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CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TAJIK-GCC RELATIONS FOR
FOREIGN POLICY AND TRADE FROM TAJIK PERSPECTIVE

BY

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ABSTRACT

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Central Asian states faced several challenges concerning their political autonomy in a globalized economic system. Foreign policy formation was top priority for acquiring international recognition. Leadership in Tajikistan focused political efforts on recruiting Arab Muslims in Afghanistan as allies based on religious and cultural ties. Relations with the neighboring countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) currently depend on foreign policy for national interests particularly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Tajikistan implemented an “open door” policy that led the relatively new nation to gain international recognition and strengthen relationships with GCC countries. Tajikistan and GCC countries currently work in collaboration to develop a “pan-Islamic” pattern of international relations. However, in recognizing its unique form of independence, political leaders in Tajikistan engage in risky political behaviors that effectively damage national reputation. The results of this study indicate that while Tajikistan has the potential to play a critical role for economic development in Central Asia, its geography may require placing restrictions on imports for agricultural goods. Moreover, labor migration to GCC countries like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar suggest that future studies should evaluate the effects of FDI and remittance flows from host to home country in shaping foreign policy directions. The political and economic future of Tajikistan and GCC countries depends on the leveraging of consumer markets while striking an important balance in foreign policy developments.

Keywords: small state behavior, Tajikistan, GCC countries, open-door policies

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DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to my mother for her sleepless nights,
care and enormous contribution for my education during the
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Introduction

The modern history of Tajikistan gaining political autonomy after the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 coincides with internal and external historical transformations. Since independence, the Central Asian nation continues to face severe economic and social problems resembling pre-independence conditions. As Tajikistan started to emerge as a new entry in global markets, a bloody civil war from 1992 to 1997 damaged its reputation as a major economic player (Jonson, 2006). Post-Civil War political efforts in the Tajik government refer to the development of “open door” policies intent on working on multiple levels with countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Open door policies granted opportunities for Tajikistan to play an active role in combating international crimes, terrorism, and drug trafficking¹. Moreover, open door policies addressed significant environmental and demographic challenges specific to Tajikistan. Because of their relationship with GCC countries, Tajikistan aimed to develop a “pan-Islamic” pattern to include practicing Muslims in neighboring Afghanistan.

Tajikistan occupies a unique geopolitical position in Central Asia based on the Turkic origin of many neighboring countries. When the Soviet Union held power in that region, native Tajiks worked primarily in Arab embassies and consulates established by the Foreign Services Ministry (Zarifi, 2009a, b). As early as 1974,

¹ Personal interview: Barotzoda Faizullo, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

² Personal interview: Barotzoda Faizullo, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

³ Personal interview: Barotzoda Faizullo, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

Soviet leadership sent a few Tajik intellectuals to Saudi Arabia as part of a plan to establish bilateral trade agreements (Melkumyan, 2005). Presently, similar agreements between Russia and Qatar have a demonstrative effect on how Tajikistan relates with GCC countries and Afghanistan (Global Intelligence Files, 2013). Interestingly, the Russian ambassador for Qatar is of Tajik origin (Radio Ozodi, 2013). From the establishment of bilateral trade agreements between these nations, the Gulf States felt obliged to channel large amounts of financial support. This financial aid varied from being in-kind goods to the humanitarian and even for the revival of religious institutions².

Of special importance in Tajik-GCC relations is how each nation constructs foreign policy directives according to geographical location, regional economy, and energy reserves. As noted in the literature review, a significant research gap on Tajik-GCC relations suggests the lack of international recognition acquired by Tajikistan as having an influential role in global trade relations. Despite this gap, this study highlights bilateral trade relations between two sets of countries. From analyzing the relationships between (1) Kazakhstan and GCC countries and (2) between Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia, economic and historical interactions provide some insights as to how Tajikistan and GCC countries can develop stronger economic trade agreements.

² Personal interview: Barotzoda Faizullo, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

Significance of the Study

To date, this study is the first to address Tajik-GCC relations in the post-Soviet era. The study has scientific and practical significance for outlining possible developments in foreign policy in Tajikistan and GCC countries. Because Tajikistan is a “small” state, foreign policy efforts require the establishment of a discussion platform that encourages geopolitical scholars to recognize the drivers and barriers for developing effective initiatives. Of practical significance is how policy drivers rely on decision-making process affecting how leadership in Tajikistan and GCC countries worked towards establishing mutually cooperative relationships for promoting national interests.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Since there has been no prior studies recognizing the effects of foreign policy on Tajik-GCC relations, the main research question is, What is the nature of the relationship between Tajikistan and GCC countries? In answering this research question, this thesis first will seek an answer to the following sub-questions:

- How historical and cultural issues embodied the Tajik-GCC relation?
- What are the driven factors in the Tajik foreign policy that determine this relationship?
- How did the relationship develop and what are the obstacles?

With that said, the study analyzes the historical and cultural issues embedded in Tajik-GCC relations to consider which foreign policy efforts will have the most

positive effects particularly for Tajikistan. This study also assesses the advantages of open door policies between Tajikistan and GCC countries. From the research question, the research hypothesis assumes that, from a Tajik perspective, foreign policy efforts in Tajikistan have historical and cultural patterns of political behavior as underscored by early post-Soviet era political ideology.

Research Methodology

This study uses an exploratory research design. Exploratory studies have their place in academic research when gaps in the scholarly literature provide glaring evidence of an imperative to conduct future studies. As a primarily qualitative research method, exploratory studies aim to serve three core purposes of fulfilling intellectual curiosity, testing the feasibility of previously supported hypotheses, and suggesting methodological approaches to use in future studies (Stebbins, 2001). Drawing from Jonson (1998), exploratory research involved developing a case study from in-depth interviews with participants of Tajik origin to test the previous hypothesis that foreign policy behaviors when establishing bilateral agreements with Western countries affect similar behaviors with GCC countries. To develop a case analysis, this study drew from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included interviews with government representatives with current or former involvement in Tajik-GCC relations, academics, private business representatives, as well as news content analysis. Secondary sources referred to published academic studies from scholars, governmental archives, documents, and correspondence.

Published academic studies had authorship mostly by scholars in Russia, Central Asia, and GCC countries.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One reviews the published scholarly literature on the historical developments of foreign policy in Tajikistan. Based on its national history, foreign policy efforts in Tajikistan suggest beginning steps of bridging a geopolitical gap between itself and GCC countries. However, some contradictions between various political efforts point to how Tajikistan remains in its early stages of independent statehood. Chapter Two provides a theoretical framework for analyzing foreign policy behaviors in Tajikistan. By applying the theory of “small state behavior,” this chapter argues that the main reason for divergence in foreign policy efforts between Tajikistan and neighboring states is because of its status as a relatively new entrant in global markets. Chapter Three highlights Tajik-GCC relations in the post-Soviet era by discussing the advantages and barriers to implementing effective bilateral trade agreements. The final chapter presents findings and discusses the limitations of conducting this study.

Chapter One: Historical Overview and Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a critical assessment of the available literature on Tajik-GCC relations. The national history of Tajikistan, a history of Tajik foreign policy, and a history of Tajik-GCC relations indicate three research strains important for this study. As noted, a significant research gap on foreign policy behavior in Tajik-GCC relations suggests an imperative for scholars to conduct future studies. Most of the research literature focuses on countries in Central Asia while only a small portion draw special attention to Tajikistan. Unfortunately, the research literature on Tajikistan describes the nation as having a war-torn history. Moreover, the historical research on Tajikistan serves to promote distinctly Western political and economic interests. Despite the lack of widely available scholarly research, this review of the literature highlights the development of Tajik-GCC relations as linked with the success of surrounding countries in Central Asia. The success of their relationships with GCC countries thus provides a model from which Tajik political leaders may draw inspiration when constructing foreign policy.

Historical Overview

Tajik nation-building shares a common history with imperialist philosophies of previous empires in Central Asia (Fuller, 1998). For example, the Sasanid Empire,

ruled Iran before Arabs engaged in a takeover (Rahmonov, 2001). Native Tajiks comprise a national group of Iranian descendants in a Turkic-speaking environment of Central Asia traceable to the first century BCE (Shozimov, 2004). Prior to receiving the name Tajikistan, the geographical region of Transoxania and Mawarannahr also had a uniquely Greek influence.

Because Tajikistan developed its cultural identity from Arab and Greek influences, this area of Central Asia was an international trade hub bridging the gap between Eastern and Western hemispheres. Despite lasting almost 400 years, the Sasanid Empire collapsed under Arab forces takeover by commanding Islamic religious authority. Native Persians living in this Central Asian region aided in the interaction of Arabs with native Tajiks, though neighboring Turkic tribes also brought on the Sasanid collapse (Barthold, 1977). However, after the mid-nineteenth century, Tajik cultural identity first drew influence from Russia.

Arab Conquest

After the collapse of the Sasanid Empire, Arabs of the seventh and eighth centuries CE aimed to develop a nation founded on Islamic principles. Iranians who migrated to Central Asia, now known as Mawarannahr (Gafurov, 1949), destroyed the pre-Islamic literature and culture to foster national interests. International trade occurred between military stations along caravan roads. At the same time, Arabs implemented their language and alphabet in religious, scientific, and government

documents. However, during the 1930s and 1940s, Arabic script changed before changing once more to the Cyrillic characters of the written Russian language. Very broadly, the history of Arab conquest suggests that the Tajik language draws half of its influence from spoken and written versions of Arabia.

