From Gas to Influence: The Future of Qatar's Economy and Power in a Post-Hydrocarbon World

By
Maayan Zimmerman

Submitted to Central European University – Private University
Undergraduate Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Political Science and Economics

Supervisor: Associate Professor Michael Labelle

Vienna, Austria
2025

Copyright Notice

Author’s declaration

I, the undersigned Maayan Zimmerman, candidate for the BA degree in Philosophy, Political Science and Economics, declare herewith that the present thesis titled “From Gas to Influence: The Future of Qatar’s Economy and Power in a Post-Hydrocarbon World” is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person’s or institution’s copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 26 May 26, 2025

Maayan Zimmerman

Abstract

Qatar, a small state in the Gulf region with vast gas reserves, has leveraged its natural resources to strengthen its image and gain regional and international influence. Yet, its economic model faces growing pressure from the projected long-term decline in oil and gas demand, particularly under the net zero emission scenario. This casts doubt on Qatar's capacity to maintain its international position in decades to follow.

This thesis aims to assess Qatar's financial stability in light of the global green transition and considers how these shifts may alter its international role. So far, no apparent attempts have been made to show how these economic transformations may affect its geopolitical stance. To address this gap, the thesis draws on rentier state theory, developmental state models, and frameworks of small-state power.

Using empirical evidence, this thesis argues that Qatar is likely to face severe economic challenges within the next two decades. It demonstrates that the country's Sovereign Wealth Fund will be unable to fully offset the decline of its energy sector. Moreover, given current trajectories, Qatar's domestic economy is not on course to develop into a substantial alternative source of revenue. The thesis concludes by showing the implications of these developments for Qatar's international relations.

Table of Contents

List of Figures, Tables or Illustrations

1. Introduction

Qatar's natural resources have helped it acquire tremendous wealth and reinforce its international position. Despite its minute size, the emirate's Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) exports and its foreign affairs strategy have helped it vie for dominance in the Arab League and gain global prominence. The state, with one of the highest GDP per capita ratios in the world, has increased its regional and global standing by investing in soft power and offering unique opportunities for other countries, making them increasingly entangled in relationships of dependence. Its soft power projections include mainly raising the country's appeal through state enterprises, culture, and sports, and portraying it as a peacemaker through various mediation efforts. Qatar has fostered dependencies by providing financial and political support to actors in the Middle East, signing long-term LNG contracts, and strategically deploying the capital of its Sovereign Wealth Fund. Thanks to this heightened stance, Qatar managed to withstand diplomatic crises, as throughout the 2017-2021 blockade, to avoid significant repercussions despite accusations of supporting internationally recognized terrorist groups and individuals, and to evade sanctions despite human rights violations against its foreign workers.

However, Qatar's long-term financial success is being threatened by global trends. While demand for oil and gas is still on the rise, peak demand for oil is expected to occur around 2040, with natural gas not very long after (IMF, 2020). These projections are rooted in the transition away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy sources, energy-efficient technology advancements, and general tendencies such as the decline in population growth. Keeping the Paris Agreement obligations and limiting climate warming below 2 Celsius degrees above pre-industrial levels may require yet bolder efforts, which may bring the end of fossil fuels even closer. These developments pose a serious threat to Qatar as it is highly dependent on its fossil fuel-related revenues.

Although projections about the Qatari (and other Gulf states) economy are numerous (Mizroev et al, 2020), and Qatar's politics are frequently the subject of media attention, there appears to be a lack of scholarly efforts to integrate these two domains. This interrelation between Qatar's economic foundations and its regional political influence calls for a more multidisciplinary analysis.

This thesis examines how the global energy transition may reshape Qatar's economy and alter its international standing in the years to come. It illuminates the economic hit that Qatar is likely to suffer due to the coming changes in the energy market and attempts to predict whether it will be able to sustain political power in the long run.

This thesis employs a qualitative, theory-informed case study approach, integrating political economy and international relations frameworks to examine the interplay between Qatar's economic structure and its international influence in the context of the global energy transition. Bearing in mind that Qatar does not operate in full transparency, the thesis makes much use of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2024 Qatar report. This report provides a comprehensive economic analysis. For the projection about the energy transition, it makes use of the International Energy Agency (IEA) report from 2023.

The thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter in the literature reviews unwraps the concept of the 'rentier state' and explores the developmental state model. The second chapter in the literature review expands upon theories of small-state power acquisition. The third chapter presents the empirical findings regarding the Qatari economy. Following an overview of the expected energy transition process, it uses economic reports to predict the impact on the Qatari economy. Next, the fourth chapter reviews Qatar's regional and global position and how it leverages its endowments to gain influence. The last chapter concludes the findings and presents their likely repercussions.

Literature Review

2. Economic Models

The first part of the literature review introduces theoretical frameworks that help analyze and understand Qatar's economy. First, previous scholarship on the rentier state is reviewed to examine the Qatari political system, particularly focusing on its rigidity and lack of both economic and political diversification. Next, the Developmental State Theory is presented to illustrate how states can proactively enhance their domestic economies. This theory is especially pertinent to Qatar as it seeks to diversify its revenue streams by strengthening domestic markets. Lastly, models depicting the potential impact of a dominant economic sector's decline on the broader economy are explored, in the context of the possible downswing of Qatar's energy sector.

2.1. The Rentier State Theory

This thesis examines whether Qatar can be categorized as a rentier state. Such a question proves useful for three main reasons. First, it sheds light on the structural obstacles faced by Qatar in pursuing economic diversification, viewed through the prism of rentier state theory. Second, the findings may offer insights that are generalizable to other rentier economies. Third, it points to a gap in the development research, where unique cases like Qatar have not been given sufficient consideration.

In the early 20th century, the term 'rentier state' mainly referred to European states that earned interest by providing loans to non-European states. In the 1980s, Hazem Beblawi (1987) refined the meaning of this concept and applied it to the Middle East region (Ross, 2001). Following the emergence of the petroleum states during the 1970s and their distinct economic behavior, Beblawi suggested a definition of a rentier state (Beblawi, 1987). Beblawi uses Adam Smith's distinction between rent and other forms of income, where rent is the result of chance or circumstances rather than produce. As such, income is either effortlessly accrued or earned with labor.

To illuminate the dynamics of rentier states, Beblawi (1987) proposes four defining conditions. First, rent is the predominant source of revenue in the economy. Second, a rentier economy is characterized by dependence on external revenue sources rather than merely by the existence of a domestic rentier class. A rentier state relies on income generated outside its domestic market, which typically remains underdeveloped and untaxable, but the state can sustain itself using the external revenues it receives. Third, only a minority of the population is engaged with the generation of the rent. This means that the state is independent of its citizens to sustain itself financially. Fourth, the government should be the main recipient of the rent income. As such, only a few have control over the economic power, granting the state a far stronger political power. According to Beblawi, a rentier economy is one in which the state sustains its citizens, instead of the more common case where it is vice versa. The Arab rentier states share their wealth with their citizens usually through two main channels: a vast public sector and energy subsidies. In addition, Beblawi maintains that the rentier mentality of the state influences other realms of the economy and being a rent-taker becomes the most assured way to succeed also in the domestic market.

