

## Soft Powers of Oman in Foreign Affairs

Cuneyt Yenigun

*Professor, Founder Director of International Relations and Security Studies Graduate Programs, Founder of Political Science Department, College of Economics and Political Science, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman, cuneyt@squ.edu.om, cuneytyeni3@gmail.com; ORCID No: 0000-0002-1258-5582.*

*Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=iUQ1Q1gAAAAJ&hl=en&authuser=1>*

### Abstract

Oman's soft and intangible powers have been increasing dramatically in the new millennium. Half of its soft power components, culture, and national morale, had already been there for centuries. The other half, governmental skills and diplomatic skills started to be shown in the international arena in the last two decades. Its mediation tactics, becoming the back channel between the Euro-Atlantic zone and Iran in triangulated diplomacy, pursuing quiet diplomacy, and putting an acceptable distance between NATO and Gulf on a seesaw assisted Oman to reach the diplomatic soft power rank. Among Oman's governmental skills, moral values, effective services, the credibility of the government, and good political and economic orchestrating could be counted. This paper finds and elaborates on Oman's soft power sub-components and brings pieces of evidence to its scholastic allegations to be a primary resource as a first article on this topic.

**Keywords:** Soft Power, Intangible Powers, Oman, Oman Foreign Policy, Middle East Studies, International Relations in the Gulf.

### I. Introduction

Soft power is a new phenomenon in comparison with the other power and international relations theory perspectives. It has defined any non-military power components according to the coiner of the term (Nye, 2008). After it was launched, it transformed and new sub-titles, and components were added to soft power, and understanding of soft power has been developed and improved. Although intangible power components intersect with soft power components, it is not exactly soft power. Intangible powers are any untouchable, unmeasurable tools in the hand of the government/state and they could be counted and used in domestic and international relations as de facto factors. For example, in the soft power definition, the economy was counted as a soft power component, because it is a non-military tool, but not counted as intangible power, because it is measurable. (Yenigun, Yari, Maani, 2021).

Under government skills, the government's management technique of economy is an intangible power but not the economy itself. Population, with its measurability, is one of the tangible power components, but its ingredient of population, such as tolerance and the multicultural face of the population are counted as intangible power sub-components. Because of the nature of immeasurability, it is very hard to compare states' intangible powers, and mostly those show themselves during hard times. In addition to that, intangible powers are the subject of unpredictability and surprise for international relations scholars. With their embedded sub-components, intangible powers, in rhetoric, could be lined up as governmental skills, diplomatic skills, national morale, and culture.

When it is compared to itself, Oman's soft and intangible powers are overwhelming its hard and tangible power levels, when theory is implemented on it. Oman's tangible powers,

military, economic, population, natural resources, and land as a small size country in the world literature. However, when they are combined cumulatively, Oman's Governmental skills, diplomatic skills, unique culture, and national morale give the highest point in the Arabian Gulf.

## 2. Oman's Governmental Skills

### 2.1. Political Management

In the past fifty years of renaissance led by the late Sultan Qaboos' rational and balanced governance, the Sultanate has developed evidently as it stands today as the most democratic country among the GCC countries. At the beginning of Oman's modern era under Sultan Qaboos' reign, the country's modernization started with ending its international isolation, creating almost all political institutions, and granting freedoms, by preserving Oman's unique culture. Modern Oman was founded by keeping the country's character intact by striking a balanced environment between tradition and modernity, that is governed by the values of respect for others, tolerance, responsibility, morality, and ethics. (Yenigun & Baig, 2020)

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Council of Ministers was formulated with members appointed to reflect a balanced political distribution of Oman's tribal, ethnic, and regional diversities. In 1981, Sultan Qaboos formed the 55-member State Consultative Council an appointed body that was confined to making policy suggestions. Nine years later in 1990, it was replaced by a more representative body, 59-member, a National Consultative Council made of men who were indirectly elected. It could only advise and comment about legislation and was barred from discussing defense, foreign affairs, and the oil and gas industry. With that by the 1990s Oman began to transform its system to a modern state of institutions, establishing government, ministries, and the law system which over time became a judicial institutional system codified in 1996 as the Ministry of Justice was created in 1994 (Yenigun & Baig, 2020).

In 1994, membership was expanded, and women were allowed to vote. In 1997 Basic Law of the

State, a written constitution was established. This was the most important signal to modernize governmental institutions. The Basic Law called for the creation of the Council of Oman. This was the compromise of the Majlis Al-Shura, which was to be henceforth elected every three years and appointed State Council which meets four times a year (Yenigun & Baig, 2020). First elections were expanded to more than 50,000 people in 1997, universal franchise for everyone aged over 21 in 2006, and 713,000 voters in 2019. In 2011 events, the government introduced the elected Municipal Councils, which are decentralized (Oman Ministry of Information, 2023).

Women's political participation has improved, where in 2019, two women were elected to Shura Council, 15 were appointed to the State Council, 7 were elected to the Municipal Councils, and in the Council of Ministers 3 women have a presence with 3 undersecretaries. The government began after 2019 to uphold a system of roles division by appointing the ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance and the National Security Council Secretary General. The Sultan empowered those agencies while retaining the power to hold those officials accountable. When it comes to efficiency, the government was refashioned to have 19 ministries instead of 26 where 17 of them were appointed in 2020 (Council of Ministers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

After the new head of state came into power, Sultan Haitham, the country continued to improve its political management. In 2021, the new Basic Law introduced the country to the position of the crown prince. This serves to omit any speculation about power vacancy ensuring a smooth transfer. The updated Basic Law answered social demands about government accountably through the creation of an evaluation committee chaired by the Sultan to investigate the performance of leading officials and ministers. Also creating a higher independent election supervise committee (Freedom House, 2022) was another big leap in political development. Furthermore, as a part of the e-government initiative Oman succeeded in using an online portal named "E-Vote" in the 2022 municipal councils voting making the poll 100% online (UNESCWA, 2023).

Oman's government like many others are aiming towards sustaining its development, as it works to build a comprehensive development through institutional accountability, transparency, social cooperation, concession, willingness, and targeted initiatives. Despite the major shocks that Oman has been hit with from the drop in oil prices, COVID-19, and the demise of its founding father, the Omani government under the new Sultan

Haitham bin Tariq managed to uphold its internal, regional, and international position and stability. Today, as a result of good of governmental management, Oman is one of the most secure and peaceful countries in the world. According to the World Bank, Oman's political stability was third and was one of the four positive countries in the Middle East in 2022 (World Bank, 2023).

