the relationship between these NRCs and their foreign policy actions. The countries involved in the socialisation analysis were selected through a review of the literature and the statements made by the foreign policymakers of both countries in each case. These potential socialisers mainly comprised regional and international countries that intervened in the crises either alongside or against Qatar and the UAE. Specifically, the countries involved in the socialisation

analysis were active participants in these civil wars and were significantly influential both in the crises themselves and on the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE. The socialisers included Saudi Arabia in Yemen; Turkey, France, and Russia in Libya; and the US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey in Syria. This list of countries indicates that the number of countries included in the analysis varied depending on the degree of internationalisation of the civil wars. It also shows that while some civil wars primarily witnessed interventions by regional countries, others became arenas for a mixture of regional and international actors. This part of the chapter aims to explore the impact of socialisation experiences, particularly focusing on the NRCs comprehensively examined in the previous section.

Qatar and the UAE adopted specific NRCs in relation to their ties with their socialisers. For example, the UAE's 'faithful ally' NRC demonstrated Abu Dhabi's commitment to its alliance with Riyadh within the Arab coalition that intervened in the Yemen civil war. This alliance also embodied a unified stance against Iran's interference in Yemen through its support for the Houthis, exemplified by the 'bulwark against Iran' NRC. Similarly, the UAE's cooperation with France and Russia in Libya was primarily based on these countries' shared 'anti-terrorism agent' NRCs during the Libya civil war. Their collective stance against the Islamist elements within the Tripoli government provided a basis for these three countries to support the Haftar forces.

In Libya, Qatar's foreign policy was shaped by its region-wide cooperation with Turkey, which intervened in the war on behalf of the Tripoli government, citing the Government of National Accord (GNA) as the UN-recognised government. The 'advocate of state sovereignty' NRC of Qatar in Libya was also shared by Turkey, and the close relationship between these two countries influenced Qatar to align with Turkey's policy in this civil war. The only instance that brought both Qatar and the UAE together under the same NRC was the formation of the coalition against ISIS in Syria. When the US-led operation began in 2014, its GCC allies, including Qatar and the UAE, joined forces with the US to combat ISIS terror in Syria and Iraq. In their statements, both Qatari and Emirati foreign policymakers underscored their countries' commitment to fighting against terror groups, thereby indicating the 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC.

In some cases, on the other hand, countries either did not meet the expectations of their potential socialisers or stood against them. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia, being the biggest and most influential GCC member, came to the forefront as the potential socialiser for both Qatar and the UAE. As just mentioned, the UAE followed the Saudi policy and became the second most active country in the coalition in Yemen. Although Qatar was a part of the coalition at the beginning, the outbreak of the Gulf crisis in 2017 left Qatar out of the GCC alliance in Yemen. In the following period, Qatar followed an 'independent' role and began criticising Saudi Arabia and the UAE implicitly by describing their activities in Yemen as one of the causes of the war's continuation in Yemen.

With a general look and referring back to Thies's (2012, 2013) works on socialisation, Qatar's reluctance to follow its GCC allies, notably Saudi Arabia, in positioning against the MB and its close or at least not opposing ties with Turkey and Iran led to 'punishment' by its socialisers in the region. The diplomatic rift in 2014 and the following Gulf crisis in 2017 were the reactions of Qatar's socialisers as it seemed reluctant to follow suit and meet the expectations of these relevant others. This example demonstrates the fact that the socialisation process does not only take place with the acceptance and implementation of the expectations by the socialisee; it also includes disagreement and 'punishment' when the socialisee does not act accordingly.

The analysis of socialisation in this thesis significantly broadened the scope and explanatory power of the research. It has been instrumental in understanding the international factors that shape the NRCs assumed by Qatar and the UAE. Particularly in cases that were highly internationalised, a regional and international level of analysis was required to more accurately depict the elements influencing the foreign policy stances of these two countries during this period. In these three cases, Qatar and the UAE were influenced by some regional and international countries that either reinforced their commitment to certain NRCs, such as the UAE's ties with Saudi Arabia in Yemen and with France and Russia in Libya, and Qatar's relations with Turkey in Libya, or compelled them to adopt different roles as a result of conflicts that arose between the socialiser and the socialisee, as demonstrated in the Yemen case between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The next chapter will address the main question of this thesis by focusing on the varied NRCs assumed by these countries and their socialisation experiences to answer the research question of this thesis.

5. Similar Structure, Different Behaviours: Explaining Different Foreign Policies

This section revisits the main research question of this thesis, which explores why Qatar and the UAE, two neighbouring countries constrained by similar structural factors, pursued divergent and sometimes conflicting foreign policies from the start of the Arab uprisings in 2011 to the al-Ula meeting in 2021. To unravel this puzzle, the analysis focused on three specific case studies: the civil wars in Yemen, Libya, and Syria, employing role theory as the theoretical framework. Within this context, the NRCs of both countries in these civil wars were identified. Additionally, the socialisation experiences of these countries were integrated into the analysis to enhance understanding of how regional and international actors and factors influenced both the identification of NRCs by foreign policymakers and the relationship between NRCs and the foreign policy actions of the countries. Consequently, this part will conduct an in-depth analysis of the NRCs and socialisation experiences to elucidate the reasons behind the opposing foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE during this period.

As shown in Table 8, foreign policymakers referenced ten NRCs for the UAE, compared to six for Qatar in total, considering all cases. The question that arises here is how these NRCs led these countries to carve out their policies divergently. First, the NRCs stated in all cases will be analysed, as they potentially represent the foreign policy backgrounds of Qatar and the UAE more concisely. Initially, the 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC presents a divergence between these two countries. The UAE assumed this NRC in all cases compared to Qatar which had it only once, and the UAE referred to more groups as terrorists than Qatar when this NRC appeared in the statements. While both countries were on the same line against designating ISIS as a terrorist organisation and fighting against it, the organisation that created the main difference between them was the MB. Emirati foreign policymakers strongly opposed the MB, by designating them as a terrorist organisation, in all cases and they criticised Qatar's ties with this organisation. Qatari foreign policymakers, conversely, never condemned the MB and the affiliated groups in the region. On the contrary, Qatar maintained positive relations with the MB and welcomed the MB figures who fled their countries in Doha (Roberts 2014; Freer 2017). Looking at the NRCs, their approach to the MB, which had a strong influence across the region during the uprisings and the following period, represents one of the primary divergences between the countries.