Some of the political implications of a rentier state were highlighted by Giacomo Luciani (Luciani, 1987). He differentiates between productive and allocative economies, where allocative are those rentier states whose main function is to allocate the endowed resources to the population. As citizens pay barely if any taxes, Luciani predicts that the government would not be held accountable. Additionally, they are disincentivized to protest against the government because of the financial benefits they receive. On top of that, the government and the political elite who control the rent income are able to “pay off” political opposition that may endanger their position. To forecast possible political implications of policy changes in Qatar, one can be assisted by Michael Ross’s quantitative research on the relationship between oil exports and democracy (Ross, 2021). From his findings, we learn that efforts to diversify the economy and make it more sustainable, such as raising taxes or increasing income, might push citizens to demand a more democratic regime, or at the very least more accountability. Three of his results are particularly relevant. Ross created a model to investigate whether oil export damage corresponds with a smaller degree of democracy. He regressed data from over 113 countries between 1971-1997 and added five causal variables that were normally associated with democracies. He found that oil exports had a negative correlation with the degree of democracy of a country (see Figure 1). Moreover, by accounting for the income variable, he discovered that the negative impact of oil on democracy is lessened the richer the population is. When accounting for taxes, Ross learned that they had a positive effect on democracy. That is, different taxes on the domestic economy (income, profit, capital gains, and VAT) significantly increase the likelihood of a country being democratic. These findings teach us that while oil is correlated with a lesser degree of democracy, income and taxation may increase democratization.

Figure 1

342 WORLD POLITICS

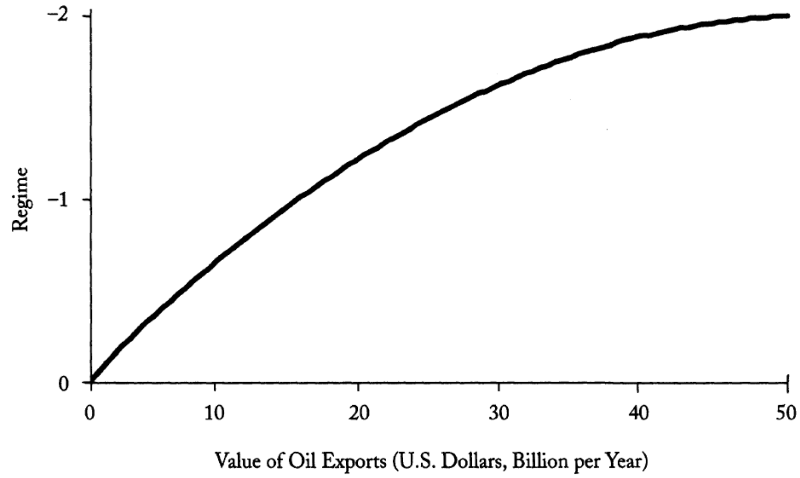

FIGURE 1
IMPACT OF OIL EXPORTS ON REGIME

[a] This figure shows the net predicted impact of oil exports on the 0–10 variable *Regime,* for a hypothetical country of twenty million people with a per capita income of $1,720 dollars a year, which is the sample mean. Note the scale on the Y-axis is negative.

2.2. the Developmental State Theory

As part of the Third National Development Strategy for 2030 (NDS3 2025), Qatar plans to build a more resilient economy by strengthening domestic sectors (Qatar’s National Planning Council, 2025). As such, the state directs policies and uses its resources to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and the private sector. To assess these efforts, this section explores the developmental state model. Theories about the development state evolved following the rapid industrialization in Japan, South Korea, China, and Taiwan. Japan’s economic growth after WW2 and South Korea’s rise after the Korean War were in large part enabled by government intervention (Caldentey, 2008). To understand which mechanisms enabled these states to develop strong and resilient economies from a poor starting point, this part recognizes four key features in the Development State theory.

According to Caldentey, a prime characteristic of the development state was its interventionist approach. This did not necessarily imply public ownership over companies, but rather a toolkit of policies that benefit certain sectors, such as tax breaks, import control, subsidies, and more. Second, the degree of government intervention should be adaptable to market changes and be able to change policies swiftly when necessary. This, consecutively, requires a qualified bureaucracy that can operate independently of political decisions. Lastly, the developmental state depends on tight public-private cooperation.

A notable gap in the literature lies in the application of developmental state theory to rentier states such as Qatar, where the taxation of domestic industry is not essential to state survival. This thesis calls for further research into this underexplored intersection, which could contribute to a better understanding of how state-led development strategies operate in economies that are decoupled from traditional fiscal pressures.

3. Small States Power

Qatar can be considered small in several respects. Its population stands at just over 3 million (Worldometer, 2025), of whom approximately 90% are expatriates. The country covers around 11,600 square kilometers—roughly 14% the size of Austria or 2% that of France. While Qatar's GDP is impressive on a per capita basis, it ranks only 55th globally, behind other small countries such as Greece, Portugal, and the Czech Republic (World Bank, 2025). Its military capacity, though difficult to measure precisely, is generally considered weaker than that of its immediate neighbors.

Be that as it may, Qatar has accumulated a notable degree of influence on the international stage. To better understand the nature of this power, the second part of this literature review examines theories and conceptions of small state power that move beyond traditional notions of hard power. It focuses on elements of 'soft power' and draws on Tom Long's framework of intrinsic, derivative, and collective sources of influence in the context of small states.

3.1. Soft Power

There are many conceptions of power. In international relations, a common one would be congenial to Robert Nye's definition: "Power means an ability to do things and control others, to get others to do what they otherwise would not" (Nye, 1990). Nye analyzed elements of power between countries and concluded that while traditional power resources remain crucial, the globalized and integrated world has made other forms of power ever more influential.

Nye (1990) coined the term 'soft power' to depict the methods and tools countries (and non-state organizations) employ to influence other states' behaviors. Instead of using coercive methods or the threat of such methods, soft power is used to make the desired behavior more attractive in the eyes of the target country. Nye emphasizes that the use of coercive power can be costly and provoke resistance. In contrast, soft power operates by shaping preferences and removing impediments to cooperation, making the other country want to act as desired. Such tools, according to Nye, include culture, political values and ideologies, institutions and international norms, and foreign policy. For instance, American popular culture (movies, cinema, celebrities, etc.) increases the U.S.'s appeal in the eyes of other nations. Likewise, Western democracies drew legitimacy by contrasting themselves to the Soviet Union and earned more credibility when they upheld human rights and a liberal society. International organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund or World Trade Organization, can have a substantive impact across the globe. As a result, a state that sustains them financially and ideologically multiplies its intentions by the normative assertion of these institutions. Foreign policy, too, can function as soft power when perceived as legitimate and morally driven. For example, humanitarian aid or mediation in regional conflicts can make a country appear more trustworthy. Lastly, Nye also acknowledged in later a work that personal charisma and interpersonal ties can enhance a country's international appeal (Nye, 2008). This can happen through a leader's personality, background, or personal ties that they made with colleagues in other states.

3.2. Derivative, Intrinsic, and Collective Powers

Keeping in mind the importance of soft power, there are additional tools that countries like Qatar can employ to enhance their global standing. This part examines derivative, particular-intrinsic and collective powers, using Tom Long's research (2017), to later be used when examining Qatari international tactics.

Tom Long examines sources of influence that are particularly relevant for small states. To understand how these states assert power, he draws on Robert Dahl's taxonomy, which divides power into base, means, and scope (1957). The base of power refers to the resources an actor possesses that can be used to alter another’s behavior. The means are the methods by which influence is exerted, such as coercion, inducement, or persuasion. The scope refers to the range of actions or decisions that can be affected.

Building on Dahl’s framework, Long argues that small states can leverage non-traditional power bases and means, differentiating themselves from larger states that rely on material capabilities and coercive tools. He identifies three distinct forms of power available to small states: particular-intrinsic power, derivative power, and collective power.