The Samanids

After the Sasanid Empire collapsed, the subjugation of Mawarannahr to Muslim rule led to dangerous internal and external political conflict. Most of the political conflict stemmed from socioeconomic differences between Tajik aristocrats well-accustomed to local conditions and the remaining population (Barthold, 1977). Arab expansion into Central Asia resulted in continued struggles over how to eliminate political turmoil. Eventually, Persians took control over this part of Central Asia for the sake of gaining wide cultural, scientific, and religious followers (Bosworth, 1996). Relations with Middle East countries prior to the formation of GCC states and North African countries—Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco—helped shape such a major influence³.

The Samanid Empire lasted for nearly 120 years. As a result, Persians held a special influence over the use of Islam to form a unique geopolitical cultural identity in this Central Asian region. Of scholarly interest, the Samanid Empire produced a wide range of renowned scholars while the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara received

³ Personal interview: Barotzoda Faizullo, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

recognition as religious centers rivaling the status obtained by cities like Baghdad (Tor, 2009). However, at the close of the tenth century CE, this region became more vulnerable to Turks approaching from the North. As noted in the next section, the Turkic invasion suggested a historical starting point of Tajik separation from the wider Muslim world.

Turkic Invasion

In 999 CE, the Persian state of what is now currently known as Tajikistan fell to the Qarakhanid Turks who followed the historical patterns of conquerors. For five centuries, different groups of Turkic origin—Seljuk, Mongols, and Uzbeks—attacked, settled, and intermarried with native Tajiks. In effect, the Turkic invasion introduced new linguistic, cultural, and demographic changes in the region. Interestingly, the Turkic invasion did not suppress Persian language and culture. However, interactions between Turks and Persians remained extremely limited.

During the sixteenth century CE, economic and cultural development in this part of Central Asia decreased sharply (Soucek, 2000). Europeans introduced maritime routes bypassing landlocked Central Asian countries while sectarian issues between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims isolated Central Asia from Turkey and the Middle East. Iran, in particular, blocked direct communications between merchants, pilgrims, and scholars (Soucek, 2000). Following into the Russian invasion of the nineteenth century, expansions of imperialist philosophy took hold over Central Asia.

Russian Domination

As Russian troops overtook control of the Emirate of Bukhara, the geopolitical agenda at hand involved placing native Tajiks in such a position that they could not do anything but sign disadvantageous trade agreements (Schuyler, 2001). Religious clergy in the city of Bukhara then declared a jihad against Russia over which they had no legitimate political power. Russia demanded that Muslim leaders recognize the necessity of territorial conquests, the importance of opening doors for economic trade, and compensate military troops. Unfortunately, religious leaders in Bukhara could not afford to pay the Russian government, which resulted in formation of geopolitical boundaries between Russia and Central Asia.

In 1920, three years after the Bolshevik Revolution, Russian soldiers in Central Asia formed the new, albeit short-lived, People's Soviet Republic of Bukhara (PSRB; Khotamov, 1997). From the formation of PSRB, the Central Asian region consisted of multiple republics formed on the basis of national identity formation. Tajikistan was thus able to declare its own national identity as the Soviet Union engaged in a rapid modernization process to provide long-term economic incentives. Russia invested in controlling the Tajik water supply by constructing hydro-energy stations. At the same time, Russia had to fight against religious backlash, even though Soviet Russia worked towards limited interactions with Central Asian Muslims, including native Tajiks, Afghans, and Iranians (Khotamov, 1997). From this point onward, international relations in Central Asia remained under strict control from Russia.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, dire economic consequences followed for Tajikistan and many neighboring Central Asian countries. Such economic consequences fomented a post-Soviet civil conflict in this region that lasted until 1997. The conflict resulted in the former Soviet Union placing draconian economic sanctions on Tajikistan such that the nation was incredibly poor during its first few years of political independence. Foreign policy negotiations between Tajikistan and Russia demonstrated that the newly independent nation remained dependent on its former protector. Because of its geographical position along ancient trade routes between China and Western countries, and as Tajikistan has a largely Muslim religious influence, national and cultural identity formation suggests pro-Russian and pan-Islamic orientations⁴. Whereas a pro-Russian pattern entails independence as useful for developing effective foreign policy decisions, a pro-Islam pattern implies significant difficulties for what lies in the future. Regarding Tajik-GCC relations, an explanation of foreign policy behaviors exclusively in Tajikistan provides some insights into how scholars and politicians may reconcile ideological differences.

Literature on Tajikistan

Describing the history of Tajikistan as turbulent and incomplete is an understatement. Almost all nations in Central Asia have a history marked by the

⁴ Personal Interview: Loiqnazar Imomi, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

“crudeness of their geography” that makes for extremely difficult living conditions (Comas et al., 1998, p. 1825). According to this logic, nations in Central Asia remains overlooked and understudied. As defined by Soviet scholars, nations of Central Asia include Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, part of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan are, important for this study. However, many Western scholars include Mongolia, Tibet, and China's Xinjiang Province as belonging to Central Asia (Comas et al., 1998). While having few genetic similarities to populations in Eastern Asia, scientific research argues for genetic diversity between population groups of Central Asia as corresponding to the limits on geographic mobility (Comas et al., 1998). At the same time, Central Asian populations share only 17 genetic sequences with European populations.

Regardless of the issues surrounding genetic similarities and difference of Central Asian populations, Tajikistan is a landlocked country in this region that borders China to its east, Kyrgyzstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the northwest, and Afghanistan to the south (Boonstra&Shapovalova, 2012; Nourzhanov&Bleuer, 2013). Because of its location in largely mountainous terrain, Tajikistan has no strong connections with surrounding nations. The border between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan largely remains closed because of tense relations since the early 1990s (Boonstra&Shapovalova, 2012). Relations with Afghanistan imply major concerns by the European Union (EU) the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) about national security as cause of clandestine networks of drug cartels along the border with Tajikistan.

The national history of Tajikistan follows a path of adapting to modern civilization brought on by military conquest. Since Alexander the Great, Tajikistan was under military rule until the Soviet Revolution in 1917 (Nourzhanov&Bleuer, 2013). Under Soviet communism, Tajikistan adapted to an institution controlled by the instrumentalist goals associated with efficiency in regulating competition for economic and material resources amongst political elites. Soviet rule of Tajikistan prevented legitimation crises by providing stability through consensus from elites (Nourzhanov&Bleuer, 2013). Tajikistan underwent a period of state consolidation from 1930s to 1980s in which state structures could not legally influence local culture. Despite efforts to shift traditional patterns of social organization, religious beliefs, and political loyalties, Tajikistan sustained a centralized system of local networks that allowed regional actors to influence how well political arrangement succeeded. However, the violent Civil War from late spring 1992 until June 1997 led Tajikistan to view its national political and social history in terms of “before and after” when mentioning key trends and events (Nourzhanov&Bleuer, 2013, p. 8). Because of this change in understanding its national history, Tajikistan lacks a full comprehensive historical background about the social structure.

Some of the scholarly literature reports the “myth” of a “historical Tajikistan” referring to regions in contemporary Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan (Horák, 2010, p. 66). According to some Tajik scholars, the national “history” of Tajikistan runs a course of nearly 2,500 years as established by the Achaemenids, or the First Persian Empire (Horák, 2010). Since then, Tajikistan's national history underwent

numerous revisions and reconstructions according to migration patterns and geographical location. Yet, regarding the development of a national identity, historians note how Tajiks idealize special qualities of their own people as “peaceful” and having “subjected no one to violence and cruelty” (Horák, 2010, p. 68). In observing the history of conflict between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, scholars of Central Asian history noted how, during the nineteenth century identity development involved Tajiks forcing Uzbeks to adopt the former's lifestyle and culture.

According to this history, anyone living in Central Asia identified as “Tajik” (Horák, 2010, p. 68). However, this history does not acknowledge the presence of clans from Turkey and Iran. Instead, “historical Tajikistan” places Tajiks as the heirs of Aryan civilization in Central Asia. In other words, Tajik identity has a history of identifying with an Aryan case in contrast to Uzbeks who were demonized as “Turks” (Horák, 2010, p. 69). During the middle ages, the development of a Samanid state represented an outstanding achievement that contributed to contemporary understandings of “historical Tajikistan” and the formation of a Tajik national identity. Despite continuing from the Sassanid era, the Samanid state represented a high point of Islamic civilization by Tajik historians (Horák, 2010; Hoseini, 2012). The Samanid state functioned as a simply organized and effective model of governance. Destruction of the Samanid state by Uzbeks referred to as “Turko-Mongols” further suggests how “historical Tajikistan” encourage the development of a Tajik national identity as one contained within beliefs of social and cultural superiority. However, Tajik historians tend to overemphasize the Samanid state as

representing a critical point in the national history of Tajikistan (Horák, 2010). Rather, the Samanid state represents how, during the middle ages, a belief in rational social and political processes influenced Enlightenment thought in Europe.

