

THE POLITICS OF FOREIGN AID IN QATAR'S  
FOREIGN POLICY: AN ANALYSIS

BY

FADHL ABDULLAH OMAR BASHIR

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human  
Sciences

International Islamic University Malaysia

MAY 2021

## ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a detailed analysis of the State of Qatar's foreign aid policy (QFAP), during the period from 1995 - 2017, to understand the practice of Muslim donors in general and that of the state of Qatar in particular. Its focus is primarily on development, implementation and evaluation of this policy. To date, there has been little in-depth study of Muslim donors' behaviours, despite the growing contribution of "Muslim aid" in the global aid regime, as academic scholars mainly focused on exploring the traditional donors' performance. Besides some other Muslim countries, particularly in the Middle East, Qatar has been involved in aid-giving especially when a new Amir ascended the throne in 1995. To comprehensively explore the research topic, an analytical framework was developed based on the broader literature of policy studies and aid documents including examples of other donors. The data were collected from face-to-face interviews and official documents and publications of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar. Additional sources included other local aid institutions and organisations, such as global aid reports from various sources such as the WB and OECD. This thesis explicitly examined the background of Qatar including the domestic and external factors and its foreign policy features as well as its foreign aid policy aspects such as evolution, institutions, legislations, motives and determinants. Subsequently, this study analysed the nature and distribution of Qatari aid and assessed the QFAP in terms of meeting its objectives and aligning with the global aid standards. This research found that the setting of QFAP is clearly influenced by the political system, socio-cultural and economic background of the country as well as its regional and global surroundings. These results make the QFAP consistent with the country's boarder ambitious foreign policy agenda which is based mainly on political and socio-cultural values with minor economic or elected interests. Besides, the findings show that Qatari aid, which is mainly given in the form of bilateral financial grants, is concentrated in Arab Muslim regions with relatively marginal amounts allocated to other regions. Qatari foreign aid has been prioritised for certain development and humanitarian sectors, especially with the increasing number of crises in neighbouring countries. The QFAP has been successful in achieving various objectives related to the country's political and humanitarian agendas but failed to fully adhere to global aid frameworks and attain the policy alignment level of its peers. As this thesis recommends potential areas for more exploration such as leadership role in policy and the change in aid behaviour in the region, it calls on QFAP to be technically improved with commendable global measures and practices such as greater transparency and better planning.

## ملخص البحث

تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً مفصلاً لسياسات المساعدات الخارجية لدولة قطر خلال الفترة 1995-2017، سعياً لفهم سلوك المساعدات لدى الدول المسلمة المانحة، وتركزت هذه الدراسة على تطور هذه السياسات وتنفيذها وتقييمها، حيث أنه حتى الآن، لم تتوفر سوى القليل من الدراسات التحليلية المتعلقة بسلوك الدول المانحة المسلمة برغم المساهمة المتزايدة لـ "المساعدات الإسلامية" في نظام المساعدات الخارجية الدولي، فقد ركز الأكاديميون والباحثون بشكل رئيسي على دراسة أداء المانحين التقليديين. فإلى جانب بعض الدول الإسلامية الأخرى، خاصة في الشرق الأوسط، تساهم دولة قطر في تقديم المساعدات الخارجية خاصة منذ العام 1995م. ولغرض دراسة هذا الموضوع بشكل شامل، تم وضع إطار تحليلي بالاعتماد على دراسات السياسات ووثائق المساعدات الخارجية، بما في ذلك الإخذ بالاعتبار أمثلة لدول مانحة أخرى، وقد تم جمع البيانات عن طريق المقابلات الشخصية والوثائق الرسمية والمنشورات الصادرة عن وزارة الخارجية في قطر، وكذلك من المؤسسات والمنظمات المحلية ذات العلاقة، بالإضافة إلى تقارير المساعدات الدولية من مصادر مختلفة مثل البنك الدولي ومنظمة التعاون الاقتصادي والتنمية. وعليه فقد بدأت هذه الأطروحة بتناول خلفية دولة قطر بما في ذلك العوامل الداخلية والخارجية وسمات سياستها الخارجية، والتركيز على جوانب سياسة المساعدات مثل التطور والمؤسسات والتشريعات والدوافع والمحددات وما إليها، كما قامت هذه الدراسة بتحليل طبيعة المساعدات الخارجية لدولة قطر وتوزيعها على مستوع العالم، وكذلك تقييم أداء هذه السياسات من حيث تحقيق أهدافها وتطابقها مع المعايير الدولية للمساعدات الخارجية. وقد أظهرت هذه الدراسة تأثير سياسات المساعدات الخارجية لدولة قطر بشكل واضح بالنظام السياسي والخلفية الاجتماعية والثقافية والاقتصادية لدولة قطر وكذلك محيطها الإقليمي والدولي، مما يجعل هذه السياسات متسقة تماماً مع الأجندة والسياسة الخارجية الطموحة للدولة، التي تقوم على قيم سياسية واجتماعية وثقافية وتحقيق المصالح، كما أن النتائج التي توصل إليها البحث تظهر أن المساعدات القطرية، التي تقدم أساساً في شكل منح مالية ثنائية، تتركز في العالمين العربي والإسلامي مع تخصيص مبالغ هامشية لمناطق أخرى، وقد أعطيت الأولوية للمساعدات الخارجية القطرية لبعض القطاعات الإنمائية والإنسانية، لا سيما مع تزايد الأزمات في البلدان والاقاليم المجاورة، كما توصلت الدراسة إلى نجاح سياسات المساعدات لدولة قطر في تحقيق الأهداف المتعلقة بالأجندة السياسية والإنسانية للبلاد، لكنها فشلت بالالتزام الكامل بأطر المساعدات العالمية والوصول إلى مستوى أقرانها. وكما أن هذه الأطروحة تقترح عدة مواضيع لمزيد من البحث مثل دور القيادة، والتغير في سلوك المساعدات في المنطقة، فإنها توصي قطر بوضع المزيد من الإجراءات التقنية التي تمثل الاطر والممارسات العالمية الجيدة مثل تحسين الشفافية والتخطيط.

## APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis of Student's Name has been approved by the following:

---

El-Fatih A. Abdelsalam  
Supervisor

---

Lee Pei May  
Co-Supervisor

---

Md. Moniruzzaman  
Internal Examiner

---

Fahimul Quadir  
External Examiner

---

Abubakar Siddique Mohammed  
External Examiner

---

Akram M Z M Khedher  
Chairman

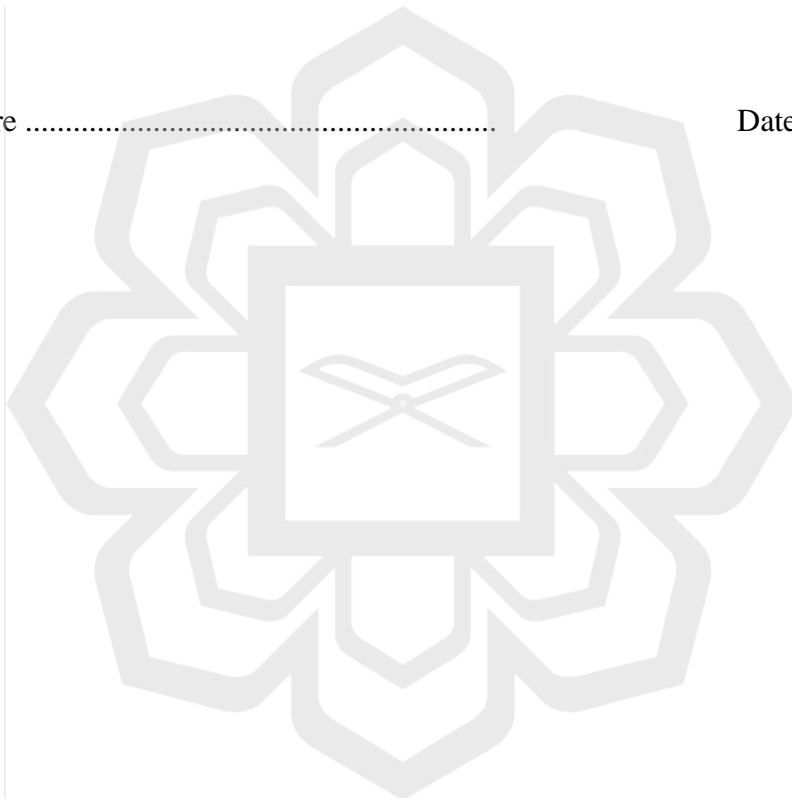
## DECLARATION

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*This Research is dedicated to*

*Our Ummah to which we belong*

*and*

*in whose revival we keep faith!*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise and gratitude to Allah (SWT), whose mercy and countless blessings on me have no bounds. Peace and blessings on His noble messenger, Muhammad (SAW). This academic journey would not have been achieved without the support and advice of a host of wonderful people who journeyed with me. Now, with the completion of this thesis, which marks the end of what has been a challenging but rewarding experience, it is my pleasure to gratefully acknowledge the precious contributions, in ways big and small, of these people, to whom I am much indebted.