Table 8. NRCs of the UAE and Qatar

United Arab Emirates' NRCs	Qatar's NRCs
Advocate/Facilitator of Arab Solidarity	Supporter of International Cooperation
Anti-terrorism Agent	Mediator
Bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs	Anti-terrorism Agent
Bulwark against Iran	Advocate of State Sovereignty
Bulwark against Turkey	Independent
Defender of the Bloc	Humanitarian Agent
Faithful Ally	
Protector/provider of Security and Stability	
Regional Ally	
Supporter of International Cooperation	

The 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' NRCs of the UAE are strongly interlinked in response to the 'supporter of international cooperation' NRC of Qatar to understand the other difference between Qatar and the UAE. Emirati foreign policymakers strongly emphasised the significance of upholding Arab initiatives and efforts to find a solution for the crises taking place on Arab lands. In accordance with that, they positioned themselves against the regional non-Arab interveners in these conflicts. Their dynamic relationship with regional, Saudi Arabia, and non-regional, France, countries contributed to their foreign policy stance in terms of these two roles. To put it more concretely, the UAE stressed the significance of Arab countries' involvement in the negotiation and peace processes initiated to find a solution for the civil wars in the region. At the same time, the Emirati leaders repeatedly criticised Turkey and Iran because of their interference in Arab affairs and approached suspiciously to the peace negotiations initiated by Turkey and Iran.

Qatar experienced increasingly deteriorating relations with some of the Arab countries in this period, which resulted in the Gulf crisis in 2017. In response, the Qatari foreign policymakers framed their foreign policy discourse around calling international actors to provide a solution for the crises in the region, reflecting Qatar's 'supporter of international cooperation' NRC. Their closer ties with Turkey and Iran, particularly compared to the UAE's ties with these two countries, and Qatar's support for the Astana Process initiated by Iran, Turkey and Russia showed that neither they opposed the interventions of these non-Arab actors in the Arab region, nor the Qatari leaders were insistent of producing Arab solutions for the Arab problems. The events that unfolded following the Gulf crisis underscored Qatar's reliance on Turkey and Iran to import its basic needs like food as its GCC neighbours, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain laid a full-scale embargo, closing borders and freezing all political, diplomatic and financial relations (Riggs 2021 and Yucesoy 2020).

In this sense, foreign policymakers of Qatar and the UAE positioned their countries in conflicting positions. The Emirati leaders had a solid stance in promoting an Arab role for the solution of these conflicts and embracing an opposing position against Turkish and Iranian activities in these civil wars, whereas the Qatari approach was essentially characterised around calling for any international effort to solve these crises regardless of whether the initiators were Turkey-Iran or the international actors such as the EU or UN. This divergence between Qatar and the UAE, especially Qatar's increasing ties with Turkey and Iran, was one of the leading factors behind the 2014 and 2017 Gulf crises.

Similarly, the 'faithful ally' NRC of the UAE and the 'independent' NRC of Qatar contributed to the rift between them. These two NRCs were stated by both countries' foreign policymakers in the Yemen case. Despite its initial participation in the coalition between 2015 and 2017, Qatar positioned itself as an independent country from its two neighbouring GCC allies, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, after the laid embargo in June 2017. Saudi Arabia and the UAE acted together in waging the war in Yemen and applying the embargo on Qatar. In response, the Qatari leaders, as detailed in the Yemen chapter, stated that they were made obligated to join the coalition forces in 2015 and criticised the countries militarily involved in the war in Yemen, implicitly referring to the UAE and Saudi Arabia. In other words, Qatar highlighted its individual stance towards the war in Yemen, in addition to its approach to the MB, Turkey and Iran, contrasting with its GCC member neighbours Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These actors and

events played a significant role in shaping the foreign policies of both countries. Consequently, the divergent approaches derived from their NRCs led to distinct and often conflicting foreign policies between Qatar and the UAE.

Another factor that added to the conflicting positions between Qatar and the UAE can be examined through Qatar's 'advocate of state sovereignty' NRC. The Qatari foreign policymakers consistently voiced their concerns regarding the foreign interventions in the Yemen and Libya civil wars, by highlighting that these interventions exacerbated the crises in the civil war countries. Especially in Libya, the UAE's involvement in the war with its financial and military support for the Haftar forces against the UN-recognised Tripoli government, along with other parties supporting the Tobruk regime and Haftar forces, was criticised by the Qatari foreign policymakers by advocating for the state sovereignty and the legitimacy of GNA. Similarly, the Qatari leaders underscored the importance of providing an environment for the internal parties of the war in Yemen to resolve the crisis without the influence of external intervenors. Qatar's 'advocate of state sovereignty' NRC, in this sense, positioned Qatar and the UAE on opposing sides in these two civil wars, further adding another element to understanding their conflicting foreign policies in this period.

To summarise, this research posits that the NRCs assumed by these countries led them to follow different foreign policies in these civil wars. Their socialisation experiences affected how they identified these NRCs. In this sense, the NRCs of both countries created their foreign policy vision towards these three civil wars. The UAE's foreign policy perspective was characterised by its opposition to the expanding influences of Islamist organisations, primarily the MB and ISIS and non-Arab regional countries, Turkey and Iran, and strongly calling for an Arab role by embracing the approach of Arab solution for Arab problems. Qatar's foreign policy perspective was marked by promoting a multi-lateral approach, including international peace efforts and mediation endeavours, to address these civil wars without antagonising the post-2011 era's two usual suspects of the regional crises, Iran and the MB, in the eyes of its GCC neighbours. Qatar and the UAE's overarching foreign policy frameworks were further reinforced by specific, case-based roles. For instance, Qatar emphasised state sovereignty in opposition to both internal and external actors challenging legitimate central governments and aligned its policies with Turkey's in Syria and Libya, reflecting similar NRCs. Conversely, the UAE's collaboration with Saudi Arabia in Yemen targeted the Iran-backed Houthis,

underscoring a united Arab front against perceived threats. These dynamics illustrate the complex interplay of regional politics, international relations, and national strategy as informed by each country's NRCs.