**Table 1:** MENA Political Stability & No Violence Ranking

Rank	Country Name	2021-2022
1.	Qatar	0.95788
2.	United Arab Emirates	0.6493
3.	Oman	0.506666
4.	Kuwait	0.299016
5.	Jordan	-0.27573
6.	Morocco	-0.39608
7.	Bahrain	-0.50511
8.	Saudi Arabia	-0.58386
9.	Tunisia	-0.69575
10	Djibouti	-0.70726
11	Algeria	-0.87647
12	Egypt, Arab Rep.	-1.02421
13	Israel	-1.06135
14	Lebanon	-1.49348
15	Iran, Islamic Rep.	-1.62163
16	West Bank and Gaza	-1.83927
17	Iraq	-2.39699
18	Yemen, Rep.	-2.58804
19	Syrian Arab Republic	-2.66344

**Source:** World Bank, 2023.

Further, Oman managed to score 0.000 in the Global Terrorism Index from 2020 through 2023 making it a terrorism-free country with no impact and terrorism attack record in the last five years (GTI, 2023). This reflects its peacefulness as

Oman ranked in the fifth position among the Middle East states according to the Global Peace Index, and it remains in the category of highly peaceful countries (GPI, 2022).

**Table 2: MENA Peace Index**

Regional rank	Country	Overall score	Score change	Overall rank
1	Qatar	1.533	-0.048	23
2	Kuwaiti	1.739	0.037	39
3	Jordan	1.849	-0.081	57
4	United Arab Emirates	1.865	-0.025	60
5	Oman	1.889	-0.013	64
6	Morocco	1.969	-0.027	74
7	Tunisia	1.996	0.002	85
8	Bahrain	2.085	0.01	99
9	Algeria	2.146	-0.112	109
10	Sadia Arabia	2.288	-0.124	119
11	Egypt	2.342	-0.145	126
12	Palestine	2.552	0.032	133
13	Israel	2.576	-0.059	134
14	Lebanon	2.615	-0.104	138
15	Iran	2.687	0.012	141
16	Libya	2.93	-0.171	151
17	Sudan	3.007	0.099	154
18	Iraq	3.157	-0.074	157
19	Syria	3.356	0.06	161
20	Yemen	3.394	0.052	162
Regional average		2.399	-0.034	

**Source:** Global Peace Index, 2023

Moreover, the successful implementation of the 2020 E-Consensus made Oman a model in transferring from a conventional field-survey census to an electronic census (E-Consensus Report, NCSI, 2020). This progress supports the Sultanate's development steps under its Vision 2040. Vision 2040 is built around three essential pillars the people, society, economy, and development to institutional performance and governance. Oman 2040 Vision works as a gateway to achieving social progress, sustained economic development and overcoming obstacles and challenges while seizing opportunities that feed nationwide images of Oman's harmonious future (Oman Vision, 2040).

## 2.2 Economic Orchestrating

As mentioned above, economy is the tangible power of the country; but economic orchestrating is the one of the important wings of governmental skills of intangible powers. Although the existence of economic diversification issues of the Arabian Gulf, Oman's economic orchestrating is very successful as a small size power in the world stage.

With the status of poverty exciting in Oman ever since before the 1970s, Sultan Qaboos was aware of the need to reform the economic system, so oil which was needed by the West presented a perfect opportunity to raise money for the Sultanate development and construction. For that, Sultan

Qaboos managed to increase state's share of the Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) dramatically in the first decade of his reign. (Yenigun & Baig, 2020). The oil production was 281,000 barrels a day in 70s, increased to 1,063,300 barrels as of 2023 by the aimed economic management (NCSI, 2023) and Oman's 5-year plans. Today Oman is at the 17<sup>th</sup> place in crude oil production (OMR, IEA, 2023), while in natural gas production it occupies the 20<sup>th</sup> rank in the world. (Wisevoter, 2023).

In the beginning, the economic sector from the start was not established to be run by the public sector but rather with a positive partnership with the private sector that had the technology to sponsor different operations such as oil extraction. Although the private sector did not exist during the first years, it was slowly built as the backbone of any economy. Hence oil was the core source of income, the money generated from it was channeled to the enhancement of Oman welfare. Sultan Haitham also knew that Oman cannot keep on depending on oil revenues forever, so he developed programs and policies that can encourage developing diversified economic activities other than oil. That provided the foundation of establishing Oman Investment and Export Promotion Center. The center was entitled with the mission of creating exportation and production basis for steel, cement, ceramics, marbles, fiber optic, and electric cables, packaging materials, fertilizers, perfumes, and the fishery industry sectors. The government used the traditionally relayed on income sources and provided incentives along regulation to sponsor such business as fishery, agriculture, shipping, and frankincense (Yenigun & Baig, 2020). A foundation, Tanfeedh, was established to diversify sectors from transport, fisheries, mining to manufacturing and tourism. (Tanfeedh, Omanuna).

Although Oman is one of the biggest oil exporters outside OPEC, it does not have the immense oil resources of some of its neighbors. However, oil still fuels Oman's economy and revenues from petroleum has enabled its dramatic development. One of the most important duties of Oman Government was/is to reduce its dependence on oil and expatriate labor. To ensure it, the

government has launched implementation project in its 10<sup>th</sup> five-year plans in 2021 as a part of its Vision 2040. The plan focuses on legislative and administrative development, addressing immediate challenges, and financial balance. (ISFU, 2020)

As very strong social liberal state tracker, Oman started to liberalize its economy by implementing value added tax of 5% in April 2022 and it generated \$780 million in a year, while the income tax set to be implemented for the high-income individuals is yet to be enforced (Campbell-James, 2022). Although the oil and gas income still have the lion share of the domestic economy the non-oil sector's contribution is steadily growing with 19%, and the service sector's GDP share rose to 46% (BTI, 2022).

The decentralization of the economic activities away from Muscat serves not only the individual gouvernantes development but also address the unemployment concerns of 2.1% in 2022 according to the NCSI. Addressing the unemployment rate is tackled by the Omanization program, which aims towards reducing the county's dependency on the foreign labor while creating windows for the local labor, particularly in commercial banking, hotels, insurance, hospitality, oil and gas, and communication sectors (MERA, 2023).

Agriculture and fishing have been growing in export ratio also. Dates and limes (Batinah), coconut palms, wheat, bananas, cattle (Dhofar), cereals and forage crops, poultry and cattle production are steadily rising. Modernizing on production reflects fish and seafood exports value by the end of 2021 reached USD 311,706 million (NCSI, 2022).

Large Industrial Projects were put into force. Currently Oman has two Special Economic Zones and three Free Zones. These zones generated USD 9 billion in 2021 (Oman Investment Authority, 2021), by the well planning technique of the government. In support of having a good infrastructure fostering easier transportation and economic activities Oman has five major ports which are Salalah, Sultan Qaboos, Duqm, Sohar, and Qalhat Ports. Including a well-established national road network includes a USD 400 million

highway linking the northern and southern regions.