Intrinsic power, Long says, is usually synonymous with capabilities or “potential power”, which a country might inflict if the urge arises. These often include population, GDP, military strength, and territory. Even though small states often lack these kinds of power, they may possess assets that put them in a special position. These are the particular-intrinsic powers, and they are only salient when exercised, rather than being implicit. Examples of this kind of power can be useful resources such as hydrocarbons and minerals, strategic locations (as in Panama’s case), special industries (as in Taiwan’s chip-making industry), or even ideational resources (as in Scandinavian countries’ images of peace promoters).

A country’s derivative power stems from its alliance with a great power. Derivative power lies in the relations between the two countries, and the base can be defined as the constitutive relationship between them. The means of such a relationship can differ. In closer relationships, small states may have a bigger say and flexibility towards the big power and participate in policy forming. In more contested relationships, there might emerge a “patron-client” hierarchy, where the small state must cooperate or comply with the demands it receives. Derivative power usually has a narrow scope, as it is difficult to alter a big power’s behavior. However, even small changes in big powers can be significant insofar as they are rightfully directed towards the small state’s desired goal.

According to Long (2017), collective power refers to small states' ability to influence international politics through participation in international organizations or coalitions. This type of power can manifest itself as either compulsory or institutional. It is compulsory when small states merge together to directly apply pressure on larger powers to alter their behavior, as illustrated by the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) coalition, which has gained an active stance in global climate negotiations. Collective power is institutional when the interests and protection of small states are anchored within larger international organizations. For example, Singapore exercises institutional power within ASEAN by leveraging diplomatic channels to increase regional stability. Within the European Union (EU), small states such as Luxembourg or Ireland frequently use collective power that is obtained from equal voting rights to amplify their influence on EU policies. In NATO, countries like Estonia benefit from collective power by contributing to NATO operations and setting an example as a country that invests sufficiently in its defense forces. According to Long, small states often prefer to participate in international organizations and adhere to their established rules, as they perceive these frameworks as advantageous for them.

Using Dahl's analytical framework, the base of collective power lies in the small states' relationships with other states within these organizations or coalitions. The means employed are diverse and typically include diplomatic tactics such as agenda-setting, definition of mutual objectives, and persuasion. The collective power's scope, that is, the potential range of behavioral impact, is wide and context dependent.

Findings

The first chapter of the findings consists of three parts. First, it provides an overview of the green transition and the expected decrease in oil and gas demand. Then, it assesses Qatar's sources of revenue. Lastly, it combines the two and projects the long-term fiscal balance of Qatar.

4.1 Energy Transition

In 2000, Sheikh Yamani, a former Saudi oil minister, said in an interview: "*Thirty years from now there will be a huge amount of oil- and no buyers. Oil will be left in the ground. The Stone Age came to an end, not because we had a lack of stones, and the oil age will come to an end not because we have a lack of oil."* (Mary, 2000)

While Yamani's forecast for 2030 was mistaken, the day the demand for oil and gas will end is nearing. Climate change and its disastrous consequences have demonstrated the urgent need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. In 2015, 195 countries signed the Paris Agreement, which is a legally binding international treaty that commits countries to reduce their national emissions. The main objective of the Paris Agreement is to reduce global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, but preferably even 1.5, compared to pre-industrial levels. A key step to achieving this goal is to drastically reduce the consumption of hydrocarbons, among them oil and gas.

This thesis aims to assess this transformation's impact on Qatar. Therefore, the focus is narrowed to the effect of the Paris Agreement's efforts on the energy market, particularly oil and gas demand and prices. Although it remains unclear whether the Paris Agreement will succeed in achieving its goals, it serves as a useful framework for projecting long-term transformations in the energy market. This thesis acknowledges that there are many different projections about the transformation of the energy market due to the Paris Agreement's goals. Due to its narrow scope, it does not aim to tackle all kinds of predictions and their respective feasibilities. Instead, it uses the projections of the International Energy Agency's (IEA) latest 'Net Zero Roadmap' from 2023. This report describes the necessary transformations for reaching net zero emissions by 2050 (NZE). The most relevant part for Qatar is the projection that oil and gas demand would decline by 76% and 78% respectively by 2050 from their rate in 2022. To account for the possibility that NZE will not be achieved, a second scenario is considered in which the world reaches net zero emissions at half the rate and starts only from its peak in 2030.

4.2 Qatar's Sources of Revenue

This section examines Qatar's three main sources of revenue: the energy sector, Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), and taxation of the domestic economy.

Energy Sector

In response to a possible EU legislation that could penalize companies that fail to meet carbon reduction goals, the Qatari energy minister, Saad al-Kaabi, told the Financial Times: *"If the case is that I lose 5 per cent of my generated revenue by going to Europe, I will not go to Europe… I'm not bluffing," Kaabi said. "Five per cent of generated revenue of QatarEnergy means 5 per cent of generated revenue of the Qatar state. This is the people's money… so I cannot lose that kind of money — and nobody would accept losing that kind of money."* (Hancock and England, 2024). This statement, while not entirely accurate, draws attention to Qatar's reliance on its income from oil and gas.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2024), the energy sector has consistently accounted for over 70 percent of government revenues since 2020. According to QatarEnergy's (the Qatari state-owned energy company) 2023 annual report, the country employs approximately 10,000 people in Qatar and 100,000 people worldwide. This means that less than a percent of the country's population is employed in its most lucrative sector. Given that nearly all oil and gas production is exported, Qatar clearly fits the definition of a rentier state.

Until the peak in demand for oil and gas arrives, Qatar's financial situation appears to be solid. Qatar possesses an estimated 24 trillion cubic meters (Tcm) of proven gas reserves, equivalent to roughly 12 percent of the global total and making it the third-largest single reserve in the world (Leslie, Al-Habibi, & Cochrane, 2023). The country has officially announced plans to increase its liquefied natural gas (LNG) production capacity from 77 million to 126 million tons per year by 2027—an expansion of approximately 64 percent. This aligns with IMF projections, which foresee LNG revenues rising from 80 billion Qatari Riyals in 2024 to 140 billion in 2029 (see Figure 2). Total revenue from the hydrocarbon sector is projected to grow from 175 billion in 2024 to 252 billion in 2029. These projections are consistent with forecasts of a peak in global demand for LNG and oil by 2030, after which a gradual decline is anticipated.

Figure 2

Table 3a. Qatar: Summary of Central Government Finance, 2020–29
(Billions of Qatari Riyals unless otherwise noted)