More systematically, Qatar and the UAE's NRCs and the perspectives that were described looking at these NRCs demonstrate that they differed from each other in mainly five items:

(1) The UAE strongly opposed Iran, positioning itself as a part of the coalition against the Iranian expansion in the Arab lands across all cases. Qatar never adopted such a stance. The statements by the Qatari foreign policymakers never openly criticised Iran and Qatar enjoyed relatively better relations with Tahran compared to its GCC neighbours, which eventually became a matter of concern for its GCC allies as seen in the Gulf Crisis in 2017. Scaling down diplomatic ties with Tahran and shutting down the Iranian diplomatic missions in Doha was the first item in the list of demands given to Qatar by the blockading countries in 2017. The UAE's perspective towards Iran manifested in its 'bulwark against Iran' and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' NRCs. Qatar's 'independent' and 'supporter of international cooperation' NRCs marked its stance against Iran.

(2) Similarly, the Emirati foreign policymakers regarded the MB as a terrorist organisation threatening security and the stability of the region from Yemen to Libya. In contrast, the leading MB figures were welcomed in Doha and never got criticism in the statements of the Qatari foreign policymakers. In 2017, as part of the Gulf crisis, one of the demands made to Qatar by the blockading countries included severing its alleged ties with terrorist organisations, specifically naming the MB. This was listed as the third of thirteen demands. The MB, alongside ISIS, was frequently mentioned by Emirati policymakers when discussing their country's 'anti-terrorism agent' NRCs, reflecting the UAE's strong stance against what it considers terrorist influences in the region.

(3) Turkey and its actions in Libya and Syria were perceived as an extension of Ankara's expansionist agenda into the Arab lands based on its colonial past by the UAE leaders. Contrasting sharply with the UAE's stance and going beyond their countries' ties with Iran and the MB, the Qatari foreign policymakers articulated not only approval but also support for Turkey's actions in these two countries. Qatar and Turkey's overlapping foreign policies and

finally the establishment of a Turkish military base in Doha became one of the reasons behind the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis, as shutting down this base was listed as the second demand by the blockading countries. Similar to its stance towards Iran, the UAE's opposition to Turkey was encapsulated in its 'bulwark against Turkey' and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' NRCs. Conversely, the joint emphasis by Turkey and Qatar on their 'advocate of state sovereignty' NRCs underscores the alignment in their foreign policy approaches, marking a significant point of convergence between the two countries.

(4) Positioning their country against Turkish and Iranian activities on the Arab lands, the Emirati foreign policymakers advocated for an Arab role to come up with resolutions for these civil wars, criticising not only Turkey and Iran-initiated peace efforts but also those that were convened by the UN but did not involve any Arab country as a participant. The Qatari discourse, conversely, did not necessarily favour an Arab approach to act to solve these civil wars, instead they put their support behind all resolution efforts, including both those initiated by the UN or by the alternative platforms such as the Astana process. Worsening ties with its Arab neighbouring countries also pushed Qatar to assume a broader foreign policy based on growing ties going beyond the GCC, if nothing else, to ensure its survival, as discussed above, and further its multi-lateral approach. The 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' NRC for the UAE and the 'supporter of international cooperation' NRC for Qatar distinctly reflect their respective stances on this issue.

(5) As detailed in the socialisation sections, Saudi Arabia is the most influential GCC country. Both Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policy perspectives, particularly towards each other and towards the Arabian Peninsula were influenced by their relations with Saudi Arabia. The UAE and Saudi Arabia had an overlapping approach in relation to their stance against Iran, the MB and Turkey, particularly after Turkey's successive military interventions in Syria. (Wintour 2019, Al-Burai 2019). Accordingly, their joint effort to counter these threats, especially Iran, were prominently displayed in Yemen, where they partnered to fight against the Houthis. Qatar, in contrast, had a turbulent relationship with Saudi Arabia, which ended up with the Gulf crises in 2014 and 2017. The reasons behind this turbulency in their relationship and the Saudi-Emirati-led embargo on Qatar were essentially can be traced back to the issues outlined above. Assuming the NRC of 'faithful ally' demonstrated the UAE's close ties with Saudi Arabia, whereas Qatar's 'independent' NRC showed its stance towards Saudi Arabia.

To conclude, this section aimed to explain why Qatar and the UAE diverged in their foreign policies towards these civil wars by examining their NRCs. Initially, their NRCs were comparatively analysed to pinpoint both countries' foreign policymakers' perspectives. This investigation into their NRCs revealed that Qatar and the UAE diverged from each other significantly, adopting NRCs that pushed them to conflicting foreign policy paths. These NRCs have been given in Table 8. After combining and comparing all these NRCs, five items were specified to explain in which matters these two countries were positioned differently or conflictingly against each other: (1) Iran; (2) the MB; (3) Turkey; (4) different perspectives on the Arab role to solve Arab crises; and (5) Saudi Arabia. Some of these actors or perspectives served as socialisers for these countries, while others were highlighted by Qatari and Emirati foreign policymakers as significant issues that influenced certain NRCs, thereby shaping foreign policy attitudes in the cases studied. What this part of the chapter demonstrated is that the NRCs identified and the investigations in their socialisation experiences in the case chapters provide a comprehensive framework to understand the main pillars of the Qatari and Emirati foreign policies. A comparative analysis of these NRCs shows the different and conflicting foreign policies between Qatar and the UAE in the civil wars of Yemen, Libya and Syria.

6. The Reflections from Historical Research

The research on the NRCs and the socialisation experiences of Qatar and the UAE presented ten NRCs for the UAE and six for Qatar. These NRCs were analysed in detail in the previous parts to comprehend how they influenced the divergences in the foreign policies of these two countries. As a result, the NRCs that produced differences were discussed in relation to how they originated and what foreign policy implications they had, which concluded with providing five items in the previous section. This part will revisit the historical context before 2011 to assess whether any of these five key areas had origins extending back prior to 2011, serving as a continuation of their established foreign policies, or if they primarily emerged in the post-2011 era.