Regarding the management of FDIs, many steps were taken to encourage it as adopting strategies and policies as changing the economic sector and FDI legal framework and regulations. This serves the target set in Vision 2040 to diversify the economy away from the oil and gas sectors. Oman FDI Law permits giving a preferential treatment to the foreign investor under the condition that the project is set to be established in less developed Oman. Moreover, Article 21 of the FDI Law allows projects to import investments through others or the owner if the project needs mean of transportation, spare parts, operation requirement, materials, machines, and expansion (Yenigun, Al-Basoo, Al Khamisi, 2021). Sultan Haitham's special focus on economy is interpreted through the reinstating of the 2011 abolished Ministry of Economy in 2020 replacing the Supreme Council for Planning and with merging the two investment funds to create Oman's Investment Authority in 2020 (ISPI, 2021). Hence in 2022 the FDI increased by 19% while also increasing the exports of non-oil products (Campbell-James, Washington Institute, 2022). Opening the way of the FDI creates new job opportunities, increases the domestic income, and improves the country's positive trade balance of import and export via providing a path of accessibility to foreign currencies and exchanges. Oman polices and regulation established an environment friendly to investments. The government programs offer soft loans and propose the building of new industrial estates in population centers outside the capital area. The government is undertaking many development projects to modernize the economy, improve the standard of living, and become a more active player in the global marketplace.

### 2.3 Effective Services

One of the top countries in the world for free government services is Oman. The cost of sewage, water, and electricity is among the lowest in the entire globe. In Oman, there are essentially no or very little municipal services with low civil taxes, income taxes, or waste taxes. Oman's nearly free services and raises are in competition with highly

developed nations like Canada or Northern Europe because of this specific feature. Oman is viewed as a socially liberal state similar to Scandinavian nations because of these particular characteristics.

According to the UN E-Government report in 2022, Oman ranks "very high" for its level of online services and the 3rd among the Arab countries after UAE and Saudi Arabia (UN, 2022). Thanks to National Registry System, national ID cards and passports could be posed easily. Today Oman's e-services rank from police and ministerial services to economic, municipal, and voting services. The Sultanate's transformation to e-government conveys a message of greater accountability and accessibility to public services to the citizens. The Ministry of Manpower also provides a single online platform to business owners and citizens for them to find services-related information and apply for those services through a unified and easy-to-use application (Omanuna, 2023). E-services make people's life easier and almost ends the bureaucracy the in the offices in Oman.

Oman's infrastructure, landscape, and free services have thrived and been transferred since the 1970s because of excellent economic management. In contrast to the bulk of European nations, Oman has toll-free access to all highways and expressways. There were only four schools and two hospitals in Oman fifty years ago, but the country has since built 1203 schools and 27 universities (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education, 2023). In state-run schools and universities, the entire educational system is free. Additionally, in a highly generous approach from nations in the Euro-Atlantic region, the Omani state pays the tuition for every student attending a private university in Oman. There are currently 59 hospitals and 897 medical centers, dispensaries, and clinics in Oman, a country that pioneered public hospitals and paved the way for private health institutions over the past 50 years. (2023, Ministry of Health). Any type of treatment or intensive care is essentially free in public hospitals, according to the national healthcare system.

## 2.4 Moral Values of the Government

Moral values are one of the central issues in any country. Oman is very different from other countries in the region. Moral values stem from Oman's rich historical civilization and its regional interpretation. Lies, bribery, corruption, broken promises, and bluffing are absolutely not acceptable in Omani life and traditions. This is because, according to Omani religious interpretation and understanding, it leads to deviation from religion.

During the Golden Age, Oman established a maritime kingdom and coexistence with other nations, religions and ethnic groups brought tolerance and respected values to Omani culture. This long civilizational historical background has also brought a kind of self-confidence and humble professionalism to the Omani people. All these specific features, historical civilizations, and hermetically sealed religious interpretations reflect the social and political life among the people and the governmental institutions from the local government to the parliamentary level.

## 2.5 Credibility of the Government

The moral values of the people are automatically reflected in the government and the cabinet. Because those who are in the parliament also are from the Omani people and all of them respect the moral values of the people even in the parliamentary jobs. Omanis strongly believe that once parliamentary decisions are made, they will be implemented within a reasonable period of time. In contrast to the electoral Euro-Atlantic countries, Oman's government and state do not bluff. That's why, Omani people Credibility in domestic politics is very high in public opinion.

Although the bureaucracy sometimes is slow, people believe that when government promises to do something or projects on a topic, it will be accomplished. It is a natural result of the moral values of the government. Thence, people trust government and state institutions more than in any European country. As a fact of Omani culture, people see the state as the "father-state" of the nation. Definitely, it gives an enormous power to

the hand of the Omani state at domestic and international level.

## 3. Oman's Diplomatic Skills

### 3.1 Mediating, Arbitrating and Conciliating

Mediation, arbitration, and conciliation are natural cultures in Oman among the tribes. In Omani culture, if there is an issue in or between any tribes, people or individuals apply to an ad hoc arbitrator (hakam) in that tribe and ask for an acceptable solution for both parties. Sometimes this person becomes the tribe leader, and sometimes the most trusted cleric in that tribe. This is a long-lasting historical tradition, which derives from religion. This culture naturally and automatically reflects Oman's Foreign Policy, and it gave a mediator mission to itself between Iran and the Euro-Atlantic zone.

In the last five decades Oman's Foreign policy has dramatically changed from isolationism to multilateral diplomacy. Especially Post-Cold War era enabled Oman's "sideless" policy to implement easier in comparison with the earlier times. Sultan Qaboos's very dynamic and active Foreign Policy is an accepted fact by everybody. It meliorated relations with Saudi Arabia and Yemen and established close relations with the United States and the United Kingdom, GCC, and Iran. These multilateral good relations naturally brought a mediator role to Oman, especially in the conflict times among the sides in the region and the Euro-Atlantic zone. Muscat in 2009 relayed messages between Iran and Obama's administration in a time of high mistrust between the two. In 2011, three American hikers were released on bail primarily due to Oman's mediation (Muscat Daily, 2011). In 2013, an Iranian scientist held in California on charges of violating U.S. sanctions was released again by mediation of Oman between the US and Iran (Reuters, 2013). Furthermore, Oman refused to join the Arab coalition against Yemen which enabled it to play the role of a neutral mediator as it managed to invoke peace talks and prisoner swaps that succeeded in 2015 to release three Saudi Citizens, two American citizens, and one British citizen who were held by the Houthis. Over the years Oman diplomacy facilitated several

ceasefire agreements between the warring sides (EPC, 2022).