					Projections					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Revenue	171.2	193.7	297.8	254.4	213.5	238.2	266.4	275.8	281.6	293.2
Oil	32.3	55.2	57.5	39.0	33.5	30.3	29.6	29.6	30.2	30.9
LNG	35.5	58.4	117.3	88.3	80.2	111.6	127.8	133.0	133.0	140.4
Investment income from public enterprises 1/	65.5	42.7	73.7	75.2	55.0	51.0	55.3	56.5	57.1	58.3
Corporate tax revenue 1/	23.7	21.1	27.9	34.6	28.4	28.5	36.4	39.1	43.6	45.6
Other revenue 1/	14.2	16.2	21.4	17.3	16.3	16.8	17.2	17.6	17.8	17.9
Expenditure	182.4	192.1	208.7	211.4	210.8	217.4	224.8	230.8	238.1	245.7
Expense	115.9	119.8	133.4	136.0	139.9	145.1	150.9	155.3	160.7	166.4
Compensation of employees	57.9	58.7	62.9	64.9	68.8	72.9	76.9	80.9	85.2	89.8
Goods and services	17.9	19.0	20.1	21.3	22.1	23.0	24.0	24.2	24.9	25.7
Interest payments	12.2	11.6	11.7	11.2	10.5	10.2	10.3	10.5	10.8	11.2
Other expense	27.9	30.6	38.8	38.6	38.6	38.8	39.8	39.6	39.7	39.8
Net acquisition of nonfinancial assets	66.5	72.3	75.3	75.4	70.9	72.4	73.9	75.5	77.4	79.2
Gross operating balance	55.3	73.9	164.3	118.4	73.5	93.2	115.5	120.5	120.9	126.7
Net lending (+)/borrowing (-)	-11.2	1.6	89.0	43.0	2.6	20.8	41.6	45.0	43.5	47.5
Financing										
Domestic financing (net)	-3.1	1.4	-22.8	3.1	13.2	3.2	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.3
Bank loans	3.0	5.5	-26.2	-9.9	10.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Domestic securities	-5.7	19.4	12.9	2.8	2.6	3.2	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.3
Domestic deposits	-0.4	-23.5	-9.5	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Foreign borrowing	3.3	-9.5	-16.8	-24.8	-8.4	-4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Other 2/	11.0	6.5	-49.4	-21.3	-7.4	-20.0	-50.9	-54.5	-53.2	-57.4
Non-hydrocarbon primary fiscal balance 3/	-132.3	-143.3	-152.3	-157.6	-162.2	-171.3	-175.4	-181.4	-187.5	-194.1
Memorandum items										
Total debt	381.7	382.0	365.2	338.6	329.2	328.4	337.8	347.3	357.0	366.8
External	228.9	219.8	203.0	178.2	169.8	165.8	170.3	174.8	179.3	183.8
Domestic	152.8	162.2	162.2	160.4	159.4	162.6	167.5	172.5	177.7	183.0
Total net debt	306.4	283.3	257.0	240.6	231.2	230.4	239.8	249.3	259.0	268.8
o/w net domestic debt 4/	77.5	63.5	54.0	62.4	61.4	64.6	69.5	74.5	79.7	85.0
External debt service/total revenue (percent)	22.8	9.9	8.8	11.9	6.2	3.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.6
Total hydrocarbon revenue 5/	131.0	156.4	253.1	211.9	175.4	202.4	227.2	236.9	241.9	252.8
as a share of total revenues (in percent)	76.5	80.7	85.0	83.3	82.2	85.0	85.3	85.9	85.9	86.2

Sources: Ministry of Finance, and IMF staff.
1/ From both hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon sources.
2/ Accumulation of foreign assets by the government.
3/ Excludes investment income and corporate income tax from hydrocarbon activities.
4/ Net of government domestic deposits.
5/ Includes investment income and corporate income tax from hydrocarbon activities.

Figure 2

Sovereign Wealth Fund

Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, the QIA, may well become the country's most significant source of revenue in the decades ahead. According to the Financial Times, (England, 2024), the fund is currently valued at $500 billion. During the expansion in LNG production, QIA is expected to benefit from continued inflows. Mohammed Al-Sowaidi, the fund's newly appointed chief executive, has even suggested that these inflows could double the fund's size by 2027. However, this projection appears optimistic. Qatar's current balance of payments (IMF, 2024) indicates annual additions of roughly 23.5 billion USD to its foreign investments. If no substantial increase occurs, the fund's assets will reach an estimated 620 billion USD by 2030.

Domestic Economy

While Qatar's sovereign wealth fund (QIA) offers a promising long-term source of revenue, it remains uncertain whether the country can build a robust, taxable domestic economy before its energy income declines**.** This section outlines six key structural challenges that cast doubt on Qatar's capacity to achieve this transition. First, Qatar does not meet the core criteria of a successful developmental state, as discussed in 2.2. Second, its levels of economic complexity, human capital, and taxation remain underdeveloped. Third, the public sector is oversized and inefficient. Fourth, the country remains heavily reliant on low-cost expatriate labor. Fifth, political rigidity may hinder the emergence of a more dynamic and empowered middle class. And finally, Qatar's economic model remains highly vulnerable to reductions in government expenditure and shocks in the energy market. Each of these challenges is explored in detail below.

First, Qatar's institutional framework falls short of the criteria typically associated with successful developmental states**.** As part of the Third National Development Strategy for 2030 (NDS3 2025), Qatar has introduced policies aimed at diversifying its economy and ensuring long-term sustainability. While some progress has been made, serious challenges persist within the domestic economy. Drawing on the developmental state theory discussed in Section 2.2, it remains questionable whether Qatar, despite its interventionist stance, satisfies the other three conditions: an efficient bureaucracy, strong public-private cooperation, and adaptability to market shifts. The bureaucracy in Qatar is tightly controlled by the ruling Al-Thani family (Freedom House, 2023), and the private sector faces a persistent shortage of qualified workers. As Tarek Ben Hassan (2022) notes, Qatar's education system lags behind global averages in STEM fields. Despite widespread admiration for entrepreneurship, most Qataris are discouraged from engaging in it. And unlike the pressure that has driven rapid growth elsewhere, Qatar's wealth leaves little sense of urgency.

Second, structural indicators suggest stagnation in productivity, weak human capital, and a non-institutionalized taxation system. The IMF's 2024 report highlights several impediments to Qatar's path to a resilient economy. First, the country has experienced a trend decline in total factor productivity. Second, its economic complexity—reflecting the accumulation and deployment of productive knowledge across diverse sectors—has been decreasing (Harvard Growth Lab, 2025). Third, economic diversification remains low and has fallen further since the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend manifests in human capital indicators: Qatar still trails behind the OECD average in PISA test scores and more than half the expatriate workers are considered either unskilled or semi-skilled. In addition to that, Qatar has a low corporate tax of 10% and imposes no income tax at all. As a comparison, the OECD income tax average is over 30% (Enache, 2024).

Third, Qatar's public sector continues to weigh heavily on the state budget and public-private dynamic. As Hertog (2020) observed in his research on Kuwait, all Gulf countries share their wealth with citizens through subsidized utilities and expansive public sectors offering favorable employment conditions and nearly guaranteed jobs for nationals. While Qatar has made notable progress in reducing subsidies, the public sector remains costly and inefficient. In 2024, employee compensation accounted for 33% of total government expenditure. This is problematic for two main reasons: firstly, it places a significant strain on the state budget; and secondly, the security and comfort of public employment dissuade Qataris from pursuing careers in the private sector, thereby hindering its development.

Fourth, dependence on expatriate labor undermines both economic resilience and long-term development. Expatriates make up roughly 90% of Qatar's population. Beyond the humanitarian concerns, which have attracted criticism regarding human rights practices, the reliance on the foreign workforce presents three key economic challenges. First, expatriate salaries are largely repatriated rather than saved or invested locally, with remittances amounting to 43 billion Qatari Riyals in 2024. Second, the abundance of low-cost labor distorts the market and suppresses productivity, diverting investment towards labor-intensive, low-skilled sectors rather than fostering a more complex and competitive industry. Third, this reliance poses a vulnerability during times of instability, when many expatriates may opt not to renew their contracts, leaving critical sectors understaffed.

Another factor casting doubt on Qatar's industrial development is the political reluctance to enable a more empowered and economically independent middle class. As Luciani (2021) notes in his work on Gulf rentier states, economic empowerment of the private sector often coincides with the rise of new political actors and interests. In Qatar's tightly controlled system, the emergence of such a class may be perceived as a threat to the status quo, limiting the extent of liberalization and decentralization necessary for private sector growth.