Historical texts during the Sassanian era, lasting from the second to the seventh centuries CE, provide evidence for how Tajik national identity derived from the religious doctrines of “good versus evil” found in Zoroastrianism (Bekhandria, 1994, p. 110). The influence of Iranian culture on Tajikistan led to negative opinions regarding Uzbeks. Iranian culture also influenced how, during the 1920s, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin allowed Uzbeks to lay ethnic claims over the towns Bokhara and Samarqand despite how both locations had a native Tajik population of approximately 90 percent (Bekhandria, 1994). Now symbols of classic Persia, Bukhara and Samarqand remain influenced by the Iranian-speaking elements of Samanid-era politics and culture as only half the population of those cities has Tajik origins (Hoseini, 2012). Because of how Stalin allowed Uzbeks to lay claim over Bokhara and Samarqand, Tajiks of Bukhara and Samarqand have few opportunities to develop a unique national identity while remaining autonomous (Behkhandria, 1994). After the Soviet Union granted independence to formerly Communist states, citizens of Tajikistan remained prohibited to access newspapers, books, or education in their own language.

As Tajikistan endured its civil war from 1992 to 1997, the newly independent nation had a status as the poorest former Soviet republic that also lacked an authentic history (Joharifard, 2010). Between 50,000 and 100,000 civilians lost their life during

the five-year-long civil war while another one million Tajiks experience displacement along internal and external fronts. Almost 70,000 Tajiks fled to Afghanistan while at least 100,000 went to the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States and the Russian Federation (Joharifard, 2010). Schools in Tajikistan experienced severe declines in resources as the civil war destroyed nearly twenty percent of all existing schools. Overall health status of Tajikistan also declined severely as the result of diminished access to hospitals and clinics (Joharifard, 2010). Communicable diseases like tuberculosis rose sharply as Tajiks reported severe deficiencies in essential micronutrients.

Post-Civil War Tajikistan continues to demonstrate limited economic potential. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in New York City, relations between Tajikistan and Afghanistan incite further concern about the negative impact of efforts by NATO to withdraw soldiers from this area (Boonstra&Shapovalova, 2012). Political leaders in Tajikistan, including President Rahmon, stress that turbulent relations with Afghanistan and radical Islam remain significant threats not only to national security but also to the development of a singular national identity (Boonstra&Shapovalova, 2012). However, skeptics argue that relations between Tajikistan and Afghanistan remain turbulent because of internal conflicts among Tajik political leaders. Meanwhile, the United States view Tajikistan as a mere extension of Afghanistan in providing “peace and security” to the nation (Boonstra&Shapovalova, 2012, p. 6). In contrast, the EU prefers to view Tajikistan through the lens of protecting Central Asian nations against severe threats

to security. In that context, political discourse about security is directly related to the economic development in Tajikistan and in Central Asia.

Heathershaw (2009) questioned the widespread belief of economic liberalists that peacebuilding efforts in post-Soviet Tajikistan were not possible without the political mechanisms in place to establish independent statehood through democratic processes. According to post-positive theory, Tajikistan transformed its history from having the status as war-torn remnant of Cold War-era Soviet politics to one with an organically developed social order rooted in the philosophy of liberal democracy (Heathershaw, 2009). Political organizing at the local level aided the peacebuilding process in Tajikistan in three ways. First, Tajikistan found representation through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international governments. Tajikistan also conducted peacebuilding activities with international political elites to bring about stability. Finally, Tajikistan engaged in peacebuilding activities to spread a belief in harmony and unity.

Rather than engage in liberal peacebuilding efforts, Tajikistan worked towards implementing formal democratic reforms after its post-Soviet civil war caused by a “complex crisis of decolonization” (Heathershaw, 2009, p. 25). After the Tajik’s civil war, political leaders developed a simulation of democratic processes to create a facade of legitimacy for the international community. Tajikistan acquired geopolitical legitimacy through its relations with neighboring Afghanistan. However, concerning Tajik-Afghan relations, peace-building efforts relied on what Heathershaw (2009, p. 173) defined as an “inter-subjective process of complex legitimacy.” In other words,

Tajik-Afghan relations relied on differences in nation-building practices (Ubaidulloev, 2014). Most conflicts resulting from philosophical and political differences pertain to the amount of economic and material resources available for supplying global market chains. As Tajikistan continues to struggle with gaining international political and economic legitimacy, leadership in the former Soviet nation had come to terms with its past.

More recent studies on the history of Tajik nation-building highlight otherwise unknown links with gender studies, Islamic studies, social anthropology, and international relations (Heathershaw&Hirzig, 2013). The central argument in this research area is that nation-building efforts in Tajikistan rely on a unique socio-historical context that shapes emergence and transformation. Four distinct contributions to Tajik nation-building shed light on how the Central Asian country strove to gain international legitimacy after the post-Soviet conflict.

Soviet imperialism during the 1920s and 1930s aided nation-building processes in Tajikistan despite its dependence on a communist authority (Heathershaw&Hirzig, 2013). Tajik identity formation within the context of Soviet politics reflected local connections, ethnic kinship affiliations, and religious upbringing in Islam. Tajik Muslims contributed to a political discourse of nation-building that reflect the works of published academic research (Heathershaw&Hirzig, 2013; Khalmukhamedov, 1998; Mesbahi, 1997). Other contributing factors to Tajik nation-building drew from political philosophies of international and national security, crime and narcotics and state functioning (Heathershaw&Hirzig, 2013).

Ultimately, the modern Tajik state developed from processes similar to those for Uzbekistan.

International relations between Uzbekistan and Iran placed significant pressure on Tajik cultural life such that Tajik-Iranian relations deteriorated after pro-Communist factions took over the Tajik government in December 1992 (Mesbahi, 1997). While this historical event had a negative economic impact on major industries in Tajikistan, international relations with neighboring countries suggest a refusal of adhering to Soviet stereotypes. However, as the literature on Tajik foreign policy suggests, very little information can provide clues for how the Central Asian nation can establish strong geopolitical relationships with GCC countries.

Literature on Tajik Foreign Policy

Very few published scholarly sources on Tajik foreign policy appear in the English language, thus indicating a severely limited availability. Most of these publications appear in Tajik or Russian, though English interpretations of which are based on a personal acquisition of the researcher's language skills that provide some clues as to how Tajik foreign policy affects international relations with GCC countries. While working as a political officer for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Jonson (2004) was one of the first to describe the regional impact of foreign policy in Tajikistan during her long-term visit there. Post-Soviet Tajikistan struggled to find a balance of power after independence reviewed

published academic studies and online news articles. The vast majority of the sources reviewed by Jonson (2004) were by Tajik, Russian and Western scholars, politicians, and journalists. Most of the articles emphasized the importance of developing effective foreign policy infrastructure after the terrorist attacks of September 11 (9/11), 2001.

Jonson (2004) asked three specific research questions intent on finding answers to explain shifts in Tajik foreign policy after the 9/11 attacks, why those shifts were necessary, and what the global implications were for those shifts. Accordingly, because the United States has a strong commitment levels in combating global terrorism, shifts in foreign policy affected Tajik-Afghan relations (Jonson, 2004; Ubaidulloev, 2014). Foreign policy shifts in Tajikistan affected global trade routes for illegal drugs and weapons (Boonstra&Shapovalova, 2012). Similar shifts affected the water supply for Afghanistan as most of it came from the Tajik mountains (Jonson, 2004). Political power in both countries wanted to control the water supply so much that it affected international relations between Tajikistan and Russia as well as between Tajikistan and the United States. More interesting is how the position of Tajikistan in trade relations with China indicated high rates of turnover from between 2000 to 2007 (Ibraimov, 2009), partly because of its immigration policies encouraging foreign expatriates to work in the country (Wenruo, 2001). Though China had a very modest position regarding foreign trade with Central Asian nations, trade turnover grew rapidly from between 2000 and 2007 nearly fifteen-fold.

By the close of 2007, China's share of trade with Central Asian nations reached almost 14 percent while foreign trade in this region constituted 0.7 percent of the Chinese economy (Ibraimov, 2009). During 2007, foreign trade between China and Uzbekistan amounted to almost 1.61 billion US dollars while trade between China and Kazakhstan totaled nearly 1.24 billion US dollars. Foreign trade between China and Kyrgyzstan amounted to 984 million US dollars in 2007 while trade between China and Turkmenistan totaled 377 million US dollars (Ibraimov, 2009). Lastly, foreign trade between China and Tajikistan in 2007 reached 684 million US dollars.

The largest markets of all Central Asia export Chinese goods to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, though joint markets may function in networks between Tajikistan and China (Ibraimov, 2009). For Tajikistan, China is the main stakeholder in domestic transport and communications based on investments in construction of power lines to provide electricity, equipment for building roads and railways, and human resources for advancing political and economic objectives (Dwivedi, 2006). According to Ibraimov (2009), China intended to redirect transportation and communication flows of the Karakorum highway, a major thoroughfare in Tajikistan, in a north-south direction as part of a political and economic strategy based on geographical location. Also, China reconstructed part of another major thoroughfare—the Dushanbe-Khujand-Chanak Highway—that connected the Dushanbe metropolitan area with the north as it allowed for year-round traffic (Dwivedi, 2006; Ibraimov, 2009). In its

efforts to construct high-voltage transmission lines, China has Tajikistan at its economic behest based on hydro-electric capabilities.