The peak point of Oman's mediation between the Euro-Atlantic Zone and Iran showed itself during the 5+1 –Iran Nuclear Talks in Muscat. It was a long-lasting process and Iran mediated it through the explicit acceptance of American and Iran foreign ministers (Times of Oman, 2014) namely the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Mediating as known is not a "classifying and fact gathering" but also the submission of a solution alternative at the negotiation table in rhetoric. It was not a surprise for the scholars but maybe new for public opinion. It was not easy for a small power country to be a mediator among the giants when a look at the parties (US, Russia, UK, France, China and European Union Foreign Minister, Iran). Oman, among them, is the least hard power but maybe the highest soft power in the region with very well-balanced mediating diplomacy on the stage on this occasion. It is a big success for the region also because almost all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (except Oman) believed at that time; Iran was a big challenger or potential danger for their countries in the last three decades. In preparation and during the peace talks Oman helped to start the process, gathered the parties in a successful forum, and according to some scholars developed a preliminary formulation for the initial gathering with US and Iran together. This includes the "convener" duty but in addition to this, by becoming part of potential solution alternatives, it succeeded the higher role of "mediation" in the process. Even with the Trump administration's 2018 withdrawal from JCPOA, Oman keeps its mediation efforts under the Biden administration to revive the nuclear deal.

Moreover, Oman mediated in the GCC's biggest conflict the Qatar diplomatic crisis (2017-2021), Oman refused to take part in the anti-Qatar bloc imposed by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt, Muscat kept on pushing parties to invoke the usage of diplomacy and dialogue (Đorđević, 2022). Adding to that, Oman's role in the Syrian crisis has managed to carry negotiation talks with Syria from 2015 that continued to 2018, and in 2020 a breakthrough happened as Oman reinstated its ambassador to

Damascus making it the first Arab country to do so. As of November 2022, Oman increased its efforts to mediate in Syria once again as requested by the US to secure the release of detained American hostages (EPC, 2022). After Sultan Haitham came into power, Oman's mediating roles continued such as in May 2023 mediating the prisoner swap between Belgium and Iran successfully. It shows that Oman's mediation capability has already been institutionalized and internationally recognized as a state, not an individual initiation.

Oman has successfully implemented the "active neutrality" policy while also succeeding in managing the role of a mediator skillfully within the Arabian Peninsula and out. Oman tries to be neutral in any conflict, and this neutrality brings a mediator and facilitator role to it. In its foreign policy columns "activeness" shows its mediator role in its foreign affairs. If its hard powers and soft powers are compared it is seen that the soft power of Oman overwhelms its hard power level, especially with its mediating diplomacy.

### 3.2 "Triangulated Balance" Policy

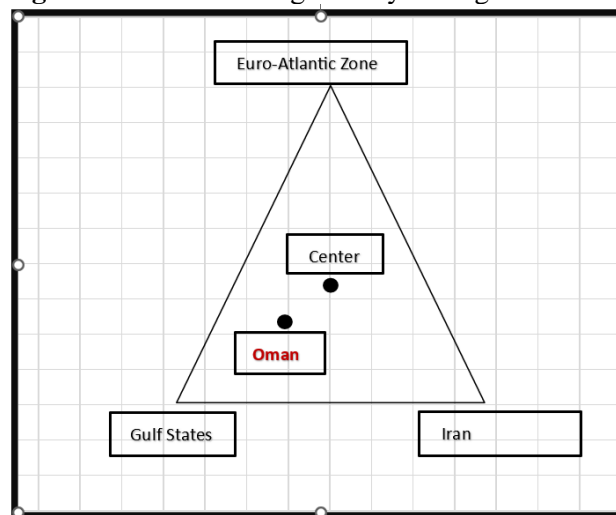
Creating a triangulated foreign policy playground is a kind result of Oman's multilateral diplomacy. On the one corner, Gulf countries are placed. Surely, Oman is an active member of the GCC, joins economic, political, social, cultural, and military decisions and implementations of the Gulf countries, and enjoys its membership to the GCC reciprocally. This corner is a natural result (and reason) of being a neighborhood because of joint geographical, linguistic, religious, and cultural reasons. That is why, this corner is the closest one to Oman among the other two corners. On the second corner, Euro- Atlantic Zone exists, it has very good long-lasting relations with the United Kingdom, France, the other European countries, and especially with the United States. Masirah Island was rented to the British military several times until 1971 in addition to very close economic and cultural ties with it. Oman is the first Arab country that sent an ambassador to the US in 1840. The Oman-US military facilities access agreement was signed in 1980 and renewed so far, the US can use Oman's airbases in Muscat,



Thumrait, and Masirah Island. Almost 60% of graduate students studied in the US. During the 1991 and 2003 Iraq and Kuwait wars, Oman explicitly supported Allied forces by permitting its airbases to the Allied forces. The third corner is kept by Iran. Although the GCC 3 states are potentially antagonistic and the other two are skeptical of Iran, Muscat had/has good economic and diplomatic relations with Iran. Although these three tips of the triangle used to see each other as competitors and/or "potential danger", Oman has succeeded to keep its ties well with those three sides. While Oman was joining military drills with

Desert Shield (of the GCC), it made the same thing with Iran in Hurmuz Strait, with the United States in the Aden Sea against maritime piracy. Although tense relations between Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain with Iran, and no relations in Euro-Atlantic Zone with Iran, nobody spoiled diplomatic relations with Oman. Actually, the three sides enjoyed using Oman as a "back channel" during emergency times. Moreover, Oman has kept her relations at almost equal distance with these three important actors. The following figure could interpret the position of Oman among the triangle in its foreign policy.

**Figure 1: Oman's Foreign Policy among Three Sides**



As seen in Figure 1, Oman is the closest state to Iran and at the same time, the closest one to the Western countries and has an acceptable and friendly distance from the Arabian Gulf states.

### 3.3 Humble/Quite Diplomacy

This type of diplomacy is a specific feature and reflection of Omani culture in its foreign policy. Normally in possible conditions, Oman helps regional peace and mediates in emergency times, but after accomplishing its mission, it steps back into the shadow and does not show off in front of the world media or world public(s). It comes from her historical background of humbleness basically. But at the same time, maybe it is a

necessity in accordance with the rational balance formulation tool in the seesaw of its own power level and power politics in the region. Oman has a humble level of hard power but increasing and credible soft power in the region. If soft powers exceed its own hard power, perhaps following silent diplomacy is much more beneficial for a small-size country in the region. It is not easy to be neutral in the conflicted region; again, it is very hard to be active in mediation as a small country among the more powerful actors. Because when you mediate among some, you potentially step on some other nations' feet who do not want peace, such as in JCPOA Agreement Saudi Arabia, AUE, and Israel were very upset against the peace with Iran at the time. That's why sometimes it could be a good choice to be silent if you are playing a big

role among the big and regional powers even if your hard powers are lower than them.

### 3.4 NATO-ICI: Acceptable Distance

NATO started to enlarge and deepen its missions after the cold war. First, it launched Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994 to increase stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships between individual Euro-Atlantic partners and NATO, as well as among 22 former communist countries. In the same year, Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) was founded between NATO and the 7 Mediterranean countries to create good relations, promoting regional security and stability. As a third initiative, NATO launched *Istanbul Cooperation Initiation* (ICI) in 2004 for the Arabian Gulf countries. The Initiative offers, advising on defense transformation, budgeting, and planning, interoperability in military exercises, education, and training, fighting against terrorism, working on the proliferation of WMDs, cooperation in border security, and cooperation in civil emergency planning. Four GCC members, Kuwait, Qatar, Emirates, and Bahrain immediately accepted the offer, signed and joined to the ICI, Saudi Arabia did not sign it because they claim that they should have been consulted first as a regional power. Secondly, they see NATO as not necessary in the Gulf region and look at NATO suspiciously, especially after 2011.