Finally, the Qatari economy remains vulnerable to external shocks, particularly those linked to fluctuations in global energy markets or reductions in public expenditure. A significant decline in oil and gas revenues, or a shift toward fiscal tightening, could lead to contractions across multiple sectors. Should the state embrace a more austere fiscal stance, reducing infrastructure projects or reducing the size of the public sector, this may smother overall consumption and heighten the risk of a broader economic crisis. Given that Qatar redistributes a portion of its wealth to citizens primarily through public sector employment and state-sponsored benefits, job cuts in this domain could provoke social unrest. Moreover, although official data on inequality is unavailable, any economic decline might create tensions between workers and capital owners, particularly as capital ownership is often concentrated among the ruling elite and their affiliates.

4.3 Qatar's Economy in the Context of Green Transitioning

To grasp the long-term financial implications of the global energy transition for Qatar, this section offers an indicative calculation of the country's future revenues and expenditures. These numbers are not presented as precise forecasts, but rather as illustrative estimates. Essentially, it tries to answer when Qatar is expected to face a fiscal deficit.

Qatar's revenue stems from three main sources: the energy sector, the Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF), and taxation of the domestic economy. The following assumptions were made:

Energy sector: As previously described, the IEA expects a 76% and 78% reduction in demand for oil and gas, respectively. Although the transition away from fossil fuels will most likely not be linear, this thesis makes use of an annual decrease of 4.97% for oil and 5.26% for gas. In accordance with IEA's outlook, Qatar's 2022 revenues from oil and gas were 57 and 117 billion QAR. In addition, to account for the scenario that global demand reduction is not as rapid, another calculation is made in which the demand decreases only from a 2030 peak and at half the rate, namely 2.48% and 2.63% (denoted as "half NZE"). Following the IMF, the returns in 2030 should be 31 billion QAR for oil and 140 billion for gas.

QIA: Three assumptions are made regarding Qatar's SWF: First, the fund grows at an internal 5% annually, beginning from 1820 billion QAR (which is 500 billion USD). Second, fiscal surplus is invested in the fund. Third, fiscal deficit is balanced by drawing the amount from the fund. For example, if in 2026 Qatar finishes with a surplus of 30 billion QAR, then those are invested in the fund. If it had a deficit of 30 billion, then this amount would be extracted from the fund.

Domestic taxation: It is assumed that revenue from non-hydrocarbon activities will generate approximately 50 billion USD annually, based on the IMF's forecast through 2029. However, this figure should be viewed as optimistic, given the underlying fragility of the domestic economy, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Expenditure: to calculate future expenditure, the annual increase is calculated based on the IMF projections. The IMF forecasts 2029 expenditure to rise to 245 billion QAR, whereas in 2024 it is 210 billion. Using compound annual growth rate (CAGR), the annual increase is: $(\frac{245}{210})^{1/5} - 1 \approx 0.0313 = 3.1\%$. This figure is somewhat modest, given that the 2020 to 2024 increase stands at 3.9% a year.

Results:

Figure 3 illustrates Qatar's declining revenues without the fund's support. As it appears, when only accounting energy sector revenue and domestic taxation, Qatar enters a fiscal deficit already in 2026. That means that to annul this deficit, it has to draw the difference between expenditure and non-QIA revenues from the fund. However, this is not sustainable in the long term. Depending on the scenario, QIA stops growing already in 2032/2036 (See Figure 4). Then, to cover the growing fiscal deficit, QIA quickly loses its value. Under NZE, the fund is equal to one year's spending in 2047. Under 'half NZE', it happens several years after.

Based on these results, Qatar's financial future seems dire. If its domestic economy persists in its current trajectory, Qatar will have only two decades before it can no longer sustain its expenditure. In 2047, Qatar's non-QIA revenues are estimated to be 24%/37% of the expenditure. This means that either the expenditure shrinks to a fourth/third its size, or Qatari domestic economy must produce more revenue. However, given the reasons provided in chapter 4.1, Qatar appears to be off track.