Important in this discussion on economic trade is how Tajikistan stands as one of four Central Asian countries belonging to the Shanghai Cooperation Council (SCO; Cooley, 2015; Dwivedi, 2006). Other countries with SCO membership include China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Because of its membership in SCO, Tajikistan must embody the foundational “Shanghai spirit” by revering official statements made by the Chinese government while also dedicate respect for principles of state sovereignty and noninterference in encouraging the “democratization of international relations” (Cooley, 2015, p. 52). Furthermore, membership in the SCO requires Tajikistan must not allow global governance institutions to impose political and economic restrictions on trade.

Russia's membership in the SCO influences how Tajikistan engages in foreign policy based on political and economic interests in trade through defending so-called “traditional values” (Cooley, 2015, p. 52). Tajik-Russian relations suggest that adhering to an anti-Western stance prevents political and economic decline as they claim to uphold moral authority. Western economic policies work against the ideals of SCO countries, as the argument goes, because of how they encourage a national culture defined by decadence (Cooley, 2015). Instead, Tajikistan relies on global political and economic networks adhering to nationalistic belief of securing a unique identity for developing a unique cultural heritage with deep religious and spiritual roots.

In 2001, Russia played an active role in Tajik foreign policy development. Though Russia certainly held a great deal of authority in its relations with Tajikistan, the initial stages of foreign policy development emphasized struggles over who would control the most natural resources (Jonson, 2004). From 2002 to 2004, the Kremlin in Moscow provided Tajikistan with greater autonomy in constructing foreign policy initiatives. Finally, in October of 2004, a cooperation pact effectively re-established Tajik-Russian relations (Jonson, 2004). Despite how the two countries had their own conceptions of independent statehood and nation-building, Tajik-Russian relations represented significant power differences from political authorities (Jonson, 2004). Russia worked to consolidate its political power while Tajikistan continued to develop a philosophy of state autonomy contributing to shifts in foreign policy development.

After 9/11, Tajik-Russian relations involved three different shifts; before, during, and after the post-Soviet conflict in Tajikistan. Nearly six years prior to the Tajik civil war, relations between China and the former Soviet Union shaped relations between Tajikistan as much as it shaped relations with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Dwivedi, 2006). Tajik-Russian relations depended on strategic thinking by the Chinese government in securing two goals useful for securing foreign policy initiatives in Central Asia. These goals emphasized the need to maintain a stable geopolitical climate in securing economic welfare for Tajikistan as they promoted peaceful negotiations (Dwivedi, 2006). During the Tajik civil war, peaceful negotiations depended on relations between Russia and Iran along with coordinated

efforts by the United Nations (UN; Herzig, 2004). Concerning the importance of how Tajikistan established relations with GCC countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Oman—relations between Russia and Iran inspired the development of infrastructure projects that promoted increased levels of economic trade.

With respect to energy development projects involving hydroelectric power, relations between Russia and the United States cement initiatives for developing a “New Silk Road” by expanding trade from north to south by linking Pakistan and Afghanistan to Central Asian nations including Tajikistan (Kanat, 2012, p. 170). Concurrent with relations between Russian and the United States, foreign policy relations between the United States and Turkey played a key role in reforms to political and economic trade relations in Central Asia.

Unfortunately, the only scholarly information on how US-Turkey relations may have influenced Tajik-GCC relations points to how Turkey established “visa-free travel regimes” with Tajikistan (Babacan, 2011, p. 142). Three GCC countries—Kuwait, UAE, and Qatar—have visa-free travel regimes with Turkey while Tajikistan signed two separate agreements for these regimes in 2003 and 2009 (Babacan, 2011). The fundamental purpose of having visa-free travel regimes in place was to promote free trade and encourage movement of people. As noted later in the thesis, visa-free travel regimes encouraged open-door policy formation in Tajik-GCC relations. On a more interesting note, because of their anti-Western stance, open-door policy formation relied on the establishment of complex national and regional identities.

Zarifi (2009a, b) reviewed Tajik foreign policy in the early 2000s to describe the goals and outcomes of “open door” initiatives. Important milestones for Tajik foreign policy development involved lateral and bilateral agreements made between other Central Asian countries and international organizations. Open door policy frameworks in China influence both Tajik-Russian and Tajik-Afghani relations (Kalis, 2014; Wenruo, 2001). Unlike the descriptive approach of foreign policy development in Tajikistan (Jonson, 2004), open door policy approaches warrant more critical scrutiny. However, no research to date analyzes the effects of open door foreign policy developments on GCC states. Such scrutiny warrants a review of diplomatic, political, and socioeconomic factors as understood by some of the limited available research (Anceschi, 2014; Ehteshami, 1994; Karla&Saxena, 2009). Drawing from the history of Tajikistan as a nation, nation-building processes share a surprisingly common history with neighboring countries in Central Asia.

Secondly, very little scholarly information is available to describe the effects of these shifts in recent years. No information to date regarding Tajik-GCC relations focuses on shifts in foreign policy development. Concerning Tajik-Russian relations, the belief in maintaining national interests to hold political power over neighboring countries indicates that some international players, such as the United States, would rather not have Russia obtain a type of regional hegemony. Yet, because of its geopolitical location, Tajikistan has the potential to emerge as a key global competitor if foreign policy directives consider its economic future in relation to GCC countries.

Implications for future research in this thesis indicates a large gap of published scholarly information on international relations between Tajikistan and Central Asian countries. Saidov (2003, 2011) highlighted aspects of relations between Tajikistan and Muslims countries such as Iran and Afghanistan. Problems of regional security and political stability were the focus of discussions on Eurasian political issues (Nourzhanov, 2012; Saidov, 2003, 2011; Ubaidulloev, 2014). Because Islam remains the dominant religion in Tajikistan and Arab countries, foreign policy developments relied on a process of integration within Central Asia.

Chapter Two: Foreign Policy Behavior of Tajikistan

During the Soviet power over a few Central Asian countries, Moscow was the main location for designing and promoting effective foreign policy initiatives. After the Second World War, Cold War-era politics required that Tajik specialists play a role in establishing and implementing Soviet-style foreign policy on Muslims living in this region. Tajik specialists have a shared historical, religious, and cultural identity in working to shape bilateral agreements between Central Asian countries (Melkumyan, 2005; Zarifi, 2009a, b). Moreover, Tajiks who embarked on foreign missions acted as interpreters and trade representatives. Despite its isolation from the Arab world, diplomatic relations between Tajikistan and Muslim states occurred within the context of former Soviet rule⁵. Thus, post-Soviet Tajikistan faced significant challenges in accommodating the demands of a rapidly progressing global economy.

Along with many Central Asian states, Tajikistan relied on foreign policy development that considered the appropriate political reasons for implementing them in the first place. Drawing from Jonson (2006), applying the theoretical framework of “small state behavior” helps to assess international relations between Tajikistan and Central Asian countries. The goal was to determine the effectiveness of these relations as a basis for encouraging researchers into conducting studies on foreign policy decision-making processes within the context of Tajik-GCC relations. Consequently, explanations from the theory of small state behavior provide enough

⁵ Personal Interview: Erkin Kasymov, Dushanbe, Dec. 2015

historical context for understanding the processes of establishing bilateral trade agreements prior to and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Defining Tajikistan

Ongoing scholarly debates about the effects of small state behavior cite factors such as population size, geographical size, and influence in international affairs (Goetschel, 1998; Jonson, 2006; Vital, 1967). Though some scholars argue that small states such as Qatar and Israel shape international relations in significant ways. These two states play critical roles in both a peacebuilding process and the formation of bilateral trade agreements (Hey, 2003). A common assumption to make about smaller states is that, contrary to larger states, internal political tensions do not foster global political crises. Alternatively, international relations between smaller and larger states suggest slightly more visible political tensions.

Without a doubt, Tajikistan qualifies as a small state based on its population of 8.5 million inhabitants and its size of 143,000 square kilometers. A troubling geographical feature of Tajikistan is that only seven percent of its arable land has agricultural use (International Crisis Group, 2014). From this information, a critical question to ask concerns which theoretical and methodological approaches can best help provide the most thorough understanding of possible of foreign policy behavior in Tajikistan.

Early theoretical explanations of small state behavior rely on two definitions of “small power,” each determining vulnerability to invasion (Keohane, 1969; Rothstein, 1968). While one definition of small power refers to a state that cannot obtain national security based on economic and material deficiencies (Rothstein, 1968), a different conception defines small power as one that never acts independently while claiming to have a significant global impact (Keohane, 1969). Whereas Rothstein's (1968) definition argues further that small states must obtain national security by relying on foreign aid through institutions, processes, and new political developments, Keohane's (1969) definition acts that all small states, regardless of networked capabilities, will have a significant global economic impact.

Especially for Rothstein (1969), two available patterns for small states to acquire political power require, on one hand, policies designed to avoid conflict and, on the other hand, policies modeled from the success of those used in nations with similar demographics. Here, the state must choose to act as an international ally or remain neutral. More commonly, small states align themselves with larger powers in efforts to gain international political recognition. Similarly, the two available patterns for small states to develop strong foreign policy and bilateral trade agreements with larger, more powerful suggest either “bandwagoning” or “balancing” (Walt, 1990). While the former refers to alignment between weaker and smaller states, the latter suggests that small states align with larger states to protect themselves from other external geopolitical threats.