Oman also has not signed the ICI Agreement due to different reasons. First, it clashes with her balanced multilateral diplomacy. Because NATO is misperceived in the region as a tool of the US and the military wing of the Euro-Atlantic zone. Although Oman works together with the UK and the US at the military level individually, hosts US forces since 1980, and works together in counterterrorism and anti-piracy actions, these could be counted as inter-state relations. Oman thinks if it works state and intergovernmental organization level (Oman and NATO), it will be more binding and long-lasting. Second Oman thinks that signing the ICI is clashing with triangulated diplomacy with Iran and others. Because it could be seen by Iran as an offensive attempt, and this is not desired by Oman. That's

why Oman officially has not joined the ICI launch but has already military ties with NATO indirectly via US military bases. Hence any actor in the region and among the great powers does not insist on Oman's membership to ICI, through the possibility of Oman's broker or mediation role in potential issues with Iran. That's why Oman did not sign the agreement but did not reject it either and kept an equal distance from Iran and NATO in long-lasting balanced diplomacy.

### 3.5 "GCC-Union Balance"

This policy is one of the new developments and reflections of Oman's Foreign Policy to regional politics in the last decade. Saudi Arabia as the most powerful member of the cooperation, insists on transforming GCC into a "union" like the European Union (EU). As known union is different from cooperation in integration theory. Union is a supranational integration level; decisions are binding and could be counted as the path to confederation. Decision-making could be arranged in two ways in the unions: Population representation, (countries have voting weighting according to their populations) or state power (one state has one vote right). In the first situation, Saudi Arabia, with its 36 million population, will be a unique decision-maker, even if the other five countries come together. In the second situation, everybody has an equal right, one vote on the paper, in politics it does not go easy with the law. Within the UN, US and Ghana have equal voting right, but in fact when the US votes in favor of something it is not easy for Ghana to use vote against it. Even if GCC goes with a "one vote" system Oman knows that Saudi Arabia will be more effective on the other members of the GCC. In addition, it does not fit Oman's futuristic plans of balanced foreign policy. Because Saudi Arabia has more negative relations with Iran and Oman does not want to leave its pursued policies in the region. Because of this fact, Oman has been rejecting the (Gulf News, 2012) Saudis union proposal but will continue its good relations and membership with GCC at cooperation level.

#### 4. Oman's National Morale

Oman has succeeded in building a national character or what can be referred to as a collective name, which refers to the people's traits, attitudes, and aptitude towards national needs, hence Omanis are known for their respect, harmonious and peaceful nature, and tolerance (ENTRI, 2022). The high national morale is seen deeply among the Omanis and is pretty much higher than a majority of European states. There are several reasons for having high level of national morale, such as historical background, free services and its reflections and general optimism in the country, media's positive news coverage, stable political system, continuous progress in welfare level, harmonious coexistence in socio-cultural level.

##### 4.1 Media

In today's context, the media played a positive role in creating awareness of the community and contributed to maintaining its identity which had boosted national morale within the Omani community. The Omani media managed to foster the national morale which consolidated the progress march and prosperity, as it continued to disseminate an inspirational message and it kept being a knowledge source while objectively shaping the Omani character traits reflecting a civilized role over time. The messages transmitted via the media are messages of unity, tolerance, country love, progress, harmonious coexistence, and all that can eliminate discrimination and spread loyalty to the country and the system. The media played the role of an extended bridge that not only extended friendship hands to the world but also fraternity with the people in line with a balanced policy and away from all forms of exaggeration and extremism. The national media played a significant role in tracing the national programs and transmitting them to the public opinion, as for Vision 2040 the media effectively motivated an acceleration of executive programs aiming towards a sustainable solution. The media established an ongoing permanent communication channel between the government and the society, an observer and a follow-up organ regarding the national program's implementation, and a conveyer of the Omani communal image (ONA,

2023). The media has played an essential role in reflecting communal norms and values while also correcting misunderstood national values.

The new era of the Sultan Qaboos and the media propaganda worked together to promote openness to the international world and go out of the old system of isolation, and good governance with a public call for a return to those out the residence to come back to their homeland Oman will embrace them and provide for them within its borders, enforcing the basic principles of a fair rule and public involvement in decision making, all in all, reinsured to the people a renewed national morale and social contract. One of the most important steps here to be implemented is establishing a worldwide news agency. Collecting information from other international agencies means you are broadcasting their news and interpretations. If a country establishes its agency, it will collect all information on the ground, and becomes the primary news resource.

##### 4.2 Towering Personalities of Sultans:

In history, Oman is the oldest independent Arab state, which in the 18th century an empire stretching from present-day Oman to the eastern coast of Africa. Throughout history, Oman's national morale was built and stabilized around the principles of tolerance, mercy, and peace which did not change with the variety of imamates, dynasties, and foreign powers such as the Portuguese and the United Kingdom who did not control Oman's entirety. Each ruling party worked to serve the people as best as they can and to involve them in the process of decision-making under the Shura or consultation principle which is also a principle embedded in the Islamic matrix. In the old times there used to be councils in which the tribal and statesmen would meet to discuss matters related to the nation's wellbeing, hence the decisions were made under the shura principle and even the ruler was sometimes elected by them. The Omani national morale was built first around Oman the country that provided for the people and served them through the natural resources then around Islam which managed to govern and systematized their lives and the ruler who served them first which is clear under the era of Sultan

Qaboos. National unity was and is the first mission any ruler in Oman worked to achieve which is why the loyalty seems to be revolving around the country and communal unity. (RAF Museum, 2022). The Sultan's personality and appealing characteristics brought the people around him hence he was a father, leader, statesman, and teacher. Both the late and current sultans' personalities aim towards highlighting the best conditions for the public's well-being. Sultan Haitham in a balanced perspective works to preserve the achievements made by his ancestor while building upon a heritage of development putting in mind the people's best interests amongst a modern history of renewal and cognitive endeavors. The shared reflective personalities of the rulers towards their people's wellbeing will remain a core foundation of the national morale makeup and state-people relationship.

Sultan Qaboos intended to be closer to the people and to hear their thoughts and complaints, so he started an annual tour program to meet his people who felt his sincere efforts to develop Oman and their lives. All these and his early speeches made the public keen to support and surround the new political system with unity. (Al Nabhani, 2011). Hence, the national morale or Omani loyalty is evident in the absence of coupes.