First, I am profoundly grateful to my Supervisor, Professor Dr. El Fatih Abdelsalam, for his valuable advice, support, positivity, encouragement and insightful comments. Thanks are extended to my previous supervisor, Professor Dr. Wahabuddin Ra'ees and co-supervisor, Assistant Professor, Dr. Lee Pei May. I am grateful to Associate Professor, Dr. Md. Muniruzzaman for his support and technical insights throughout my research, and to Associate Professor, Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain for his inspiration and suggestions. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Department of Political Science, IIUM, to Dr. Tunku Mohar Tunku Mohd. Mokhtar, for his support in constantly communicating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Qatar, and to Dr. Rabi'Ah Aminudin, Head of Department, for her help and support in completing this study.

I am very grateful for the enormous support I received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar in facilitating my day-to-day research events during my field research. Special thanks are due to HE Tariq Ali Al Ansari, the Head of International Cooperation Department in MOFA Qatar, and HE Eissa Mohamed Al Mannae, the Qatari Ambassador to Malaysia for arranging my field research. I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to all Ambassadors and staff in MOFA Qatar as well as in other Qatari organisations and aid agencies for allowing me to conduct this research with their much-appreciated assistance.

Lastly, but most importantly, my wonderful family, whom I love and will always love; in particular, from the bottom of my heart, the biggest thank you possible to a very special and wonderful woman who provided all support and made tremendous efforts for me to successfully complete this journey. To all my many friends, please know that you will never be forgotten.

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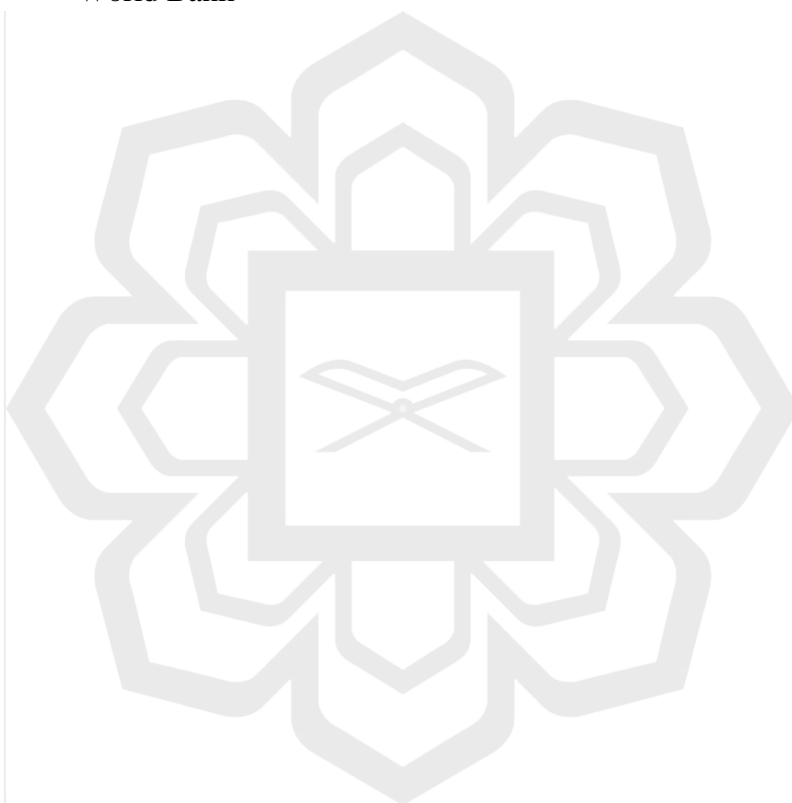
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AAA</b>	Accra Agenda for Action
<b>ADFD</b>	Abu Dhabi Fund for Development
<b>AFESD</b>	Arab fund for Economic and Social Development
<b>AGFUND</b>	Arab Gulf Programme for Development
<b>AL</b>	Arab League
<b>AMF</b>	Arab Monetary Fund
<b>ASEAN</b>	The Association of South East Asian Nations
<b>ATI</b>	Aid transparency Index
<b>BADEA</b>	The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
<b>BOD</b>	Busan Outcome Document
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
<b>CDI</b>	Commitment to Development Index
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>D8</b>	Organisation of the Developing 8
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DCF</b>	Development Cooperation Forum
<b>DCR</b>	Development Cooperation Report
<b>DI</b>	Diplomatic Institute (MOFA Institution)
<b>DICID</b>	Doha International Centre on Internait Dialogue
<b>EAA</b>	Education Above All
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FBO</b>	Faith-Based Organisations
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
<b>FTS</b>	Financial Tracking Service
<b>GCC</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>GCO</b>	Government Communication Office
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GHA</b>	Global Humanitarian Assistance
<b>GNI</b>	Gross National Income
<b>GPEDC</b>	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>IATI</b>	International Aid Transparency Initiative
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organisation
<b>ICESCO</b>	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>ICIC</b>	Islamic Committee of the International Crescent.
<b>ICNPL</b>	International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law
<b>IDB</b>	Islamic Development Bank
<b>IDPs</b>	Internal displaced People
<b>IFRCRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian law
<b>IUM</b>	International Islamic University Malaysia