The first item was their policies towards Iran. It was analysed under the NRCs of 'bulwark against Iran' and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' for the UAE and 'independent' and 'supporter of international cooperation' for Qatar. The historical context

chapter highlighted that the UAE emerged as a fully independent state with a sovereignty dispute over three islands in the Persian Gulf with Iran. Despite the absence of a concrete crisis between Iran and the UAE in the following period, excluding the three islands conflict, the then-Crown Prince MBZ told a previous US ambassador to Abu Dhabi that the UAE had two enemies: terrorism and Iran (Roberts 2020). In this context, although it was clear that these two countries had already rooted issues even before 2011, the UAE's 'bulwark against Iran' NRC and its foreign policy deeds in Yemen were unprecedented developments, looking at the previous period. Qatar, on the other hand, had already enjoyed enhancing relations with Iran, particularly since the 1990s, marked by a set of joint construction plans, financial agreements and diplomatic engagements flourishing the Qatari-Iranian ties (Guzansky 2015; Bianco 2020). In this context, the relatively closer ties between Qatar and Iran than other GCC countries were already present in the pre-2011 era.

A very similar pattern is seen regarding the second item: the MB. When the Emirati foreign policymakers mentioned the MB, their main reference was their commitment to counter-terrorism, which translated into the UAE's 'anti-terrorism agent' NRC. Although the MB, the Islah movement as the UAE's branch of the MB, had an active role in, especially, social and educational areas in the country as well as they were perceived as a counterforce against the potentially expanding Shia ideology, their increasing influence in the state and social systems led the Emirati policy to curtail their power in the country, particularly in the 2000s (Alnogaidan, 2011). In other words, the first decade of the 21st century had already experienced a downgrading trend in the UAE-MB relations. However, the reaction of Abu Dhabi to the rise of the MB and the affiliated groups across the region and the eventual designation of the MB as a terrorist organisation by the UAE in 2014 demonstrates a further level of confrontation with the MB in the post-2011 era, as also seen in the UAE's approach to Iran. Conversely, the MB never experienced such crackdowns in Qatar. Key leading figures of the MB continued to reside in Qatar after 2011. Qatar remained engaged and even strengthened its ties with the MB and affiliated groups across the region, from Yemen to Libya, during the protests and afterwards (Roberts 2017).

Given the NRCs analysed, the 'bulwark against Turkey' and the 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' NRCs by the UAE and the 'advocate of state sovereignty' NRC by Qatar were assumed towards Turkey. Turkey, as the third item, did not get a mention in the

historical context chapter, since its relations with Qatar and the UAE were limited in the pre-2011 period. Turkey's increasing presence in the Middle East, particularly with its strong involvement in the Syrian civil war, its support for the MB in Egypt and its vocal critical approach to the coup in 2013, repeated military interventions in Syria, the establishment of a military base in Doha and its involvement in the Libya civil war, made Turkey an active actor in the region. As noted, the UAE adopted a critical stance towards Ankara while Qatar-Turkey relations witnessed a flourishing trend in this period. Unlike the first two items, their increasing engagements with Turkey and its growing presence in the region were novel developments. Therefore, instead of discussing whether there was continuity or change in it, it could be merely described as a new dimension in their foreign policies.

The fourth item, an Arab role in the resolution of the crises, stands as a difficult element to discuss here, since the historical research was unable to capture the approaches of both countries regarding this topic. It could be merely stated here that in the first two years of the Syrian civil war, the then-Emir Hamad bin Khalifa called Arab countries to act to stop the Assad government's violent response to the protestors. However, these calls never appeared as an NRC since the language used in these speeches did not present Qatar as the advocator or promoter of an Arab role as it did for the UAE. In addition, the statements given by the Qatari foreign policymakers began changing in 2014, replacing the emphasis on the responsibility of Arab countries to address the conflicts with the calls for international society to get involved. Two significant developments took place in this period, potentially affecting this change in Qatar's discourse: Emir Hamad bin Khalifa handed over power to his son Tamim bin Hamad in June 2013 and the worsening ties of Qatar with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain culminated into the diplomatic crisis in March 2014. It is possible to read this change through either or both of these two developments, but what is certain is the fact that the Qatari leaders quit stressing the significance and necessity of Arab efforts to deal with these civil wars in the following period. Similarly, the lack of data makes it difficult to analyse before and after regarding this item for the UAE. Nevertheless, the prevalence of this NRC was strongly connected with the increasing activeness of non-Arab regional actors, Turkey and Iran, in the region. Given this interaction between the 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' and 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' NRCs, it can be asserted that the

emphasis on the necessity of the Arab role was a more frequently used theme in the statements of the Emirati foreign policymakers than before.

Lastly, Qatar's and the UAE's relations with Saudi Arabia were analysed through the NRCs of the 'faithful ally' for the UAE and the 'independent' for Qatar. After an initial security seeker-security provider relationship, Qatar's relations with Saudi Arabia had witnessed ups and downs since the Kufoos Incident in September 1992 in the pre-2011 era. Qatar's improving ties with Iran and Al-Jazeera's critical coverage of the Gulf monarchies were mentioned as two of the key issues that created the Qatar-Saudi tension in this period (Guzansky 2015; Keating and Abbott 2021). The reflections of these two issues were also seen in the post-2011 period, as Qatar's relations with Iran and Al-Jazeera's coverage were placed on the list of thirteen demands from Qatar by the blockading countries after the 2017 Gulf Crisis. Its ties with the MB were also included in this list as a new element of crisis between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In this context, it could be said that Qatar's turbulent ties with Saudi Arabia after the Arab uprisings hold strong continuities, lasting since 1992. What is novel here is the UAE's strengthening bonds with Saudi Arabia in this period. Although the UAE and Saudi Arabia enjoyed stable relations before the uprisings, they had not been as close partners as they were in these three civil wars in cooperating to address the perceived threats in the region. It would not be incorrect to argue that Emirati-Saudi relations enjoyed a honeymoon in this period, particularly between 2015, the start of the Arab coalition's intervention in Yemen, and 2019, the Emirati announcement to withdraw its soldiers from Yemen. This close relationship appeared in the Emirati leaders' statements as assuming their country as a 'faithful ally' to Saudi Arabia.