Figure 3

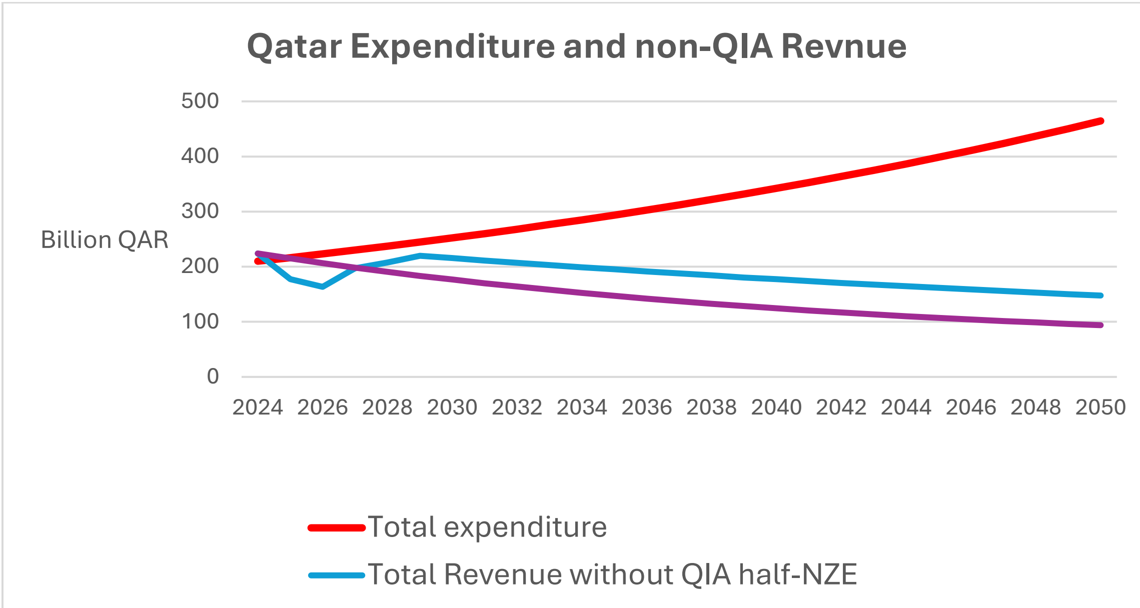

Figure 4

Figure 4

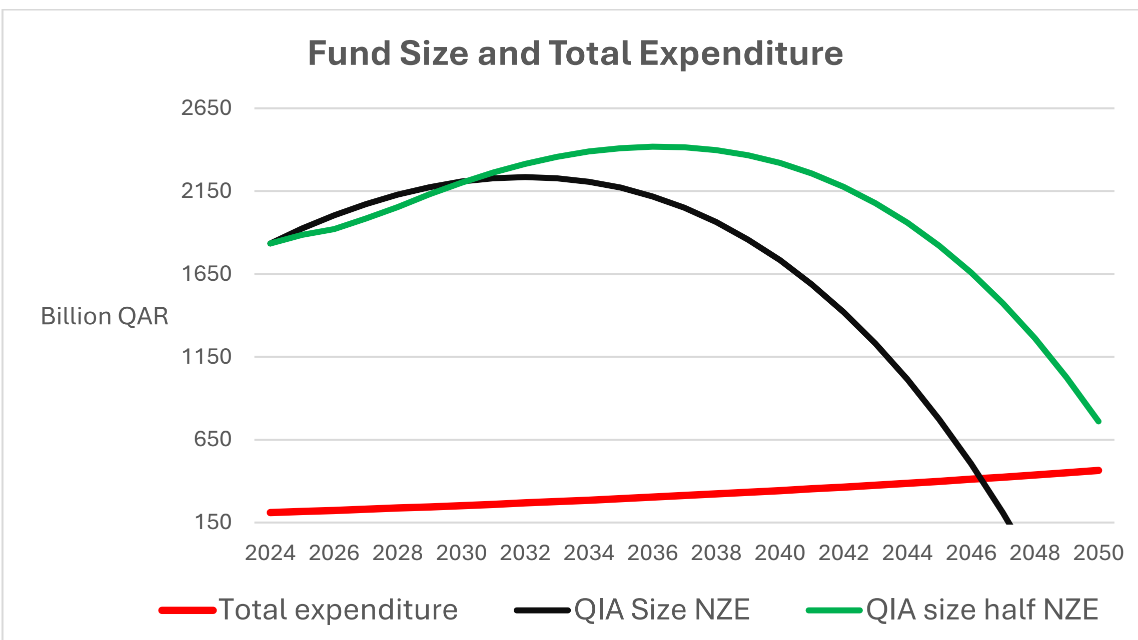

Figure 5

5. Qatar’s international influence

Qatar was a British protectorate from 1916 until its independence in 1971. The Al Thani family had by then established itself as the ruling dynasty of the emirate. In the 24 years that followed, Emir Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani ruled over a period marked by economic conservatism and regional alignment (Kamrava, 2013). Although Qatar’s vast North Field, which was discovered in 1971 and was later confirmed as the world’s largest pure (non-associated with oil) natural gas reserve, held immense potential, it remained largely unexploited under his rule. During this time, Qatar’s foreign policy was aligned with that of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In 1995, a bloodless coup led by Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani deposed his father and changed the country's trajectory. The new emir led the development of the North Field, transforming Qatar into one of the world’s leading exporters of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and accruing significant national wealth. This shift away from his father’s caution enabled Qatar to pursue global visibility and a more independent foreign policy. In 2013, Sheikh Hamad willingly handed power to his son, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who has since continued to develop his father’s legacy.

The second part of the findings explores the myriad ways Qatar builds its international influence based on the concepts explored in the literature review. While arguments suggesting that Qatar’s rise has also resulted in forms of disempowerment and backlash are compelling (Brannagan and Giulianotti 2018), such critiques fall outside the scope of this thesis. It first examines Qatar’s projections of soft power. Then, it uncovers the emirate’s particular intrinsic power and derivative power. Finally, it tries to put a price tag on these power projections.

5.1 Soft Power

Qatar has leveraged its wealth to project soft power in a myriad of ways. This section is devoted to discovering the state's most prominent soft power initiatives, which have drawn increased global attention to the emirate: Al Jazeera, Qatar Airways, the 2022 FIFA World Cup, investments in sport and culture, humanitarian aid, funding to Western universities, and mediation efforts. Where possible, the associated financial costs of these undertakings are noted.

Al Jazeera, Qatar's state-funded media network founded in 1996, has been among its most effective soft power instruments. The channel rose to prominence following the 9/11 attacks when it was the only broadcaster with a permanent presence in Afghanistan. In 2006 it launched the English language branch to increase its exposure. In the early 2010s, Al Jazeera's covering of the Arab Spring uprisings increased its status and achieved a wider audience. Today, it is the most prominent Arabic-language news channel globally, rivaling established names like BBC, CNN, and CNBC. According to the network, it broadcasts in over 150 countries and reaches more than 450 million viewers (Al-Jazeera, 2025), not to mention its social media impact, with millions of followers across different platforms. Al Jazeera's popularity has also been translated into a series of journalism awards, including the 2012 Royal Television Award, Emmies, and others.

Al-Jazeera's wide reach has enabled it to promote different ideologies and challenge established norms. Some argue that it has been used as a platform to host a 'clash of civilizations' dynamic by positioning itself as a counterweight to Western media (Brannagan and Giulianotti 2018). The network is also used as a tool for Qatari foreign policy. For instance, leaked documents suggest that Qatar used the company's coverage as a bargaining tool to repair relationships with other countries and diplomats.

While financial transparency is limited, Al Jazeera is widely believed to operate at a loss (Atalayar 2022). A 2005 *Guardian* article estimated its annual operating cost to Qatar at around $100 million—a figure that has likely grown with the network's expansion.

Qatar Airways is another arm of Qatari state branding. The young company is regularly announced as the "world's best airline", known for its premium service, and carried over 43 million passengers in 2024 (Reuters, 2025). The airline contributes to projecting an image of Qatar as modern and globally connected. In addition, many of the passengers transit through Doha, boosting tourism and possibly receiving positive impressions of the country.

A major event for Qatar in recent years was hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup (Al-Kubaisi, 2023). The event attracted over 3.4 million visitors from around the world and augmented the emirate's visibility. The tournament served as a showcase for Qatar to present its modernity and infrastructure abilities and ameliorated its public image. The event and preparations are approximated to have cost 220 billion USD (Statista, 2024).

Qatar has also expanded its presence through investments in sports and culture. In 2011, it acquired the French football club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), which has since become a major global brand. Qatar attempts to gain prominence amongst other sports such as table tennis and video games by hosting events and helping officials to reach powerful positions in sports orgnaizations (Beech, 2025). These sports investments are complemented by a cultural agenda. The Qatar Museums Authority, managed by Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad Al Thani (the emir's sister), oversees institutions such as the Museum of Islamic Art, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, and the National Museum of Qatar—each of which positions Doha as a regional hub of heritage and creativity.

Further enhancing its global standing, Qatar has made significant financial contributions to higher education, particularly in the United States. According to a U.S. Department of Education investigation (Romano 2024), Qatar donated approximately $4.7 billion to more than 60 American universities between 2001 and 2021. Prestigious institutions such as Cornell, Harvard, Yale, MIT, and the University of Chicago received hundreds of millions of dollars each.

Qatar is also a notable humanitarian donor. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2024), Qatar pledged $100 million in aid to Gaza, contributed more than $86 million to Sudan since the start of its civil conflict, and provided support to Syrian refugees. Its efforts extend well beyond the Middle East: Qatar donated $100 million following Hurricane Katrina and dispatched emergency responders to assist following the 2015 Nepal earthquake.

Finally, a primary activity that Qatar engages in is mediation. Qatar's role as a mediator in conflicts has given it diplomatic prestige and the perception of a peaceful actor. The small state has managed to assist in negotiations between different powers in the Middle East and beyond. These include Israel-Hamas, US-Taliban, Lebanon (Doha agreement), Sudan-Eritrea and more. Beyond the Middle East, Qatar participated in talks between Russia and Ukraine for returning children to their families (Reuter, 2024) and between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda (Rolley and Kasongo 2025).

5.2 Particular-Intrinsic Power

Qatar has successfully leveraged its LNG reserves, wealth, and distinctive diplomatic position to cast influence which can be identified as particular-intrinsic. This section reviews the following four pillars of such power: interdependencies between Qatar and the EU, the opportunities it provides using investments, financial support to Middle Eastern actors and its mediation efforts.

As Labelle (2023) points out, the Russian invasion of Ukraine caused a shift in the interdependence between the EU and Russia. The EU sought to diversify and decouple itself from Russian fossil fuels, even at the price of painful inflation. This realignment created an opportunity for Qatar, which secured long-term LNG supply agreements with several European states, including Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. While Qatar's share of the European gas market remains modest in comparison to Russia's pre-war levels, these new partnerships are likely to entrench Qatar's importance to European energy security in the coming years.

The QIA has also enabled Qatar to reach warmer ties with other countries. U.S. President Trump's visit to the Gulf countries in May 2025 manifested how investment can be translated into warm diplomatic relations, with Qatar pledging to increase investments in the U.S. and purchase 210 Boeing jets (Broadwater and Swan 2025). QIA has consolidated its presence in other countries through its portfolio, with investments ranging from Barclays and London real estate, Volkswagen, Credit Suisse, and more.