<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INSANIA</b>	OIC Islamic Cooperation Humanitarian Funds
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISF</b>	Islamic Solidarity Fund
<b>ITUC</b>	International Trade Union Confederation
<b>IUMS</b>	International Union for Muslim Scholars
<b>KFAED</b>	Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>LLF</b>	Lives and Livelihoods Fund
<b>LNG</b>	Liquified Natural Gas
<b>MADLSA</b>	Ministry of Administration Development, Labour, and Social Affairs
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MDPS</b>	Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics
<b>MOF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MOFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MOUs</b>	Memorandums of Understanding
<b>MWL</b>	Muslim World League
<b>NDS</b>	National Development Strategy
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OFID</b>	OPEC Fund for International Development
<b>OIC</b>	Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation
<b>OPEC</b>	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>PEIC</b>	Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict
<b>PD</b>	Paris Declaration
<b>QACA</b>	Qatar Authority for Charitable Activities
<b>QAR</b>	Qatar's Aid Reports
<b>QC</b>	Qatar Charity
<b>QF</b>	Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development
<b>QFAP</b>	Qatar's Foreign Aid Policy
<b>QFC</b>	Qatar Financial Centre
<b>QFD</b>	Qatar Development Fund
<b>QFP</b>	Qatar's Foreign Policy
<b>QHR</b>	Qatar's Humanitarian Report
<b>QIA</b>	Qatar Investment Authority
<b>QNV</b>	Qatar National Vision 2030
<b>QRC</b>	Qatar Red Crescent
<b>RACA</b>	Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities
<b>RAF</b>	Al-Thani Humanitarian Fund
<b>ROTA</b>	Reach Out to Asia
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEC</b>	Sheikh Eid Charity
<b>SFD</b>	Saudi Fund for Development

<b>SIC</b>	Strategy for International Cooperation
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nation Children’s Fund
<b>UNOCT</b>	UN Office of Counter-Terrorism
<b>UNRWA</b>	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>WB</b>	World Bank



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Foreign aid (FA), which is also referred to as “Official Development Assistance” (ODA), has been gaining much attention in the field of International Relations (IR) and development studies and is considered a significant foreign policy tool for donor states to achieve certain national interests and foreign policy goals. FA principally is a product of the post-World War II era. Its origin goes back to the Marshall Project which contributed to the reconstruction and rebuilding of the ruined European economies after the war through an influx of financial capital. Although the rationale for aid giving was perceived primarily as a way to achieve development and growth in those newly-independent poor countries.<sup>1</sup>

Foreign aid, along with its goals and policies, has been at the heart of political and academic debates. Academicians and politicians emphasise the officially stated aims of aid from individual rich countries and multilateral organisations, and also place more emphasis on the motivations behind aid initiatives (Riddell, 2007). These motives underline the difference in the amounts of aid allocated for certain countries compared to others. The different aid frameworks applied by donors cannot be denied but it is generally accepted that these donors are guided by some underlying common factors and goals in respect of aid. Categorising recipient countries in aid giving has been also

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<sup>1</sup> This view has been presented in the literature by many scholars such as Browne (1990); Alessia and Dollar (2000); and many others besides the international organisations reports such as the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN) and international NGOs.

a common behaviour of many donors especially when considering poverty indicators as well as political and economic alliances.