To sum up, some items had their roots in the pre-2011 era, which includes Qatar and the UAE's approaches to Iran and the MB, as well as Qatar's turbulent relationship with Saudi Arabia. However, they gained more intense characteristics after the 2011 uprisings; for example, Qatar-Saudi relations experienced a new phase where Qatar was put under embargo by a Saudi-led coalition, or Abu Dhabi's negative sentiments regarding Iran, as articulated by MBZ, transformed into the UAE's 'bulwark against Iran' NRCs which led to confrontation with Iranian expansion on the ground in Yemen. It is not that the UAE's partnership with Saudi Arabia could not be expected when revisiting the pre-2011 era, but how these countries' perspectives overlapped in addressing the unfolding event and developments in the region after the

uprisings deserved to get an individual emphasis here. Differently, Qatar and the UAE's active engagements with Turkey were products of the post-2011 era, stemming from Turkey's active involvement in the region's crises. Lastly, the degree to which Qatar and the UAE stressed the significance of the Arab role to solve these civil wars could not be analysed in detail due to the lack of data for the pre-2011 period. However, as this research argues that there is a positive corelation between the 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' and 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity. Thus, it was asserted that the former's increasing saliency in the post-2011 period due to the expansionist policies of Turkey and Iran may have also caused the latter to have a growing trend in the same period.

7. Conclusion

This chapter sought to answer the research question of this thesis by conducting a comparative analysis of three empirical chapters, which scrutinised the influence of data availability, carried out a detailed investigation into the NRCs, and presented findings from the socialisation inquiry. Building on these analyses, the chapter addressed the research question by proposing that specific NRCs, some of which were shaped out of the socialisation experiences of these countries, led the UAE and Qatar to develop divergent foreign policies, resulting in conflicts between these two countries in some instances. Based on these differing NRCs, it provided a list of five items: (1) Iran, (2) the MB, (3) Turkey, (4) their approaches to the notion of 'Arab solutions for Arab problems', and (5) Saudi Arabia. These represent the main factors that drove Qatar and the UAE onto different and occasionally conflicting foreign policy paths in these three cases. Finally, the chapter revisited the historical context to examine whether the approaches of Qatar and the UAE to these five items were continuations of pre-2011 legacies or if they emerged after 2011, shaped by the events of the Arab uprisings and their aftermath. This examination aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the roots and evolution of the foreign policy stances of Qatar and the UAE, reflecting on how past interactions and conflicts influenced their present discourses and actions.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE in three civil wars within the region, Yemen, Libya, and Syria, from 2011, the outbreak of the Arab uprisings, to 2021, the al-Ula Meeting that ended the Gulf crisis, utilising role theory. It aimed to answer the question of why Qatar and the UAE, two non-democratic neighbouring countries constrained by similar structural factors, followed different and even conflicting foreign policies in the civil wars of Yemen, Libya, and Syria between 2011 and 2021. It also highlighted the importance of the dynamic relationships of Qatar and the UAE with the regional and international intervenors in these civil wars, which was incorporated into the analysis as socialisation. The reason why these two small-sized countries' ties with bigger regional and international powers were included in the analysis lies in the literature, which argues that small states are more sensitive to regional and international dynamics due to potentially having a bigger chance of being affected by them in terms of their survival (Gigleux 2016; Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017). In this context, this research argued that Qatar and the UAE differed from each other in these three cases because they had divergent NRCs that led them to differ and, in some cases, contradict in this period. Their foreign policymakers positioned Qatar and the UAE differently in these civil wars by attributing divergent roles to their countries. Additionally, their dynamic relationships with the countries involved in these civil wars influenced how they identified their NRCs.

To address these questions and validate this argument, it initially outlined the historical context to undertake an in-depth examination of the evolution of Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies prior to 2011, with a particular emphasis on the factors that potentially influenced their foreign policies after 2011. This chapter aimed to explore the stances of these nations within both regional and global frameworks, analysing the dynamics and occurrences that fostered specific international alliances, and assessing how these trends in foreign policy influenced their actions over the period discussed in this thesis. In other words, the historical context chapter sought to explain the origins and foundations of the foreign policies that Qatar and the UAE adopted following the Arab uprisings. This analysis examined these two countries ties with neighbouring, regional and international powers, as well as the historical ties

between the royal families of the Arab Gulf monarchies. It also investigated foreign policy tools and goals of Qatar and the UAE before 2011.

This chapter ultimately illustrated the enduring relationships among the royal families of the Arab Gulf monarchies, which have fostered both rivalries and alliances. These connections have manifested in various forms, ranging from marital alliances, as seen between the Al Thani and Al Saud families, to historically entrenched territorial disputes, as occurred between the Al Thani and Al Khalifa families. Regarding foreign policy, following the termination of the Persian Gulf Residency, Saudi Arabia assumed the role of the region's security provider, supplanting the UK. After the Gulf War, the United States significantly expanded its presence in the Persian Gulf, effectively taking over as the region's security guarantor from Saudi Arabia. While Riyadh diminished its influence as the primary security provider for the smaller GCC states, it remained a pivotal player as the largest GCC nation. Saudi-Qatari relations declined when Hamad bin Khalifa seized power in the 1990s, whereas the UAE's relations with Riyadh remained largely positive, albeit with some fluctuations primarily due to territorial disputes. Finally, in examining their foreign policy strategies, Qatar, particularly after the 1990s, adopted a hedging approach, while the UAE prioritised increasing its military expenditure to develop a well-trained army. Both countries invested heavily in state-branding initiatives. Additionally, Qatar employed soft power tools, such as mediating regional conflicts and establishing Al Jazeera. The UAE capitalised on its economic strength by creating the region's largest economic free zone in Dubai and positioning itself as the financial hub of the Middle East. After presenting Chapter 7, the comparative analysis chapter, the historical investigation in Chapter 2 was then revisited to compare the findings to detect which NRCs had their origins in pre-2011 and which ones emerged as an outcome of the developments after 2011. This analysis mainly concentrated on five items, their perceptions towards Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, the MB and Arab solution for Arab problems approach. The findings of this comparative historical analysis will be presented in the following paragraphs when the reflections from historical research section of Chapter 7 is discussed.