### 4.3 Religion

Religion is one of the most important characteristics of culture in the Arabian Gulf countries. Because of the interpretation of Ibadism, almost everybody practices Islam in their life. And Islam orders everybody to settle for small and look to this life as an examination saloon. Patience and maturity are some main columns of Islam and are practiced very intensively in Omani life. Omani people as practitioners of Islam have general happiness in their lives. It is believed also in rhetoric this could reflect physical power also during wartime. Mu'tah war is one of the unforgotten examples in which 3,000 companions defeated 200,000 Roman soldiers in the 6th century and is still being talked about in the Arabian Gulf.

The social construction of the Omani society along with the religious background managed to

build a strong national morale circling the current system. The people find themselves morale obliged to work for the development of their country, to support the system, and to be patient in times of hardships. Having national morale or being loyal to one's country is a part of the Islamic faith. Also, Islam is a religion of peace and harmony that is beginning from the family level to the communal and then state levels which is what we can see in Omani society. The national morale and morality in Oman are linked to the national brotherhood as an integral principle in Islam. Omanis express love for their country and are loyal to it for many reasons one of them is Islam which asks the citizens to work for the development of their land and to sacrifice in times of need for the greater good of the community and the nation. Since Omanis are highly related to their religion their national morale is also high as loyalty comes to God first and then to be obedient to the national or civil authority since its responsible for the people's safety. Islam does not only require the citizens to obey the government but also express love and gratitude to their country and works for their welfare, which is why they work hard to initiate plans of development and nation-building programs where for example every national vision reflects such obligation.

### 4.4 Free Services and Scholarships

Fully funded educational scholarships abroad create satisfaction among the new generation in Oman. Free services, Omanization, job protection, (almost) no tax policy, and full scholarship at the undergraduate to post-doctorate level generate happy new masses and increases national morale in favor of the people and the state. Especially in comparison with five decades before, Oman's today economic, social, political, cultural, and welfare situations are dramatically and positively changed, and the Omani people are aware of it. This reflects state power and the international arena as one of the important intangible power components of Oman.

The free services provided for the citizens and residents in Oman support and enhance increased national morale, particularly the basic services from health and education to municipalities. The

equal provision of services and the equality of all in law managed to overcome the divided loyalties and identities as triable ones to a united identity and loyalty. The services provided made the people keen to create great love and gratitude towards Oman for what it has given them and what it will continue to provide. Providing free services was needed to uphold the citizens' needs and hardships they went through in times of isolation and underdevelopment, particularly before the 1970 or the Renaissance era. To bring them closer to the state and the new system and to push them towards expressing volunteer support for the new national plans, the first services given were education where Oman moved from having only three schools to having hundreds of free governmental schools, hospitals to provide the basic health services especially that many were suffering from the lack of health services, subsidies services as water and electricity considering their economic conditions, and building roads to make their movement easier wither for work or any other personal reasons considering the hard nature of Oman with extended empty spaces, desert, and mountains. All in all, giving the people bases for loyalty towards Oman and the system that provided such welfare services for them for free, which reflected in high national morale.

#### **4.5 General Optimism**

It is evident that Omani people are significantly more optimistic than Europeans when comparing Oman with European nations. It may have its roots in religion, culture, or maritime history, but it is an unavoidable fact of the nation. This pervasive optimism boosts the country's morale and demonstrates Oman's real influence on the international stage.

Oman's high national morale can be attributed to a variety of factors, including its social and religious foundations, historical background of unification and upholding group interests, current system of free services, and media propaganda designed to foster loyalty. National morale is thus defined by the factors that contribute to its existing, but its strength is determined by how resilient and persistent it is, and Oman's national morale has

endured through the ages despite its turbulent region.

### **5. Oman's Culture**

#### **5.1 Ancient Civilization**

It is one of the nation's additional soft powers. The social culture of Oman is peaceful, mature, humble, silent, and supercilious, and it reflects foreign policy as it is. "Having a civilized and educated enemy is preferable to an uneducated friend." This regional idiom demonstrates Oman's friendship with all other regional nations and the rest of the world due to its history of civilized society. Oman is a maritime nation that has exchanged goods and people with other countries for over three millennia, from southeast Africa to the Indian Ocean region. A historical tradition of comprehension and acceptance of peaceful coexistence between various communities and nations was established thanks to Oman's enduring engagement. Prior to the advent of Islam, Oman's history dates back to 5000 BC. By the 1800s, it had developed into an economic superpower with an empire that included the seacoasts of Kenya, Mombasa, Zanzibar, and Iran in addition to Pakistan. Due to its long history of exchanges and contacts with other countries, the country has managed to cultivate a distinctively tolerant and open culture. (Ministry of Endowment & Religious Affairs, 2023).

Oman is the oldest independent Arab state which by the 18th century stretched its empire from the modern Oman territory to the African east coast. Oman's industrial presence date back to around 100,000 years, with the world's earliest inhabited cities. In the 7th century Islam came to Oman and from that point on Oman sought to use its strategic location to trade across the world. Since the 7th century, Oman's rule had been divided among different dynasties, imamates, and foreign powers due to its strategic location importance on the eastern trade routes. The Portuges dominated the area between 1507 and 1650, and the Ottomans between 1581 and 1888, however, Muscat was never fully controlled and by the mid-17th century Oman's tribes managed to drive the Portuguese out under the Imam's leadership. By the late 17th century Oman began expanding down the African

eastern coast. By 1749 the Al Said dynasty ruled and drove out the Persians, and in 1783 Oman expanded to Gwadar which is in present-day Pakistan. With that Muscat grew to be a powerful regional trading nation and managed to establish a maritime trade empire known for its strength, and far-reaching fleet with positions in the Arabian Gulf with the Sultanate of Oman and Muscat and in East Africa with the Sultanate of Zanzibar (RAF, 2022).

Oman through different ancient history epochs was known for its maritime leadership and managed to establish close historical connections with different civilizations of the ancient world. Across history, Oman was an influential political, commercial, naval, and cultural force. Hence, with a heritage this important modern Omani History worked on cultivating and maintaining the state's intangible and tangible cultural heritage as it is an essential part of the Omani identity (Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, 2023).

## 5.2 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is one of the most important power components of Oman. Heterogeneous countries have a richness of different perspectives, cultures, multilingualism, different ideas, and thinking styles. Oman originally has different backgrounds in his today's nation, autochthon Arabs, Zanzibaris, Baluchi, and Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi) minorities, as Omani citizens. This Omani character brings different thinking styles to Oman, and it reflects Omani foreign policy as multidimensional diplomacy. In addition to its melted citizenship, there are almost a million expatriates that can bring research and development and different perspectives to the country as a rich mosaic.