For post-Soviet Tajikistan, foreign policy development has two main goals. The first goal was to survive as a newly independent nation; Second goal was to secure foreign aid for nation-building and to implement a national security infrastructure⁶. The post-Soviet conflict provided very few opportunities for Tajikistan to establish diplomatic relations with countries outside of the Central Asian region. This could explain the research gap on Tajik-GCC relations. As Tajikistan necessarily relied on pro-Russian policies, Soviet hegemony of Central Asia continues to have some economic impacts concerning trade relations.

The post-Soviet conflict left Tajikistan dependent on the Kremlin to develop a national security platform. Moreover, as the Taliban seized power over Afghanistan in 1996 (Khalmukhamedov, 1998; Ubaidulloev, 2014), Russia's military presence in Tajikistan contributed towards national security throughout Central Asia. However, using Russian support to develop a national security platform for Tajikistan entailed that the small state would remain even more isolated from playing an influential role in global markets (Jonson, 1998). Neither Russia nor any Central Asian countries expressed interest in strengthening relations with Tajikistan.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks led to a turn of events for Tajikistan as American military troops launched air strikes on Afghanistan. Suddenly, Tajikistan had significant political value for Washington politicians concerning foreign policy development (Jonson, 2006). US-based interest in Tajikistan involved expanding international relations through all Asian countries. Anti-terrorism coalitions held

⁶ Personal Interview: Loiqnazar Imomi, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

political influence over foreign policy development as Tajikistan slowly cut pre-9/11 ties with Russia in an effort to encourage financial recovery. As a result, Tajik political leaders felt obliged to engage in a partnership with the United States to create new communication channels (Jonson, 2006). Post-9/11 relations between Tajikistan and Russia thus remained important because of the requirement that foreign policy initiatives designed to advance national interests balancing against potential risks. Overall, Tajik-Russian relations before and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks relied on securing foreign aid through national security platforms and economic development programs.

Bandwagoning Russian Interests Prior to the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

Shortly after post-Soviet conflict, Tajikistan was in no position to develop its own foreign policy infrastructure without relying on neighboring states. By the late 1990s, serious geopolitical threats to Central Asian states were imminent as the Taliban held political power in neighboring Afghanistan (Khalmukhamedov, 1998; Nourzhanov, 2012; Ubaidulloev, 2014). As a signing member of the Collective Security Treaty (CST), Tajikistan actively played a leading role in its relations with the Russian military (Jonson, 2006). By 1998, Tajikistan was a transit hub for transporting Russian material resources to fight against the Taliban (Sadri, 2004). The following year led to Tajikistan forming a strong alliance with Russia as a member of

the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS; Jonson, 2006; Sadri, 2004). Meanwhile, most Central Asian states had unstable relations with the Taliban.

Tajikistan found the Taliban a significant threat to national security (Jonson, 2004; Nourzhanov, 2012; Ubaidulloev, 2014). Russian military presence was a precursor to the formation of Tajik foreign policy. For example, the military base in Tajikistan is the Russia's largest base overseas (Klein, 2009; Sadri, 2004). Despite fragile relations, Tajikistan relied on Russia because it had no other options, other than relying on the United States, were at immediate disposal (Sadri, 2004). Nearly twenty years prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the only other interest that the United States had in Tajikistan resulted in a 1992 visit by then-Secretary of State James Baker. US-based efforts saw Central Asian countries as politically expedient to their cause of extracting hydroelectric power. From this event, Tajik foreign policy development relied on a consolidation of efforts between the United States and Russia in forming democratic reforms and human rights legislation (Luong&Weinthal, 2002; Sadri, 2004). Unfortunately, because Tajikistan has very few oil and gas reserves, American politicians quickly lost interest.

In sum, rather than perform a balancing act between small and large states, Tajikistan practiced a bandwagoning approach in early foreign policy development after its independence from the former Soviet Union. A balancing act did not occur until neighboring Central Asian states aided in Tajik foreign policy development after the 9/11 terrorists attacks. Because of internal and external political conflicts, Tajikistan would eventually construct foreign policy that would anchor international

relations with Russia (Sadri, 2004). Of special consequence is how Tajikistan now relies on financial assistance from the Kremlin as deemed necessary.

Post-9/11 Attempts at Balancing Policy Change in Tajikistan

Policy change happens in accordance with adjustments made to material and economic conditions (Doeser, 2008; Hermann, 1990). Four levels of policy changes have particular importance for how these changes affected Tajik-GCC relations. Policy change may occur first in the act of defining major problems and goals. Second, policy change may occur in alignment with methods for achieving a common goal. Third, policy change reflects perspectives concerning participation in global markets. Finally, policy change may occur in minor ways so as not to greatly affect current regulations (Hermann, 1990). Important for Tajikistan is the third level of change.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, participation in global markets played a critical role for the Central Asian nation to gain international legitimacy. Tajik political leaders saw the terrorist attacks as providing a great opportunity for gaining economic prosperity. Interest in US-backed counterterrorism efforts led to stronger formation of the Tajik military. When the United States declared war on Afghanistan, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon announced that he would provide political support. However, Tajik support for American military led to a violent attack by Afghani troops in the capital city of Dushanbe (Ubaidulloev, 2014). Tajik-Afghani

relationship clearly soured as the result of Tajik Support of US military involvement in Afghanistan (Glumskov, 2001). American troops went through Tajikistan to enter Afghanistan as part of military strategy based on never having previously occupied a Central Asian nation.

Tajik support for American military signaled an unprecedented regional geopolitical situation influenced by Russian defense interests (Jonson, 2004; Sadri, 2004). For example, in January 2002, the United States rescinded on its ban of weapons to Tajikistan. The following month, Tajikistan joined the Partnership for Peace (PFP) program that provided a legal basis for cooperation with the United States and other official members. Cooperation efforts via PFP membership included joint military reforms, emergency civil planning, environmental programs, and scientific research (Cornell, 2004). In December 2002, President Rahmon met with President George W. Bush in the United States to discuss long-term counterterrorism efforts combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and illegal drugs (Saidov, 2003). Improvements in international relations between Tajikistan and the United States thus led to the construction of foreign policy that would provide the Central Asia with great opportunities to gain economic success.

Tajik-US relations led to the development of “open door policy” frameworks that involved cooperation with United Nations (UN) members (Zarifi, 2009a, b). Open door policy frameworks suggest a mutual respect of common interests and cooperation with Muslim states in Central Asia and the Middle East. Put differently,

open door foreign policy developments strengthened cooperation between nations with starkly different religious practices⁷.

Though research on relations between Tajikistan and GCC countries remains largely unavailable, open door foreign policy efforts strengthen Western geopolitical and economic interests in securing the nation against internal and external threats (Saidov, 2003). Despite strong Tajik-Russian relations after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, open door foreign policy efforts accounted for how Tajikistan had relatively minimal military presence by American troops.

Tajik-Russian relations involved high levels of bargaining with the Kremlin. Tajik political leadership demonstrated high confidence levels in diversifying international relations to include GCC countries. US-led coalitions played a more critical role in peacebuilding efforts affecting the Central Asian region (Labott, 2011). Because its ties with Russian and American defense establishment (Sadri, 2004), foreign policy efforts with greater involvement from the international community provide Tajikistan with significant opportunities to acquire success in the global economy.

In the next chapter, the vast literature on Tajik-Russian relations suggests an influence on Tajik-GCC relations in the Post-Soviet era. Because of its enrollment in the SCO, Tajikistan and surrounding Central Asian countries adopted open door policy frameworks dependent on the oil and gas industry. Religious factors also play

⁷ Personal Interview: Loiqnazar Imomi, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

an important role in the formation of Tajik-GCC relations as these countries have a predominantly Muslim population.

As observed in the following sections of Chapter Three, open door policy frameworks allow Tajik-GCC relations to adopt interdependent networks of economic trade through foreign aid. Yet, before discussing the development of Tajik-GCC relations, a more thorough analysis of how relations between Tajikistan and Iran greatly influenced current economic trends in Central Asia provides ample clues for understanding the implications of open door policy frameworks.

Chapter Three: Tajik-GCC Relations in the Post-Soviet Era

Foreign policy behavior in post-Soviet Tajikistan relied on Russian and American military efforts to bolster its national economy. The post-Soviet conflict from 1992 to 1997 made Tajikistan vulnerable against more significant political threats. However, as the Central Asian nation adopted open door foreign policy frameworks, a reliance on oil and gas production, as noted in this chapter, influenced international relations with other nations who have a predominantly Muslim population.

More importantly, relations between Tajikistan and Iran influenced the development of Tajik-GCC relations (Toone, 2012). GCC countries contribute high amounts of foreign aid and remittances to Tajikistan for economic development purposes (Mohapatra&Ratra, 2010; Naufal&Genc, 2014:Sasikumar, 2014). Yet, the main reason for the development of Tajik-GCC relations was to form bilateral trade agreements encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI) in Central Asia (Mina, 2010). Relations between Iran and GCC countries suggest a bid for “regional hegemony” in competition with relations between the United States and Israel (Cronin &Masalha, 2011). However, differences in religious leadership between Iran and Saudi Arabia—the most powerful of GCC countries—affect Tajik-GCC relations as a whole.