The thesis continued with setting out the theoretical framework and methodology in Chapter 3. It initially investigated various theories prominent within international relations, like structural realism and constructivism, and those specific to Middle Eastern politics, such as omni-balancing theory. After a thorough critique of these theories' relevance to the research

questions, Chapter 3 introduced role theory, stressing its extensive conceptual and methodological tools for subsequent discussions. The main emphasis in this chapter was on NRCs and socialisation that were going to be used to conduct the rest of the analysis. Building on role theory, Chapter 3 also presented the methodology of this thesis, explaining case selection, the methodological tools of role theory, how to detect NRCs and how to examine socialisation looking at the data. In this context, this chapter drew the role map for the following three empirical chapters.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examined the civil wars in Yemen, Libya, and Syria by reviewing the collected data and applying role theory to this data to identify NRCs and explain the socialisation experiences of Qatar and the UAE. After identifying the NRCs and socialisation processes of both countries, Chapter 7 performed a comparative analysis of the three previous empirical chapters, presenting and discussing the findings and acting as the natural conclusion of this thesis. First, it assessed the differences between these empirical cases, focusing on the variations among them in terms of their characteristics and data availability. This section was written to explain why the length of the chapters varied. In this context, it noted that the chapters differed due to the variations of the available data, which was also affected by the accessibility of data sources, the extent of each country's involvement in the crises, and the degree of activity by foreign policymakers on their social media accounts. The following section provided an in-depth examination of the NRCs across the cases. It investigated the effect of differences between the cases on countries' NRCs, the saliency of the NRCs to understand those that played central role in Qatar's and the UAE's foreign policies, whether same NRCs was perceived in the same meaning by the foreign policymakers, and the NRCs found place in the discourses of both foreign policymaker in all cases to understand their foreign policies in this period based on these central NRCs.

The third section explored the socialisation paths of Qatar and the UAE, analysing how their foreign policies were shaped by their interactions with their respective socialisers in these cases. The socialisation analysis within this thesis significantly expanded the research's scope and explanatory capacity, as it was pivotal in elucidating the international factors influencing the NRCs adopted by Qatar and the UAE. Especially in highly internationalised cases, both regional and international levels of analysis were essential to more precisely identify the factors impacting the foreign policies of these countries during this period. Building on the

findings and analyses in the first three sections, the fourth section aimed to address the main question of this thesis. Validating the argument of the research, it discussed the prevalent NRCs of both countries regarding in which sense and to what extent they led Qatar and the UAE to pursue foreign policies differing and conflicting with each other.

The fifth section combined the analysis of NRCs and socialisation to address the research question. Following the argument of this thesis, the research concluded that the UAE's roles as a 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs', 'anti-terrorism agent', 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity', and 'faithful ally', alongside Qatar's roles as a 'supporter of international cooperation', 'independent', and 'advocate of state sovereignty', led these countries to pursue different and conflicting foreign policies in these three civil wars. These role conceptions were reflected in divergent foreign policies across the following five cases: (1) Iran; (2) the Muslim Brotherhood (MB); (3) Turkey; (4) perspectives on the Arab role in solving Arab crises; and (5) Saudi Arabia. In other words, the stated NRCs prompted Qatar and the UAE to adopt opposing perspectives on these five cases. These conflicting perspectives subsequently led them to adopt different foreign practices in the civil wars in Yemen, Libya, and Syria.

Finally, the last section of Chapter 7 revisited the historical context chapter to detect which of the five stated cases had their roots in the pre-2011 era and which emerged as new perspectives in Qatar and the UAE's foreign policies after 2011. This analysis concluded that both countries' approaches to the MB and Iran, and Qatar's fluctuant ties with Saudi Arabia, were also elements of the region's dynamics before 2011, although the intensity of these relationships demonstrated some changes due to the unfolding crises and civil wars during this period. The UAE's close partnership with Saudi Arabia, particularly seen in Yemen, also emerged post-2011, but the two countries had not experienced the turbulent relations that Qatar and Saudi Arabia had before. The perspective on Turkey emerged after the uprisings, stemming from Turkey's increasing involvement during this period. Lastly, the emphasis on the 'Arab role and solutions for Arab problems' could not be discussed in detail due to a lack of data for the pre-2011 period. However, a positive correlation between the 'bulwark against external intervention in Arab affairs' and 'advocate/facilitator of Arab solidarity' NRCs was observed in the process, which can be attributed to 'Arab role for Arab problems' becoming a rising element in Emirati foreign policy.

1. Contributions to Gulf Studies and Role Theory

This research contributes to the research of Gulf studies and role theory in three realms, as presented in the introduction chapter. Firstly, it aimed to provide a comprehensive comparative study on the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE, focusing on three civil wars that differ from each other in terms of their geographical proximity and the extent to which they were internationalised. In doing so, it examined how these two countries designated their roles and addressed these conflicts under different circumstances, due to the unique features of each civil war from the standpoint of Qatar and the UAE and the involvement of various regional and international actors at different levels. As will be discussed later in this chapter, such comparative studies may lay the groundwork to work on other small Gulf monarchies comparatively, especially using a theoretical framework such as role theory that allows examination of both material and ideational factors, as well as incorporating domestic and international actors into the analysis.