In the Middle East, one of Qatar's primary strategies for influence has been its political and financial support for Islamist movements. Unlike other members of the Arab League, Qatar has historically maintained ties with actors that others refused to engage with (ISPI, 2025). Qatar has been linked to the Muslim Brotherhood since its establishment and offered refuge to members who faced persecution in other regimes. The Arab Spring marked a turning point, as Qatar openly supported Islamist groups it believed could reshape the region. It gave monetary and political backing to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Tunisia, rebel forces in Syria, and Islamist militias in Libya. Qatar has also kept close relations with Hamas; aside from the funding it receives, Hamas' leadership was also allowed to operate from Doha.

Qatar's support of these organizations, which are often denounced by the Arabic public, is seen as high-risk high-gain gambles. Indeed, Doha's acceptance of such actors has caused widespread criticism and backlash. Between 2017 and 2021, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE, and Bahrain led a regional blockade against Qatar, accusing it of financing terrorism and fostering ties with Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. The embargo involved the closure of airspace, borders, and diplomatic channels. Other countries followed suit. The crisis ended with the Al-Ula Agreement in 2021. Many commentators suggest that Qatar emerged from the dispute with greater autonomy, having strengthened its relationships with Turkey and Iran, diversified its trade partners, and refused to comply with the coalition's original demands.

Finally, Qatar's distinctive diplomatic position can also be understood as a form of particular-intrinsic power. Qatar maintains an open channel with controversial or denounced groups such as Hamas, the Taliban, or the Muslim Brotherhood, yet is still seen as neutral. This capacity has been valuable to Qatar's diplomatic capital. Whether in the Israeli negotiations with Hamas or American negotiations with the Taliban, Hamas is viewed as essential to ensuring correspondence.

5.3 Derivative Power

In addition to its soft and particular-intrinsic power, Qatar also exercises derivative power. Central to this is Qatar's alignment with the United States. This is exemplified by its hosting of Al Udeid Air Base, the largest American military facility in the Middle East. While there is no formal defense treaty between the two nations, the U.S. designated Qatar a major non-NATO Ally in 2022 (Reuters 2022). Beyond its substantial investments in the U.S., Qatar has actively courted its ally through lobbying efforts (Vogel 2024) and providing gifts to American politicians—most notably, the recent gifting of a luxury airplane to President Trump. Qatar has also cultivated closer ties with NATO. In 2018, the alliance was granted access to the Al Udeid base, and Qatar established a military liaison office at NATO headquarters in Brussels (NATO 2018). Joint training exercises have strengthened their cooperation. The backing of the U.S. and NATO has allowed Qatar to pursue a more assertive foreign policy and to engage in regional maneuvers that could otherwise exceed the limits of what a small state could safely undertake.

5.4 Collective Power

One element that Qatar lacks in its foreign policy is collective power. The 2017–2021 blockade proves that Qatar remains isolated within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and that it cannot reliably depend on regional alliances to advance or defend its interests. Unlike other small states that strengthen their international influence through coalition-building and institutional engagement, Qatar has often pursued a unilateral path. Qatar is indeed a member of major multilateral bodies such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and has played active roles in forums like OPEC and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF). However, it has rarely used these platforms to lead coalitions or shape institutional agendas.

5.5 Implications

Considering the findings from chapter 4.3, there is much doubt on whether Qatar can maintain its international influence in decades to come. Chapter 4.3 shows that Qatar is likely to enter a painful fiscal stage already from the next decade, when its Sovereign Wealth Fund, QIA, shrinks. Drastic change must occur before Qatar completely depletes the QIA, or otherwise the country will fall into debt that it cannot return. Such a change, if even possible, would most likely involve a drastic reduction in public spending.

This means that within two decades, Qatar's regional and global clout will probably diminish. The shift from the current state of affairs will express itself in three main ways: First, any activities that make it more powerful today and depend on monetary means are likely to suffer due to the repercussions of its financial state. These include media influence, financial support in the Middle East, cultural events and more. Second, the element of interdependence in Qatar's relationships with gas importers will decline, and the country will no longer be seen as essential to ensure energy security and diversification. Lastly, Qatar becomes more dependent on the countries where its assets are held until they are depleted. This holds even more so in a scenario where Qatar finds a solution to preserve the QIA as a revenue source. Two risks stand out: First, global market volatility may threaten Qatar's budget. Second, countries where its assets are held have a bigger leverage over the emirate, as confiscation of assets or international sanctions, for instance, could prove fatal.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the economic foundations of Qatar's political power in the context of the global energy transition. Drawing on the rentier state framework, developmental state theory, and small-state power dynamics, it has illustrated how Qatar's influence has been made possible by an unprecedented accumulation of fossil fuel wealth, leveraged with strategic investments in soft power and international alliances. However, the upcoming changes in the energy market are likely to alter the emirate's position.

The findings suggest that, if current trends continue, Qatar may face severe financial challenges within the next two decades. Its Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) is estimated to be depleted at a rapid pace. Under the International Energy Agency's Net Zero Emissions by 2050 scenario, the fund is no longer able to cover the fiscal deficit by 2047. Even under a more moderate trajectory, where emissions are reduced at only half the rate, the fund's depletion is only postponed until 2051.

The thesis identifies two principal drivers behind this outlook: the global transition away from fossil fuels and the structural weaknesses of Qatar's domestic economy. The first concerns the efforts to limit global warming, which harm Qatar's energy sector. Second, Qatar has only made limited and insufficient progress in diversifying and consolidating its economy. These conclusions are grounded in the theoretical framework of rentier and developmental state literature, and supported by empirical data, including recent reports from the International Monetary Fund.

Given this trajectory, Qatar's international influence is likely to decline sharply. The thesis demonstrates that much of Qatar's impressive power accumulation has so far relied on its wealth and strategic gas reserves. If these elements erode, Qatar will lose power in three key areas. First, it will lack the monetary capacity to sustain its influence as it currently does. Second, other states will cease to depend on Qatar as a primary energy supplier. Third, Qatar will become more vulnerable to the political and economic conditions of the countries where its SWF assets are held. Nevertheless, some elements of its influence may persist, such as derivative forms of power linked to the United States and NATO, as well as its role as a diplomatic mediator in regional and global affairs.

This thesis urges foreign policymakers to take into account Qatar's growing vulnerability. While the state currently projects confidence, the long-term position appears more fragile, which may call for adjustments in foreign policy. Finally, the thesis highlights the need for further research at the intersection of rentier-state dynamics and effective developmental strategies.

Bibliography

About Us | Today's Latest from Al Jazeera. Accessed May 22, 2025. https://www.aljazeera.com/about-us.

Al-Kubaisi, Hissa A. "The 2022 World Cup and Shifts in Qatar's Foreign Policy." *Journal of Arabian Studies* 13, no. 1 (2023): 30–50.

Atalayar. "Al Jazeera, an Echo of Qatari Diplomacy." *Atalayar*, April 14, 2022. https://www.atalayar.com/en/articulo/reports/al-jazeera-echo-qatari-diplomacy/20220414055141156007.html.

Beech, Hannah. "Qatari Push to Dominate Another Sport, Table Tennis, Draws Scrutiny." *The New York Times*, May 25, 2025, sec. World. https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/25/world/middleeast/qatar-table-tennis.html.

Ben Hassen, Tarek. "Developing a Vibrant Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Qatar: A Sustainable Pathway Toward the Knowledge-Based Economy?" In *Sustainable Qatar: Social, Political and Environmental Perspectives*, pp. 349–364. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2022.

Beblawi, Hazem. "The Rentier State in the Arab World." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1987): 383–98.

Booth, Robert. "WikiLeaks Cables Claim Al-Jazeera Changed Coverage to Suit Qatari Foreign Policy." *The Guardian*, December 6, 2010, sec. US news. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-al-jazeera-qatari-foreign-policy.