Furthermore, the complexity of foreign aid policies along with foreign aid itself especially with the various actors and stakeholders has made foreign aid a contestable and controversial matter at social, political and academic levels. Since the emergence of institutionalised aid in the post WW II era, some questions have been asked about it, but no consistent responses have been available (Arnold, 1985). These questions are: “Why do the rich developed countries provide aid to the poor and undeveloped countries?” “How do they deliver it?” There have been similar various questions that focused on the same domain (Van Der Veen, 2011). Besides, other questions can be furtherly added, such as; “Do all donors follow the same pattern of aid giving?” and “How do cultural and social backgrounds contribute in shaping aid policies?”

In the past five decades, certain changes related to the usual setting of the global aid system have occurred, including the rise of new aid donors like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the emergence of the new aid concepts like South-South Cooperation framework. This has effectively changed the usual setting of aid giving which used to be a North-South relationship. Features of this change have been more visible in the inter-relations of the Muslim World<sup>2</sup>. Growing volume of aid has been disbursed by certain Muslim donors to other Muslim countries and other parts of the world through different frameworks and policies. These policies have made certain regions and countries more favoured in terms of the quantity and quality of aid

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<sup>2</sup> Muslim World or Islamic World commonly refers to “the unified Islamic community (Ummah, consisting of all those who adhere to the religion of Islam, or to societies where Islam is practised. In a modern geopolitical sense; these terms refer to countries where Islam is widespread (Muslim majority countries) and as well as minorities in other countries.”

received from these donors indicating certain different interests and values from the global aid setting.

The big amount of aid that is being disbursed within the Muslim World as well as its special attributes make “Muslim Aid” a significant research area. Besides that, there is a perceptible negligence about this aid in the existing literature on the global aid system and international development. As most of the literature focuses on the Western aid, few studies go for this aid and its related attributes. This study, therefore, will definitely be useful for understanding foreign aid trends in the Muslim World and will facilitate the work of development and political groups in seeking up future insights into this important part of the world and its unique characteristics and features.

Traditionally, donor aid policies have been very effective in determining and regulating foreign aid flows to recipient countries. Despite the fact that the Muslim World shares many common values that supposedly make aid disbursement smoother, aid policies still play a decisive role in its aid giving. The political and economic alliances between Muslim Countries as well as the cultural and social backgrounds have played a part in setting up such policies. As an implication of these policies, Muslim donors have developed certain frameworks and criteria for regulating their aid disbursement and operations. This research aims to explore and explain the policies, and underpinned frameworks, of Muslim donors that are determining and regulating their aid allocation and aid activities in the other parts of the world.

Qatar, as a typical Muslim foreign aid donor, is the case study that will be examined in this research throughout the period 1995 - 2017. Although it is a small country in terms of geographical area and population size, Qatar is wealthy and advanced economically, technologically and politically. Qatar has generously provided aid to economically poor nations, politically unstable states and conflict and disaster

regions and areas<sup>3</sup>. Its increasing contribution in the international aid system and growing participation in humanitarian and development aid activities in various countries is vibrant manifestation of stimulating aid policy that is underpinning pragmatic engagement in the international politics and global partnership for development.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Certain Muslim countries, particularly in the Middle East, are increasingly contributing to the international aid system through various development programmes and humanitarian and relief efforts. In relative and absolute figures, Gulf Arab states, in particular, and Turkey are leading this phenomenon. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) indicators, United Nations (UN) figures and World Bank (WB) reports are showing a gradual rising trend in foreign aid disbursement by Muslim donors through bilateral (state to state) and multi-lateral (regional and international organisations) arrangements. Besides that, and due to the nature of State and political system of these donors, aid policies and practices are distinct especially in relation to decision-making, role of governing regimes, and the interdependence between the state and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charities. Such distinctiveness makes the foreign aid policies related to Muslim donors more considerable and researchable.