In this sense, secondly, this thesis employed role theory as a theoretical framework to analyse the foreign policies of Qatar and the UAE, focusing on the perspectives of their principal foreign policymakers regarding their countries' roles in the international system, particularly in relation to three specific case studies. This analysis also explored their dynamic relationships with international actors involved in these civil wars. In doing so, the NRCs of both countries were identified to comprehend how the foreign policymakers in Doha and Abu Dhabi positioned their countries' roles in the international arena. The work on socialisation included an international level of analysis, examining how these two countries were socialised into specific roles, how the roles they assumed before were influenced and transformed as a result of their interactions with their socialisers, and even how attempts were made to socialise them into certain roles which they refused to assume, as seen in the case of the relationship between Qatar and Saudi Arabia around the Gulf crisis. As stated in the first paragraph of this conclusion, the GCC comprises five small-sized countries alongside Saudi Arabia. In addition to Saudi Arabia, other international actors such as the United States, and regional powers like Iran and Turkey, also exert significant influence over their foreign policies. In this context, this study has demonstrated that examining the foreign policies of any of these five GCC members can benefit from role theory's socialisation analysis, offering deeper

insights into how they shape their foreign policies in relation to their potential socialisers. Therefore, role theory offers much to the study of the Middle East and specifically the Gulf monarchies, with its rich conceptual framework, three levels of analysis, and inclusion of both material and ideational factors. The incorporation of ideational factors also enables examination of the impact of religious and even denominational factors, as demonstrated by Akbaba and Ozdamar (2019) when analysing the change in the foreign policies of Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran before and after the Arab uprisings. To sum up, this research contributes to Middle East and Gulf studies literature, which requires more theoretical frameworks to be studied through both international relations and foreign policy analysis theories (Fawcett and Notes 2017; Bustos 2017; Darwich and Kaarbo 2020; Darwich, Gause, Hazbun, and Valbjørn 2022).

This research also sought to further develop the scholarship of role theory through its empirical research and the way it combines socialisation and NRCs to explain foreign policy practices. Thus, it added a comparative study of two Gulf monarchies to the field of role theory. There are some studies on individual Gulf monarchies, such as Yom's (2020) analysis of domestic role contestation concerning Kuwait's position regarding the 2012 GCC Internal Security Pact, which was formed to provide a collective security umbrella in response to potential threats stemming from the uprisings across the region. However, this thesis is the first to compare two of these Arab monarchies in the Gulf. The importance of such a study lies in its potential to inspire sub-regional works that use role theory to comparatively investigate and position the foreign policies of all GCC members or, to pursue more similarities between the studied countries, five small Gulf monarchies, except Saudi Arabia. What such research can contribute to the Middle East and Gulf studies literature will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Another contribution of this research is to the theoretical framework of role theory. The majority of works in role theory scholarship focus on either identifying NRCs or discussing the socialisation process to explain the foreign policies of countries. Works on NRCs typically engage solely in identifying role conceptions by examining, for example, foreign policymakers' statements through content analysis or conducting a narrative or historical analysis of secondary data (Holsti 1970; Chafetz et al. 1996; Wehner 2014; Yoshimatsu 2018). They identify NRCs to explain foreign policy practices of countries without incorporating

socialisation experiences as a separate analysis. In contrast, studies on socialisation in role theory scholarship mostly focus on one NRC for a certain period and discuss how their dynamic interactions with their respective socialisers affect the role location as a result of a role bargaining process between the socialisee and the socialisers (Thies 2012 and 2013; Guimarães and Maitino 2017).

Adding to this literature, this research integrated these two dimensions of role theory by identifying the NRCs of both countries and discussing how their relationship with respective socialisers influenced them to locate their specific roles. In other words, while conducting both NRC and socialisation analyses, this thesis also demonstrated the relationship between them. For example, Chapter 4 presented how Saudi Arabia attempted to socialise both the UAE and Qatar into the 'faithful ally' role in Yemen, during which the UAE accommodated, while Qatar refused to do so. At the same time, by establishing relationships between the NRCs and socialisation experiences, this research showed how the foreign policymakers of both countries articulated their NRCs in relation to Saudi Arabia's socialisation efforts. In this sense, Emirati leaders repeatedly emphasised their alignment with Saudi Arabia, whereas the foreign policymakers in Doha presented their country's independent role and critical attitude towards the Arab coalition's activities in Yemen, advocating for state sovereignty in Yemen. This thesis, which integrates these two realms of role theory research, can inspire further studies to provide a more comprehensive analysis of foreign policy, incorporating leaders' perceptions and dynamic interactions with related international powers.

In addition, apart from the classical sources utilised for content analysis, such as official statements, speeches, and interviews of political figures, this research also introduced Twitter data for use in role theory research. Tweets from leaders not only increase the volume of data available but, more importantly, allow for the exploration of day-to-day opinions of these foreign policymakers on unfolding issues. Particularly, Twitter data can enable the examination of different types of statements if leaders tend to share their personal views on their Twitter accounts, rather than posting only official government statements, as seen in the previous Emirati Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Anwar Gargash's use of Twitter. The advent of digital technologies has provided states with a direct and cost-effective means to engage in public diplomacy and communicate their foreign policy perspectives to both domestic and international audiences. This development has offered researchers a new resource to observe

how states position and perceive themselves within their foreign policy rhetoric. It also enables the examination of different foreign policy actors' opinions within the same country, allowing for an analysis of whether their views on the country's foreign policy position align or diverge. In this context, the use of Twitter as a source to conduct content analysis and accordingly to identify NRCs can enrich the sources, particularly when the data available for analysis in a case was not adequate.

2. Notes on Gulf Politics Research, Limitations and Future Studies

Following this analysis, another question arises: what this thesis and its findings have showed us regarding Qatar and the UAE, or more generally for the Gulf region. The first point to be discussed is data availability. The monarchic structure of these countries creates a problem in reaching statements, speeches and interviews of the top foreign policy elites. Especially, this issue provided challenges in the case of the UAE. MBZ is regarded as the main figure in decision-making even before he became the president of the country (Roberts 2017; Dogan-Akkas 2021b). However, he only occasionally gives speeches or makes statements, particularly regarding his country's foreign policy. The data on his perspectives are mostly collected either through the newspaper articles written by journalists and area specialists who had the chance to interact with him in person like Robert F. Worth's (2020) article on the New York Times or the Wikileaks documents revealing email exchanges such as previous US ambassador to Abu Dhabi's, Richard Olson, remarks on the-then Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi MBZ in his email sent to the US president (Roberts 2020). Moreover, there is always the risk of removal of speeches or statements on the official websites of these leaders. After MBZ became the President in May 2022, his speeches on his crown prince website were removed and not transferred to the UAE government or president websites.