Influence of Iran on Development of Tajik-GCC Relations

As a country in the Middle East region, Iran is like Turkey in that it occupies a space that could potentially bridge a gap between Tajik-GCC relations as the latter arguably bridges a gap between the EU and most of Asia. Because of its location, Iran functions as a hub for accessing more than 50 percent of the world's known oil and gas reserves (Kashgari, 2011). Relations between Iran and GCC countries have important geopolitical and economic implications for Tajik-GCC relations based on Iran's position within a larger global economy.

In demographic terms, Central Asian nations like Tajikistan have striking similarities with GCC countries in having a population mostly comprising Sunni Muslims (Kashgari, 2011). In some ways, geopolitical and economic implications of the hydro-energy industry in Tajikistan indicate that bilateral trade agreements suggest peaceful cooperation (Iapadre&Tajoli, 2013). Political leaders in Tajikistan recognize that GCC countries have their own material and economic needs. However, bilateral trade agreements between Tajikistan and GCC countries rely on differences in trade preferences and overcoming shortcomings often found in quantitative statistical studies (Iapadre&Tajolik, 2013). As with Tajik-Iranian relations, Tajik-GCC relations rely on networks of local and regional networks of trade structure reliant upon agreements made within a global trading system.

Because of Iran's geopolitical location, the Middle Eastern nation serves as a focal point for understanding increased “regionalization” through regional trade agreements (Iapadre&Tajoli, 2013, p. S90). As global networks of economic trade

become more regionalized, one important trend noted in the policy research literature is the assumption of decreased costs in transportation and communication. As Tajikistan and GCC countries establish bilateral trade agreements, regionalization of economic trade networks suggests that all countries involved will increase the number of trading partners while businesses in both the Middle East and Central Asia trade from longer distances (Herzig, 2004; Iapadre&Tajoli, 2013). This literature also showed how the need to regionalize economic trade networks decreases over time as emerging countries succeeded in apply development frameworks. From 1992 to 1997, the post-Soviet conflict in Tajikistan shaped the potential to regionalize economic interests as Russia and Iran played leading roles in peace negotiations (Herzig, 2004; Sadri, 2004). Along with the active support of other regional states, the UN coordinated efforts to improve diplomatic relations between Iran and Tajikistan was based on regional economic interests.

Iran's geopolitical position allows itself to influence relations with Tajikistan as much as it influences Tajik-GCC relations. Iran views itself as having a cultural status as an inheritor of Classical Greek and Roman civilization and as having a political history of independent statehood (Cronin&Masalha, 2011. p. 3). Compared to the GCC countries, Iran has diversified economy, advanced scientific and technological developments, and a strong military. Moreover, the GCC countries have a history derived from British Imperialism (Cronin&Masalha, 2011). In religious and sectarian terms, Iran excludes Shi'a Muslim identity from foreign policy development that is addressed towards Tajikistan. This exclusion greatly influences

the development of Tajik-GCC relations as most of the countries involved in bilateral trade agreements have a Sunni Muslim population.

As observed in discussions of open door policy frameworks, the influence of Tajik-Iranian relations implies that relations between Tajikistan and GCC countries have a unified religious backing. This geopolitical and economic context ultimately suggests that religious and national identity have inextricable links with important research implications for studying the effects of bilateral trade agreements between the Middle East and Central Asia (Atkin, 1992). With respect to Shi'a Muslims as having a religious identity, ethnic groups do not themselves have a national identity.

Rather, nationalities act as an inherently political form of social organization that determines the social and cultural goals of a state (Atkin, 1992). Prior to Soviet nationalization processes in the 1920s, native Tajiks identified as belonging to a Muslim community that was subdivided into mutually hostile groups. Ethnicity served as an ideologically divisive tool for nationalization though other divisions related to dynastic legacies, political elitism, and tribalism served to create economic subdivisions (Atkin, 1992). In contemporary Tajikistan, defining an ethnic identity has interchangeable ties with religious affiliation and nationality⁸. However, inhabitants of Tajikistan depend on religious convictions to foster a greater sense of belonging. More interesting is how Muslim-identified inhabitants of Tajikistan claim a national identity as influenced by Turkey as was the case in Uzbekistan (Atkin, 1992). While Tajikistan originally belonged to earlier empires, Tajikistan did not

⁸ Personal interview: Barotzoda Faizullo, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

begin to develop a national identity until 1924 as an independent republic within the former Soviet Union. Yet, the history of developing a Tajik national identity is not without controversy.

In fact, the links between Tajik and Iranian national identity distinguish between ethnic groups speaking Persian and ethnic groups speaking Turkic languages (Atkin, 1992; Bertoncini et al., 2012). Unfortunately, very little research to date links the history of Tajik and Iranian national identity development as influential to the emergence of bilateral trade agreements between Tajikistan and GCC countries. As noted earlier, ethnicity and religious affinity shape national identity while the latter eventually social and cultural development. Ideological discourses about political infrastructures between Tajikistan and Iran shape Tajik-GCC relations such that governance structures enter debates concerning foreign policy (Sadri, 2004; Wiseman, 2010). For example, education systems in the Middle East and Central Asian nations rely on the establishment of international norms regarding how education implies success in a global economy. Since the religious affinity of these countries effectively utilizes standards considered extremely conservative under most Western standards, reforms to education policy must draw influence from possible reforms to economic policy.

Because success in a global economy depends on applications of Western standards, some of the literature implies that Tajik-Iranian and Tajik-GCC relations should have the capacity to strike a balance between the types of that education that conforms with religious or national identity and education that serves a primary

objective of economic expansion (Wiseman, 2010). Expansion of economic trade between Tajikistan and GCC countries suggests that Iran plays a central role in fostering a “world culture” through education (Wiseman, 2010, p. 21-2). As a geopolitical strategy, education shapes a world culture through a process of “normative isomorphism” that Iran likely considered when influencing Tajik-GCC relations (Wiseman, 2010, p. 22). Instead of relying on bandwagoning, Tajik-Iranian relations depend on foreign policy strategies designed to balance alignments between smaller and larger states. Similarly, Tajik-Russian relations also depend on balance of foreign policy strategies (Sadri, 2004). By extension, Tajik-GCC relations must also rely on a balancing act of foreign policy development as other Central Asian nations have no special interests in furthering the economic progress of Tajikistan.

Strategies for developing a world culture through education programs suggest that Tajikistan must adopt the social and cultural norms of Iran especially with respect to Muslim religious identity. As Tajikistan has a history of internalizing of Russian social and cultural norms, relations with Iran run into conflict with respect for shaping local and regional cultures (Wiseman, 2010). Iran has its own intellectual and cultural history in Central Asia based on a Persian legacy rooted in Zoroastrianism (Bekhandria, 1994; Kashgari, 2011). Furthermore, Iran has a history of tumultuous relations with GCC countries after the 1979 Iranian Revolution declared a break from Western ideals of social, cultural, and economic progress rooted in religious identity (Kashgari, 2011). From that historical moment,

international relations between Iran and the GCC countries remained in a state of severe disrepair.

Many of the GCC countries base their legal system almost entirely on Shari'a law leading Iranian education systems to depict Saudis as completely hostile to developing foreign policy initiatives with Iran and Central Asian nations outside of Tajikistan (Kashgari, 2011). On the other hand, Tajikistan and many Central Asian nations have a largely secular foreign policy accepting of both Persian and Iranian interests⁹. Religion occupies only a small portion of many lives of contemporary Tajiks, though Iran and Tajikistan celebrate many of the same official religious holidays observed by followers of Islam (Kashgari, 2011). As a result, both religion and education shape relations between Tajikistan and Iran as much as those factors shape Tajik-GCC relations.

Aside from education, Tajik-GCC relations present significant advantages in terms of food exports from Central Asian countries. Because Tajikistan has few airports, many food exports would need to pass through Afghanistan, Russia, or Iran to reach their destination (Woertz, Pradhan, Biberovic & Jingzhong, 2008). FDI inflows from food exports involve local politics and discussions of international accountability concerning how to handle political conflicts. Regional conflicts in the Middle East complicate how Tajikistan exports food because of how they pose significant threats to potential investments in agriculture (Woertz et al., 2008). Outside of regional conflicts, a global economy reliant upon Western standards

⁹ Personal Interview: Loiqnazar Imomi, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

implies that agricultural expansion in both Tajikistan and GCC countries must rely on Russia and countries in North Africa.

Rising oil prices complicate agricultural development even further as most political infrastructures in Central Asian nations like Tajikistan depend on policies formed while Russia belonged to the former Soviet Union (Woertz et al., 2008). More troubling is how regional conflicts include threats of a nuclear standoff that deplete global food supplies. Yet, despite mounting concerns about regional conflicts, the material and economic flows of trade influence the capacity to which Tajikistan can transform its current status as a largely developing nation into one that flourishes in a global economy¹⁰.

Material and Economic Trade between Tajikistan and GCC Countries

The Gulf States contribute high amounts of foreign aid to Tajikistan¹¹. Because Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait have the highest economic influence on the Central Asian nation, Islamic/Muslim Identity plays a significant role in establishing effective bilateral trade agreements (Villanger, 2007). Though these GCC countries mean well in providing foreign aid to Tajikistan, they follow what Wright (2011) defined as checkbook diplomacy. Financial assistance in this manner often involves a leveraging of soft power in core and periphery countries. Wealthier

¹⁰ Personal Interview: Erkin Kasymov, Dushanbe, Dec. 2015

¹¹ Personal Interview: Azamsho Sharifi, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

states in the core rely on their financial capabilities to solve disputes and gain a status as peacekeeper.