Although, Muslim aid is still framed with global aid regime setting and implies various similarities, especially in the political outset, its nature and operative mechanisms make it even distinctive in the international aid system. Muslim countries

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<sup>3</sup> Qatar's involvement in the international aid regime and in the global relief efforts has been consistently mentioned in many international reports such as OECD, DAC, WB and GHA humanitarian besides official reports from Qatari governments institutions.

favourability, secret aid disbursement, allocation of direct political aid “aid allocated to support certain regimes or governments” and terrorism allegations are some of these unique associated attributes. Also, faith-based aid, with its exceptional concepts and regulation, forms a substantial part of this aid affecting its funding and disbursements approaches. This distinctiveness implies factors and issues that are affecting Muslim donors’ policy such as motives, values and determinants.

With such exceptionality, there is an obvious shortage in the existing studies on the foreign aid policy of Muslim donors as well as scarcity of in-depth analysis for the individual Muslim donors. This study investigates the foreign aid policy of the state of Qatar as a significant Muslim donor, providing insights into the nature, development and implementation of this policy. Also, this study provides an outlook and assessment for the country’s aid policy affiliation with the global aid regime through bringing the issues of global partnership for development, aid effectiveness and other related aspects.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This research provides answers to the following questions:

- 1) Why does the state of Qatar give aid? What is the foreign aid policy of the State of Qatar? What are the motives for this policy?
- 2) How has Qatar’s foreign aid policy (QFAP) been developed and integrated into the country’s foreign policy?
- 3) How is Qatar’s aid policy implemented and how successful is it?

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the motives and determinants of the foreign aid policy of the state of Qatar.
2. To discuss the development, attributes and decision-making processes in the foreign aid policy of the state of Qatar.
3. To evaluate the implementation of the State of Qatar's foreign aid policies and how successful they are in achieving the intended goals.

## **1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study focuses on Qatari foreign aid Policy (QFAP), and its related aspects, considering all features of Qatari foreign aid allocations and disbursements. In attempting to trace the line of policy background, orientation, formulation and implementation, several components have been considered including the State political system, the Elite, the country's social and economic background and the regional and global factors. However, in conducting this research, the decision was taken to focus on the very related aspects influencing QFAP including the timeframe set for this research which is from 1995 till 2017<sup>4</sup>. Two mean significant limitations are also noted for this study. Firstly, the emphasis here is on the Qatari policymaking and implementation process with much less attention paid to the recipient countries. Also, when QFAP is assessed in terms of aid effectiveness, it is attentive only to alignment with global aid policy frameworks not the Qatari aid impact. Secondly, a limitation related to the transcription. As all the interviews were conducted in Arabic and translated to English,

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the long process of getting the field research for this study approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar (MOFA) in Qatar, around two years, the year of the field research "2018" is included in certain aspects and examples.

some terms and expressions were difficult to exactly get their meaning despite the earnest endeavour of the researcher.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Foreign aid policy has been examined by many institutions and think-tanks, while researchers, politicians and policy analysts have contributed widely in elaborating various dimensions of aid policy, especially for the Western traditional donors. Nevertheless, aid and aid policies of Muslim donors are still understudied; less literature is found addressing “Muslim Aid” role. Only few studies that have dealt with the individual cases of Muslim donors, which is not matching the increasing size of this aid.

This study, therefore, makes a significant contribution. First, it sets the scene for a dynamic and growing phenomenon in the Muslim World and in the global aid regime. Second, it endeavours to promote a theory that links foreign aid policy and the political context in the Muslim world, through International Relations (IR) approaches and theories. It is hoped that the research presented here contributes to an understanding of the causes and orientation of Muslim donors’ aid policy. Its principal merit is in providing a detailed exposition of the aid policy-making process and the implementation for a Muslim donor.

This study maintains that Muslim donors’ aid policy have certain differences and frameworks from the global outlook. Setting this theory begins with the assessment of foreign aid policy within the Muslim donors’ foreign policy portfolio. Then, presenting this study’s analysis on how national policies are potentially shaped and implemented and how they are aligned with global recognized aid standards and frameworks “western donors”. The differences imbedded in Muslim donors’ aid policy and its associated frameworks from the global setting are essentially due to the role of the non-