This well-imbedded factor in Omani history and society serves as a character of peace and tolerance. Oman since ancient times was introduced and has made conversations and dialogues to absorb the different cultures living in the land. Regardless of the cultural background of the different people living in Oman fairness is the main treatment component especially in the multicultural and interreligious dialogues, hence embracing multiculturalism became over time a

trait and a fundamental element of the Omani identity. Oman's multiculturalism revolves around the nation's diversity within in cultural or religious terms, from Ibadi, Sunnis, and Shiites to Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, and from Arabian culture and Persian to Eastern African and Asian cultures, mainly due to its location and golden age heritage. Hence the government has provided them with worship places with two Christian compounds and two large Hindu temples. Thus, Oman's commitment to religious plurality is well highlighted in the rights given to the different cultural groups.

Oman deals with its multiculturalism with an integration approach, not an assimilation one, it does not illuminate the original cultures but paves the way for them to coexist in one territorial definition of land. The national attraction that appeals to different people from different cultures is due to the leading role it achieved in cultural integration. This is reflected in Oman's success in promoting law and order and integral stability, due to the cultural harmony Oman practices on its people and which they then practice among each other and the state. Oman's efficient model of diversity in religion and culture is boasting the international reputation of Oman's harmonic and coexisting model. The nation is at peace with itself due to tolerance and multiculturalism coexistence of accepting similarities and embracing differences. Embracing multiculturalism is something embedded deeply into Omani history and society for thousands of years because Omani history particularly talking about the golden era the Omani society was nothing less than a social mosaic that is crowded with different sects, races, and lineages. Moving from understanding that differences and nothing but a manifested translation of the basic mind, Omanis welcomed differences. A core driver of the Omani multiculturalism coexistence is that one is not asked about background, religion, ethnicity, or ideology hence all are seen as human beings first and foremost. This treasure of culture transforms a soft and intangible power component in the hand of the Omani state in domestic and international affairs.

### 5.3 Tolerance

One of Oman's distinctive cultural traits is tolerance. All foreigners are welcome in the nation, unlike in some European nations. In addition to expatriates, it is a natural outcome of its heterogeneity and a requirement for her national peace due to her country's combination of people from various backgrounds. This tolerance weather reflects Oman's foreign policy as "mediation capability", "humble diplomacy" and a good negotiator. Thus, the projection of multiculturalism and community tolerance reflects the reciprocal relationship between the state and the people, particularly through its national and foreign policies, which translate the discourse of Oman's reputation for international peace.

The trajectory of tolerance is influenced and governed by the multiculturalism coexistence that embraces the uniqueness of the new cultural characteristics which influence the societal tenants with religious pluralism. Oman continues to ensure religious tolerance by providing worship places for the communal minorities which serves a higher societal integration. Protecting others reflects supporting fair rights for the social development of the nation carried upon tolerance terms. Thus, tolerance is an internal policy made of traditional activities that are practiced with no motivation of getting something in return, it's a natural national aspiration.

Oman's tolerance has been rooted since Islam entered, where tolerance has been an essential ingredient in the success of preserving the national identity and Omani society. Thus, one of the factors adding to the success of Oman's model of tolerance is the nature of the national society and its good knowledge of the Islamic law which focuses on the concepts of brotherhood and compassion among all humanity. Oman's model of toleration has benefited the nation at a different level across times and space, in history Oman's power reached with its commercial ties to China who were fascinated by Omani morals, in modern history Oman was and is able to play the role of a third-party negotiator in different conflicts withier to mediate, facilitate, and a conciliator due to its level of tolerance and peaceful international reputation.

Oman's internal model of tolerance and coexistence has been reflected in its international reputation, prestige, and efforts of backing peace and stability. Through Oman's history and its cultural tolerance, it has well played the role of peace propagator. Hence Oman's internal relations reflect its foreign policy, which is grounded around peace dialogues, respecting others, non-intervention, and keeping channels open to all, this has earned Oman international and regional respect. Where, when the civilized heritage is mirrored by tolerance and coexistence then becoming a respected third party of peace comes naturally.

With the social contract built around modern heritage, multiculturalism coexistence, interreligious dialogue, and tolerance Oman's internal fabric remained strong and well-constructed which is reflected in the internal relation and public policy then the foreign affairs which components are built on the same bases.

### 5.4 Omani Diaspora

Diasporas bridge the gap between the home country and the host nation, which is crucial in international relations. Diasporas can serve as a link between sending and receiving states, fostering both economic cooperation and the promotion of peace and security. In Asia and Eastern Africa, the Omani people first arrived 1300 years ago. During the Omani Golden Age, it peaked after a tremendous increase in intensity. A natural Omani diaspora developed in five distinct African nations following Oman's loss of territory and influence in the previous century. Although the statistics is not well known, there may be millions of Omanis in the Eastern Africa.

The Omani diaspora is now scattered across many East African countries, including Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. Tanzania has Omanis attracted to Zanzibar, Pemba and Dar es Salaam. Other countries have small settlements in various locations. Various communities communicate with each other through relationships within these discrete groups. There is no common diaspora organization at national or regional level. However, certain NGOs and civil society organizations exist in certain regions and

perform certain functions. (Yenigun, AlRahbi, 2021)

The link between the diaspora and the home country depends on economic capacity and the rules for the movement of diaspora members between the host country and the home country. Relations with host country and Omani diaspora are very good. The Omani diaspora are respected by the local population and enjoy a good reputation. Even today, the diaspora is already so well integrated into the region that they consider these countries their homeland, so the country can no longer be used as a host designation for the diaspora. In this regard, a certain level of integration between Omani Diaspora and local communities has been achieved. (Yenigun, AlRahbi, 2021) This level manifests itself in many ways, especially in interracial marriages.

As a neutral country, Oman has no intention of expanding its sphere of influence or interfering in the domestic politics of other countries. The Omani diaspora can therefore only be a positive means and a bridge between the economic, socio-cultural and international affairs of East Africa and Oman.

### **5.5 University Chairs and Cultural Centers**

The university chairs are arguably the most crucial tools for fostering soft power and public diplomacy in a host nation. There are Sultan Qaboos Chairs spread across the world, and they are anticipated to be instrumental in fostering closer ties between nations. In the world, there are 16 Sultan Qaboos Chairs. The majority of the chairs concentrate on Arabic studies, which any country that speaks Arabic can do, Islamic studies, and Oriental studies. It can be seen from the table that the majority of the Chairs are in Europe. It is a fact that among the Gulf states, Oman has the most chairs. Because they are locals, those Chairs ought to act as unpaid ambassadors to build bridges between Oman and the inhabitants of the host nation. Oman is only very weakly known by the public, according to a survey that was conducted in 63 countries (Yenigun, 2022), even in those where Sultan Qaboos Chairs were in existence. When compared to other chairs, like Jean Monnet Chairs, they should conduct at least

one international conference, teach semester courses, host a number of seminars, and collaborate with institutions in their home countries on a project (Jean Monnet Action, 2021). If not, the responsible individuals are replaced or the Chair is transferred to another university because there is a very thorough inspection system in place to make sure they are carrying out their mission.