For instance, Saudi Arabia provides the most financial assistance to Tajikistan because of its hegemonic position (Wright, 2011). Saudi Arabia is not only the largest of GCC countries; it also has the largest economy in this region. Other GCC countries like the UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait effectively develop foreign policy efforts as bandwagoning off of Saudi Arabia. Bandwagoning in the GCC countries not only helps individual nations, it also establishes clear roles about who controls global economic flows (Nonneman, 2005). Control of oil and gas production in Saudi Arabia foments their hegemonic role as influencing how other GCC countries bandwagon foreign policy.

National security interests also play a role in how relations between Tajikistan and GCC countries reflect a strategic partnership with the United States. Such interests reflect an increased demand for oil production in the Gulf region. Arguably, increased oil production encourages regional economic stability (Sokolsky, 2003). Particularly for the United States, peacebuilding efforts in the Gulf region reflect a political interest towards greater national security. Cold War-era relations between the United States and Russia influenced these interests, though converging interests after the post-Soviet conflict in Tajikistan and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks led to a recognition of diverse interests in securing a successful role in the global economy. Concerning Tajik-GCC relations, the findings of this chapter suggest that each of these countries engages in small state behavior mentioned throughout this study.

Based on the collection of interview data evolving from questions about establishing priorities for Tajik-GCC relations, one clear inference to draw from the findings is that the combined interests of seeking political autonomy while promoting national security interests are two interesting yet conflicting actions of foreign policy development.

Contemporary Tajik-GCC Relations

After the initial considerations of open door policy frameworks, Tajik political leadership sought to strengthen international relations with the GCC states and surrounding Central Asian nations. In exploring the drivers of improvements in these relationships, this chapter analyzes interview data with questions drawn from the research literature. It was decided to use the qualitative method for collecting the primary data, because that type of interviewing is more flexible and the interviewer may bring up any new questions due to respondent's replies. Total of nine in depth interviews with the average duration of 40-50 minutes each took place in Doha and Dushanbe respectively. The interviews were held in English, Russian and Tajik languages, depending on the will of the participants. As the fluent speaker of all three mentioned languages, gathered data then was translated into English by the researcher.

Participants for the interview have been selected based on their direct involvement, whether politically, academically or economically to the Tajik-GCC relations

(Appendix 2). The importance of conducting the interview with the right person who has the knowledge of this research topic is crucial since it would increase the accuracy in the answers.

The interview questions are as follows:

- What do you see as the main priorities in the relations between Tajikistan and GCC?
- Apart from having formal relations after the independence of Tajikistan, in which year do you think the active relations with the GCC States began?
- What actions are the government taking to increase cultural exchange between Tajikistan and GCC States?
- What actions are the government taking to increase socio-economic relations between Tajikistan and GCC States?
- What actions are the governments of both sides taking to increase political/foreign policy cooperation?
- What are the main obstacles for the better cooperation between Tajikistan and the GCC?
- How do you describe the current state of Tajik-GCC relations?
- What are your recommendations that could strengthen the relations between two parties?

Interview data contained findings that highlighted three main priorities for Tajikistan to develop economic cooperation in the form of hydro-energy, tourism, mining and financial services. These four economic sectors have the most significant impact for

Tajikistan. Interview data also indicated the importance of effective political relations and the importance of attracting the investments from the GCC States. It is very crucial for Tajik government to show country's untapped opportunities via promotional campaigns and cultural exchanges with an aim to attract attention of GCC investors. Serious work should be done to decrease the barriers for the potential investors, as we see that there is an interest from the Gulf States to invest in Tajikistan. Capital protection schemes should be implemented. Investor should be absolutely sure that his capital will be protected by the government. Along with that, Because Tajikistan is a largely Muslim country, religious and cultural ties to GCC countries play a significant role in encouraging cooperation in foreign policy development.

Concerning how Tajikistan has international relations specifically with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, interview data indicated a relationship with foreign policy and internal political stability. If neither of these countries have internal stability, foreign policy efforts will not have positive outcomes. Moreover, because of its major economic role, Saudi Arabia cannot provide as much foreign aid to Tajikistan as it would like as political instability increases the risk for corruption.

Interview data indicated further that prior to 2004-2006, Tajik-GCC relations were only based on formal recognition. Difficulties in cultural exchange suggested that low levels of understanding religious differences between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. Though Tajik Muslims have Persian roots, their practice follows the Sunni tradition despite a common misconception that they follow the Shi'a tradition.

Historically, relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran demonstrate a great deal of turbulence. However, as suggested from the interview data, Tajikistan can be an active participant in the negotiation process and act as a buffer against further conflict between the two Middle East nations.

Finally, interview data indicated that while Bahrain and Oman do not play any diplomatic roles in relations with Tajikistan, limited support from the UAE demonstrates a continuous pattern. Foreign aid from Kuwait to Tajikistan between 2007 and 2008 proved helpful in the midst of humanitarian crisis. Despite its extremely limited involvement, Oman provided financial assistance to Tajikistan when it experienced another humanitarian crisis between 2011 and 2012. Humanitarian aid from Oman was unique because of how this GCC country provided financial support of up to \$3 million for construction efforts in affected areas. The results also showed that although relations with Oman not on the high level, Muscat however is ready to assist and cooperate when needed.

Overall, interview data suggested that the strengthening of Tajik-GCC relations depends on collaboration and open door policy frameworks. Strengthening these relations requires that political leaders schedule and hold meetings that address the most critical barriers to success. Tajik-GCC relations affect foreign policy development in considering the effects on countries in the Central Asian region. Turbulent relations with Afghanistan after the 9/11 terrorist attack present one significant barrier to promote economic success for Tajikistan. However, as also suggested by the interview data, peace and stability in Afghanistan remain top

priority not only for Tajikistan's internal stability and security, but also for the former's economic prosperity. Peaceful situation in Afghanistan will give Tajikistan an opportunity to fully use its exporting capacity to ship goods through sea ports in Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia

Relations between Tajikistan and Saudi Arabia have a three-phase historical pattern. The first phase reflected the establishment of formal and informal contacts between political leaders and foreign ministers of both nations. Saudi Arabia was also one of the first nations to recognize Tajikistan as having political independence from the Soviet Union¹². The Kingdom was one of the first GCC States to channel substantial amount of financial aid to Tajikistan. In particular, from independence and until 1999 Saudi Arabia channeled aid that was equal to \$217 million.¹³ During the First Gulf War from 1989 until 1993, international relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia indicated major tensions between ideological and pragmatic approaches with respect to diplomacy (Amiri, Samsu, Korshidi & Piri, 2010). During this time, both Iran and Saudi Arabia explored commitments to regionalizing economic interests based on religious identification with Islam (Herzig, 2004). Unfortunately, this first

¹² Personal Interview: Azamsho Sharifi, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

¹³ Archive of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan, department of Foreign Trade and Economic Policies, International Relations division. Folder on Tajikistan-Saudi, "Memorandum of Understanding between Tajikistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", Dushanbe 1992, p.13

phase suggested little promise for cooperation especially as alliances between Saudi Arabia and the United States strengthened.

Concerning Tajik-Saudi relations, the Tajik Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid close attention to how it developed foreign policy efforts and bilateral trade agreements in alignment with those of Saudi Arabia¹⁴. The second phase reflected a period of cooperation between Tajikistan and Saudi Arabia from 1997 to 2001 as marked by various political, socioeconomic, cultural, and humanitarian shifts. Multiple visits by foreign ministers and associated work groups facilitated the direction of this cooperation phase. The final phase launched in 2003 provided a launching point for discussing bilateral trade deals to bolster Tajik-Saudi relations. Bilateral trade agreements developed during this final phase established a legal framework for cooperation in economics, investment, culture, technology, sports, and youth affairs¹⁵. However, Tajik and Saudi embassies for each respective nation did not open until 2008 and 2010, respectively. Yet, when Tajikistan faced a humanitarian crisis caused by one of the coldest winters in history, Saudi Arabia provided \$10 million in foreign aid (Najibullah, 2008). In contrast, the United States provided only \$2.5 million while Japan provided a paltry \$90,000¹⁶.

Recent studies in policy research cite how relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia face complications due to the significance of Shi'a Muslim communities. Disputes between Iran and Saudi Arabia shaped the formation of economic trade

¹⁴ Personal Interview: Erkin Kasymov, Dushanbe, Dec. 2015

¹⁵ Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, reports of the Department of Asian and African countries, folder on Tajikistan and Saudi Arabian relations, 2007, page 12.

¹⁶ Personal Interview: Ardasher Qodiri, Doha, May 2015

agreements between Tajikistan and the remaining GCC countries. In return, Saudi Arabia fears the factors driving Iran's potential to influence foreign policy development between Middle East and Central Asian states (Cronin&Masalha, 2011). Moreover, alliances between Saudi Arabia and the United States shape Tajik-Iranian relations especially as Iran and Oman discussed possible joint military programs in 2008. Three years prior to these discussions, Prince Saud al-Faisal, then foreign minister of Saudi Arabia conceded to the Sunni insurgency of Shi'a Muslims in Iraq launching a proxy war with Iran (Cronin &Masalha, 2011). As Saudi nationals fought in Iraq, relations with Iran feared that relations between GCC countries would entail a trade boycott.