Brannagan, Paul Michael, and Richard Giulianotti. "The soft power–soft disempowerment nexus: the case of Qatar." *International Affairs* 94, no. 5 (2018): 1139–1157.

Broadwater, Luke, Jonathan Swan Reporting from Doha, and Qatar. “Qatar Airways to Buy 210 Boeing Jets.” *The New York Times*, May 14, 2025, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/14/us/politics/qatar-airways-boeing-jets.html.

Caldentey, Esteban Pérez. “The Concept and Evolution of the Developmental State.” *International Journal of Political Economy* 37, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 27–53. https://doi.org/10.2753/IJP0891-1916370302.

Dahl, Robert A. "The concept of power." *Behavioral Science* 2, no. 3 (1957): 201–215.

Deans, Jason, and broadcasting editor. “Minister Backs BBC Arabic TV.” *The Guardian*, November 30, 2005, sec. Media. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2005/nov/30/broadcasting.Iraqandthemedia.

England, Andrew. “Qatar’s $500bn Wealth Fund Targets Bigger Deals as LNG Windfall Looms.” *Financial Times*, December 11, 2024, sec. Qatar Investment Authority. https://www.ft.com/content/463cc5cf-e991-4eec-9fce-6994190e375d.

Enache, Cristina. “A Comparison of the Tax Burden on Labor in the OECD, 2024.” *Tax Foundation* (blog), May 31, 2024. https://taxfoundation.org/data/all/global/tax-burden-on-labor-oecd-2024/.

Fagan, Mary, and Deputy City Editor. “Sheikh Yamani Predicts Price Crash as Age of Oil Ends.” *The Telegraph*, June 25, 2000. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1344832/Sheikh-Yamani-predicts-price-crash-as-age-of-oil-ends.html.

Freedom House. “Qatar: Freedom in the World 2023 Country Report.” Accessed May 18, 2025. https://freedomhouse.org/country/qatar/freedom-world/2023.

Hancock, Alice, and Andrew England. “Qatar Will ‘Stop’ EU Gas Sales If Fined under Due Diligence Law.” *Financial Times*, December 22, 2024, sec. EU business regulation. https://www.ft.com/content/2260c21b-f5f4-4ea9-b176-ba1b38c8471c.

Hertog, Steffen. "Reforming wealth distribution in Kuwait: estimating costs and impacts." (2020).

IEA. “Net Zero Roadmap: A Global Pathway to Keep the 1.5 °C Goal in Reach – Analysis,” September 26, 2023. https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-roadmap-a-global-pathway-to-keep-the-15-0c-goal-in-reach.

ISPI. “Qatar: A Small Power With Big Ambitions, Passing (Also) Through Political Islam.” Accessed May 23, 2025. https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/qatar-a-small-power-with-big-ambitions-passing-also-through-political-islam-203340.

Kamrava, Mehran. *Qatar: Small State, Big Politics.* Cornell University Press, 2013.

LaBelle, Michael Carnegie. "Energy as a weapon of war: Lessons from 50 years of energy interdependence." *Global Policy* 14, no. 3 (2023): 531–547.

Long, Tom. "Small states, great power? Gaining influence through intrinsic, derivative, and collective power." *International Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2017): 185–205.

Luciani, Giacomo. “Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework | 4 | The Arab State.” Accessed May 16, 2025.

https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315685229-4/allocation-vs-production-states-theoretical-framework-giacomo-luciani.

Luciani, Giacomo, and Tom Moerenhout. “When Can Oil Economies Be Deemed Sustainable?” In *When Can Oil Economies Be Deemed Sustainable?*, Chapter 2, 9–31. Springer Nature, 2021.

Mirzoev, Mr Tokhir N., Ling Zhu, Yang Yang, Ms Tian Zhang, Mr Erik Roos, Mr Andrea Pescatori, and Mr Akito Matsumoto. *The Future of Oil and Fiscal Sustainability in the GCC Region.* International Monetary Fund, 2020.

NATO. “Secretary General Welcomes the Emir of Qatar to NATO Headquarters.” NATO. Accessed May 23, 2025. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_152658.htm.

NDS3 Strategical National Outcome. Accessed May 18, 2025. https://www.npc.qa/en/planning/nds3/Pages/strategicalnationaloutcome.aspx?index=0.

Nye Jr, Joseph. *The Powers to Lead.* Oxford University Press, 2008.

Nye, Joseph S. “Soft Power.” *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (1990): 153–71. https://doi.org/10.2307/1148580.

Pal, Leslie A., Reem Al-Hababi, and Logan Cochrane. "Pathways for a sustainable future." *Sustainable Qatar* (2023): 365.

QatarEnergy, “Publication Details” . Accessed May 21, 2025. https://www.qatarenergy.qa/en/MediaCenter/Pages/PublicationsDetails.aspx?itemId=9.

Qatar Affirms Ongoing Efforts to Strengthen UN Humanitarian Response. Accessed May 22, 2025. https://ny.mission.qa/en/media/news/detail/1446/06/10/qatar-affirms-ongoing-efforts-to-strengthen-un-humanitarian-response?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

Reuters. “Biden Designates Qatar as Major Non-NATO Ally of U.S.” March 10, 2022, sec. Middle East. https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/biden-designates-qatar-major-non-nato-ally-us-2022-03-10/.

Reuters. “Qatar Airways’ Net Profit Jumps 28% as Company Expects Strong Demand to Continue.” May 19, 2025, sec. Middle East. https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/qatar-airways-posts-28-jump-net-profit-record-21-billion-2025-05-19/.

Reuters. “Russia and Ukraine Return Children to Families after Mediation by Qatar.” November 28, 2024, sec. Europe. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-ukraine-return-children-families-after-mediation-by-qatar-2024-11-28/.

Romano, Jenna. “How Much Does Qatar Donate to American Universities?” *Mideast Journal*, March 6, 2024. https://www.mideastjournal.org/post/qatar-donation-us-university.

Rolley, Sonia, and Ange Adihe Kasongo. “Congo, M23 Commit to Work towards Peace after Doha Talks.” *Reuters*, April 24, 2025, sec. Africa. https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/congo-m23-delegations-leave-doha-peace-talks-stall-sources-2025-04-23/.

Ross, Michael L. “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (April 2001): 325–61.

Statista. “Cost of Hosting the World Cup 2022.” Accessed May 25, 2025. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1361481/world-cup-host-total-costs/.

The Atlas of Economic Complexity by @HarvardGrwthLab. Accessed May 20, 2025. https://atlas.hks.harvard.edu/rankings.

Times (Singapore), Global. “The Qatar Investment Authority: Quiet Power in a Turbulent World.” *Medium* (blog), May 14, 2025. https://medium.com/@GlobalTimesSingapore/the-qatar-investment-authority-quiet-power-in-a-turbulent-world-55f4b1af815d.

Vogel, Kenneth P. “As a Lobbyist, Bondi Had Clients Including Amazon, G.M., Uber and Qatar.” *The New York Times*, November 22, 2024, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/21/us/politics/pam-bondi-trump-ag-lobbyist.html.

Whitaker, Brian. “Al-Jazeera – How Arabic News Channel Became a Key Player in Global Media.” *The Guardian*, September 20, 2011, sec. Media. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2011/sep/20/al-jazeera-arabic-channel-key-player.

World Bank Open Data. “World Bank Open Data.” Accessed May 19, 2025. https://data.worldbank.org.

Worldometer. “Qatar Population (2025).” Accessed May 19, 2025. http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/qatar-population/.