Similarly, Anwar Gargash's tweets became one of the most significant sources for this research, particularly considering that he was not only sharing official statements of the government as the other foreign policy figures did, but he was also sharing his personal opinions on the unfolding events. These tweets, which go beyond the official statements that typically focus on what the country has done, provide insights into why and how the UAE acted in specific contexts, or how the UAE operates in a broader sense. In this context, Gargash's tweets have been particularly valuable for identifying the NRCs and navigating the

socialisation experiences. However, after he left his position as the minister of state of foreign affairs, some of his tweets were deleted on his Twitter account. This could be interpreted in many ways, such as a potential policy change in the subjects included in those deleted tweets. Regardless of the possible reasons behind the fact that the statements on official websites and remarks on social media platforms might be deleted, these instances suggest that those who work on these countries should always archive data when reached to deal with the very probable risk of data removal in the following period.

Additionally, this research initially aimed to conduct an analysis of domestic role contestation, as stated in Chapter 3. Particularly, the UAE, being a federal monarchy composed of seven emirates, was considered likely to exhibit different perspectives among the emirates on various regional actors and factors. A review of the literature suggested that there might be data demonstrating divergences among foreign policymakers on certain issues. For instance, Rugh's (1996) work on the perspectives of Dubai and Abu Dhabi on Iran reveals a divergence between these two emirates. While Dubai had a more accommodating approach to Iran, predominantly due to its economic relations with Tehran, Abu Dhabi supported the US sanctions against Iran. In this context, Miller and Verhoeven (2020) draw attention to the different orientations of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, noting that Dubai has an economy-oriented approach while Abu Dhabi's perspective is dominated by a security-oriented stance in their foreign policy perspectives. Roberts (2017) also highlighted differing opinions between Abu Dhabi and the smaller northern emirates (Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah) concerning the MB and its UAE branch, the Islah movement. This divergence stemmed from the Islah movement's presence in these emirates in the form of creating an elite patronage network, in contrast to its absence in Abu Dhabi. Therefore, these works indicated a potential contestation among these emirates, particularly concerning Iran and the MB, which occupied an important place in this research. However, the examination of statements from all these emirates' leaders regarding the three civil wars covered in this research did not produce any remarkable outcomes to be analysed under the title of domestic role contestation.

However, the inability to detect contestation in these cases does not necessarily imply that exploring domestic role contestation in these countries is fruitless. Future research could take guidance from Yom's (2020) article on where to observe contestation. Instead of solely focusing on leaders' speeches to identify contestation, the embedded role conceptions of

these two countries could be examined to understand why Qatar and the UAE behaved differently compared to their GCC allies or diverged unprecedentedly from their previous foreign policy practices in certain cases. Domestic role contestation could not be analysed in this thesis due to a lack of data. This limitation may stem from the methodology of this thesis, which primarily focuses on the statements of foreign policymakers. Employing another method to gather data might yield results sufficient to conduct a study on domestic role contestation in Qatar and the UAE. For example, this method could benefit from historical research to examine contestation as Yom did. Such research could also demonstrate that contestation in foreign policy exists not only in democracies but also in non-democratic monarchies.

In addition to this suggestion for further research, the role theory framework can be used to create a study that includes all GCC countries as a sub-region to examine their foreign policies comparatively. This study could analyse a process as this thesis did or their foreign policy stances towards certain events in the region. For example, their policies towards the Israel-Palestine issue or how they positioned themselves when the Abraham Accords were signed can provide a basis to investigate their NRCs, socialisation experiences with both each other and other regional and international countries, and potential vertical domestic role contestation, particularly given the possibility of reactions from Arab citizens in these countries. Another idea might be to conduct socialisation research on the five small Gulf monarchies, following Thies' (2012) article on Israel. Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, and Kuwait, which became fully independent states in the 1960s and 1970s, could be studied comparatively to understand how they were socialised into the sub-regional, regional, and international systems by their socialisers, most notably Saudi Arabia.

The literature on Gulf countries requires further expansion and more rigorous attention due to its growing importance and the previous neglect it has experienced. Roberts (2023) describes the oversight in Gulf studies as follows:

> "At Blackwell's bookshop in Oxford, the Norrington Room spreads out under Trinity College's lawns next door, and for many years it was listed as the world's largest room selling books. Amid its 160,000 volumes is a corner devoted geographically and thematically to the Arab world, divided into sections focusing on Turkey, Iraq, Iran,

> political Islam, Israel and Palestine, Edward Said, T. E. Lawrence, and the Middle East. The Gulf monarchies of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) do not merit a mention even under a collective category such as the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula, or the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)" (1).

The subsequent sentences of this introduction highlight the significance of the Gulf and Arab Gulf monarchies, not only for the region but also for the world, principally emphasising their religious and economic importance. Therefore, further studies employing diverse methods and theoretical frameworks to understand the dynamics of this region remain an important endeavour for researchers.

Lastly, role theory offers a great deal to comparative studies with its rich conceptual and methodological tools. Even the inaugural work of role theory in the field of foreign policy analysis was a comparative study by Holsti (1970), which analysed the statements of foreign policymakers from 71 countries, identifying their NRCs and categorising these countries in terms of type of NRCs and the number of NRCs they assumed. This potential of role theory can be realised by increasing the number of regional or sub-regional comparative research projects. Following the example set in Chapter 3, the foreign policies of countries located in the same region and carrying certain similarities varying from their sizes and material capacities to their cultural and religious structures, such as Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador in South America, or Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the Caucasus, can be examined through the lens of role theory.

As final remarks, I believe this research has contributed to both the role theory and Gulf studies fields and has the potential to inspire further comparative works using role theory. Many objectives were set, and I hope that most have been achieved. Professor Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a prominent Emirati figure on social media, visited the University of Edinburgh on June 27, 2023, to deliver his speech titled 'The Gulf Moment'. Professor Abdulla argued that the Gulf countries are now enjoying their 'Golden Age', noting that whereas the other 16 Arab countries used to have more influence over the 6 Gulf Arab monarchies, now the roles have reversed. These words of Professor Abdulla hold significant value for a researcher in role theory and Gulf politics, as they attribute an 'Arab regional leader' role to the GCC. Simultaneously, Professor Abdulla's statement implies that while the GCC countries were once

the ones being socialised, they have now become socialisers, exerting their influence over the Arab world. Regardless of the veracity or support for these statements, as a researcher working on this region, such assertive remarks further motivate me to continue monitoring these countries' foreign policies and to publish on them.

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