The most significant tool for public diplomacy in the host nation may be the international cultural centers. Numerous studies have found that people have more faith in and trust in civil society organizations than they do in the media and their governments. Cultural centers stand out from the rest because, in addition to their seminars, training sessions, and publications, the majority of their events also involve music, food, and ethnic festivals. Nearly two decades ago, Oman decided to organize its public diplomacy in three major capital cities: Washington, London, and Paris. The Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center (SQCC) was established permanently in Washington in 2005 (Yenigun and AlMaani, 2022). Despite the absence of permanent cultural institutions, ad hoc festivals are held annually as public diplomacy tools in Paris and London.

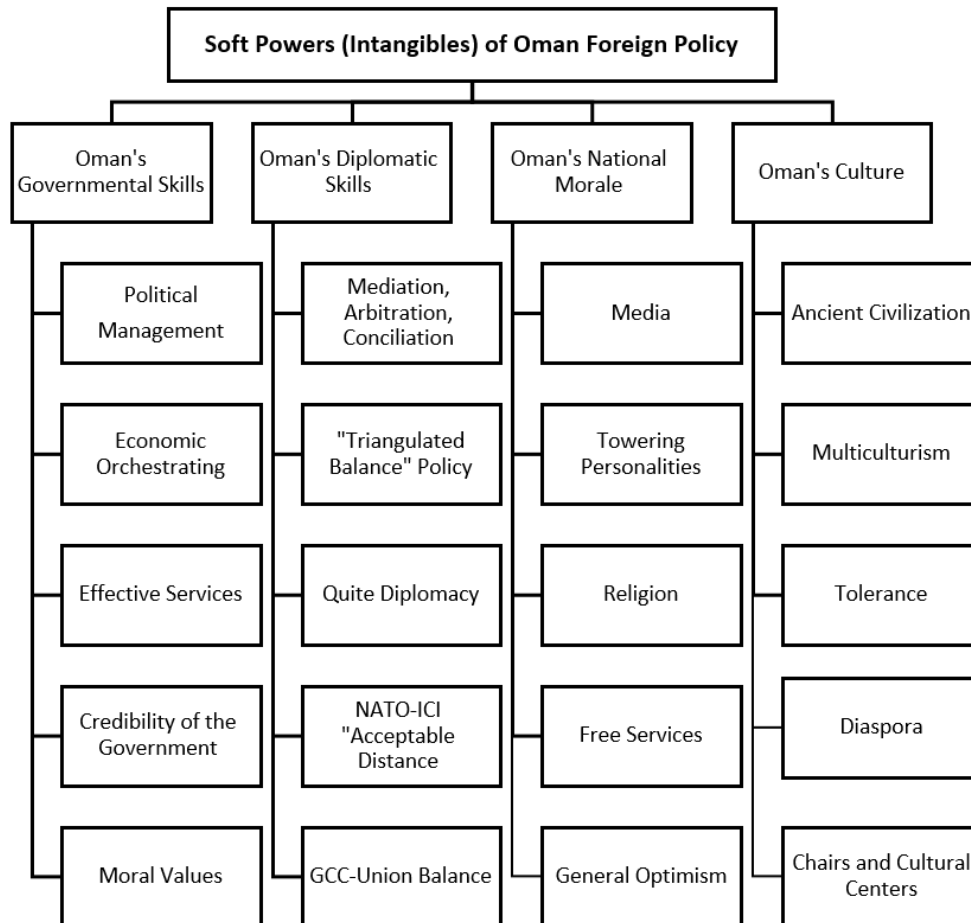
The soft power tools in the favor of home countries include cultural centers, chairs, scholarship recipients, international students, prizes, and language centers. On a national and international scale, Oman is in possession of all of those tools. Despite the fact that some of these soft power strategies had been in place for 40 years, it cannot be said that they had the desired impact in the host nations. SQCC in Washington is one of the two instruments that operates the best. Comparatively speaking to the other University Chairs, the SQCC performs at the highest level, despite the fact that it should intensify its international conferences at least once a year. The other university chairs from around the globe should, however, work together on joint projects, conferences, exhibitions, and publications, as well as coordinate with one another and the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Also, 16 University Chairs had no big impact on Omani soft power in the host nations. Those university chairs ought to be given to foreign SQU professors with ten years



of work experience who have published extensively about Oman and have performed civic duty in Oman. They ought to be examined and required to participate in yearly conferences,

publications, and exhibitions. If not, they ought to be replaced with another strong contender, such as the Jean Monnet Chairs, which are highly productive in Europe.

**Figure 2: Oman's Soft Powers in Sum**



## 6. Conclusion

Oman's soft power is significantly more effective than its hard power components, compared to itself. It also ranks among the highest in soft power compared to its neighbors in the region, rivaling Qatar in the Arabian Gulf. Compared to other neutral countries such as Austria, Malta and Switzerland, Oman is once again one of the most effective neutral countries.

The majority of the neutral or neutralized countries such as Norway, Austria, Ireland, and

Monaco live in peaceful regions unlike Oman, which is more necessary to work for peace than the others are. The proximity of conflicted or potentially chaotic areas in the Middle East is very close to Oman, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia, the Aden Sea, Syria, and so on. Among these antagonistic actors, Oman carries two heavy duties on its shoulders with a seesaw: being active positively and being neutral with equal distance to all, which could be summarized as “active neutrality”. As a small size power with limited hard power components, country scale, low population, economical size, and limited military

power, it is not easy to do that. Oman's soft powers helped it a lot to overcome and achieve the active neutrality target in the last decades. Therefore, Oman especially in the new millennium started to increase its soft powers, which could fit its neutral position in the international arena than its military and materialistic powers. Oman's governmental skills had already been started in the 1980s with good political management, economic orchestrating, moral values, and credibility of the government were going on. Oman's culture with its ancient civilization, multiculturalism, tolerance, and potential diaspora was already there also. In the last two decades, Oman's diplomatic skills and national morale improved and escalated in the region and the international arena. Using media very positively, the towering personalities of the two sultans, the natural interpretation of religion, and the general optimism of the people and the government helped very intensively to improve Oman's national morale. In addition to that, Oman increased its diplomatic strives and started to be seen on the international stage through its mediation and arbitration efforts, implemented triangulated balance diplomacy, pursued quiet and humble diplomacy techniques, and put an acceptable distance with the GCC and NATO.

Under Sultan Haitham's rule, the new Oman continues to maintain "active neutrality" policy and expands its soft power capabilities and capacities not only domestically but also especially internationally. Specifically, the other and potential soft power components such as establishing a worldwide news agency, using the Omani diaspora as a bridge, reactivating Sultan Qaboos Chairs and Cultural Centres on behalf of Omani foreign policy and will be fortified and continued to improve. Because Oman is aware of its soft power capabilities and the enormous benefit of soft power in the international arena.

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