During the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, coordinated efforts with the United States served a primary interest of protecting the Saudi monarchy (Aydin, 2013). Economically, the Arab Spring forced Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries to provide mutual support for Bahrain and Oman while competition with Qatar intensified. International relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran became more turbulent as both countries struggled to occupy a hegemonic geopolitical position bridging the Middle East and Central Asia (Aydin, 2013). Moreover, Saudi support for Syria during the early stages of the Arab Spring shaped led to sharply conflicted relations with the United States. In other words, the turbulent history of Saudi-Iranian relations has significant economic impacts for Tajikistan¹⁷.

¹⁷ Personal interview: Barotzoda Faizullo, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

Overall, while GCC countries provided employment to millions of migrant workers over twenty years, the research literature presents very little information about remittances sent from Saudi Arabia to Tajikistan (Naufal&Garc, 2014). As follows, the amounts of remittances sent from Saudi Arabia to Tajikistan increases as the Saudi economy grows. The macroeconomic effects of remittance flows from Saudi Arabia suggest that expansion of local economies will result in higher rates of returns (Naufal&Garc, 2014). However, higher rates of domestic returns in Saudi Arabia lead to lower remittance flows as higher rates of foreign increase such flows. Political instability between Iran and Saudi Arabia thus has an economic impact on Tajik-GCC relations. As Iran and Saudi Arabia compete for regional economic domination while having an explicitly anti-Western, remittance flows from the Middle East to Tajikistan affect fiscal and monetary policies.

Unfortunately, agricultural subsidies for Saudi Arabia remain economically feasible and environmentally unsustainable (Woertz et al., 2008). Saudi Arabia now plans to phase out domestic wheat production by 2016 to preserve water resources. Phasing out wheat production will make way for the production of fruits and vegetables that will likely increase the monetary value of crops (Woertz et al., 2008). Yet, as is the case with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), sharp increases in population, declining incentives for entering agriculture as an economic practice, and lack of water resources shape Tajik-GCC relations on a basis of an ability to export goods between nations (Woertz et al., 2008). As global food markets continue to have declining surpluses, countries in South and Southeast Asia place restrictions on what

foods they can export. As a result, open-door policy frameworks may involve Tajikistan placing restrictions on food imports in coming years. Future research efforts should therefore focus on how food production in Tajikistan and Saudi Arabia, along with the remaining GCC countries, shapes foreign policy directives.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE is Tajikistan's largest trading partner. Tajik leaders express high level of comfort with investing their money in the urban centers of Dubai and Abu Dhabi¹⁸, as these two cities facilitated its role as a key economic player in recent years (Aydin, 2013). Having a population of nearly eight million—with nearly 75 percent identifying as foreign expatriates—the UAE consists of seven emirates scattered on the Hormuz strait of the Persian Gulf with six tribes dominating monarchical rule. For example, the Bani Yas tribe rules the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai (Aydin, 2013). The tribal ruler of Abu Dhabi is also the President while the tribal ruler of Dubai stands in line as the next Vice President. Nevertheless, Dubai is a regional and global leader in economic diversification such that its food processing plants and cement factors provide expatriate workers with some incentive to stay. The city of Dubai has a booming tourism industry largely generated by the use of expatriate labor (Aydin, 2013). The tourism industry in Dubai also provides wealthy Europeans with a vacation spot during holiday.

¹⁸ Personal interview: Anonymous speaker, Dushanbe, Jan. 2016

Concerning migration issues, the UAE's has nearly 50 percent of its labor force originating from South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. As of 2013, only 16 percent of the UAE population identified as Shi'a Muslim, while 80 percent identified as Sunni Muslim (Aydin, 2013). With an average GDP per capita of \$48,000 US, the UAE has ten percent of global oil reserves. The emirate and city of Dubai abides by a free market economic philosophy by investing in global projects that attract the attention of business executives in recent years¹⁹. However, the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009 brought on economic recession to the UAE.

Despite having a status as the leading emirate to diversify a national and regional economy, Dubai had to borrow money from Abu Dhabi while it also had to postpone loan repayments to that emirate (Aydin, 2013). The Arab Spring movement shaped internal economic relations within the UAE at local levels to ward off public outcries. Between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the two emirates have administrative veto power in either providing or prohibiting the uses of intelligence, military, and police force in the UAE (Aydin, 2013). Moreover, the UAE has a Federal National Council that oversees the distribution of economic and political power given to each emirate. Larger emirates like Dubai and Abu Dhabi receive most of the economic spoils while smaller states inevitably receive very little.

As mentioned in the previous section on Saudi Arabia, the UAE has an agricultural industry that, despite its promises for the Middle East, remains largely

¹⁹ Personal interview: Zuhursho Rahmatulloev, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

unsustainable in economic terms (Aydin, 2013; Woertz et al., 2008). Agricultural markets in the UAE have a greater exposure to market volatility than they do in Saudi Arabia (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). Issues concerning food security in local and regional geographic contexts prompt both the UAE and Tajikistan to consider what types of agricultural investments each nation should make (Woertz et al., 2008). Importantly, the UAE currently invests in technological innovations to produce agricultural products (Aydin, 2013). To make for its lacking agricultural sector, the UAE has a relatively successful industry that provides intermediate levels of economic self-sufficiency (Aydin, 2013). Yet, regardless of food security concerns, Tajikistan is one of several Central Asian nations with an increase in FDI flows from both China and GCC countries. FDI flows draw from developments in the telecommunications and energy sectors. Despite enhancements to these two industries, Tajikistan needs to put significant efforts in transportation sector to be able to help with this ongoing concern²⁰.

Tajikistan still has only one direct flight to the city of Dubai. Moreover, the UAE tends to avoid political discussions in preferring to address business and trade affairs. International relations between Tajikistan and the UAE did not start until 1995 when President Rahmon met with UAE's Prime Minister to sign memorandums against double taxation²¹. In August 1997, Tajikistan opened trade mission to the

²⁰ Personal interview: Anonymous speaker, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

²¹ Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, Department of Asian and African countries, folder on Tajikistan and UAE agreements, "Declaration about the further evolution of the relations between TJ and UAE", Dushanbe, 1995, p. 14-15

UAE. Conversely, the UAE channeled \$250,000 in foreign aid to Tajikistan²². Regarding FDI flows, Tajikistan does not have the authority to nationalize or confiscate foreign investments. Although little research has been done about FDI flows between Tajikistan and the UAE, one observation worth noting is how foreign investments between these nations represent a type of foreign aid for the former (Woertz et al., 2008). Exceptions to restrictions against nationalizing or confiscating foreign investments occur in cases of natural disasters, epidemics, and other cases as decided upon by Parliament. In these cases, investors originally intent on investing in economic development receive compensation provided that money used in foreign aid complied with legal standards.

Despite the research gap on FDI flows between the UAE and Tajikistan, some of the literature noted how both nations work to provide each other with a sense of international and regional support. While the UAE is a “rentier state” that earns most of its income through production in the oil and gas sector, investments made in Western countries shape foreign policy development between this GCC country and Tajikistan (Aydin, 2013, p. 127). A rentier economy has significant importance for continued oil production in the Middle East and Central Asia because of an inability to establish multi-purpose economic systems. Even after the Arab Spring movement, the UAE has around eight million US dollars invested in the oil and gas industry (Aydin, 2013). Rentier states use oil money to keep the monarchy at bay especially as

²² Archive of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan, department of Foreign Trade and Economic Policies, International Relations division. Inquiry on bilateral Tajik-UAE relations, 1997, p. 16-17

domestic policy suggests that UAE citizens do not participate fully in political processes. In other words, The Arab Spring has implications for Tajik-GCC relations, as this contemporary historical event suggests that economic success in a global economy depends on how much political clout nations give to citizens. Relations between the UAE and Tajikistan have an overlooked historical past suggesting early efforts at developing bilateral trade agreements in regional and global contexts. In 2005, the first Tajik work groups led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs visited political leaders in the UAE to discuss the possibility of implementing effective bilateral trade agreements. After several meetings over the course of two years, Tajik-UAE relations strengthened. December of 2007 launched the first high-profile visit of the UAE Foreign Minister to Tajikistan. The UAE Foreign Minister stressed the importance of opening diplomatic relations to boost international cooperation (Ergasheva, 2007; “Skoro v Dushanbe,” 2007). Until 2012, no major actions bolstered Tajik-UAE relations though the UAE regularly disbursed foreign aid to Tajikistan²³. The annual reports indicate that Tajikistan for some time has been the second biggest receiver of the UAE foreign aid in the Central Asian region, ranking just after Kazakhstan (Appendix 3).

Interestingly, GCC countries often fail to report how much aid they donate because of a lack in regulatory mechanisms enforcing full disclosure of charitable contributions (Villanger, 2007). Disclosing such amounts would weaken internal relations for religious reasons. Even more important is how maintaining a largely

²³ Personal interview: Mukhtar Aliev, Doha, May 2015

expatriate labor force in the UAE affects international relations with Tajikistan (Naufal&Gerc, 2014). Unfortunately, no information to date indicates how immigration flows from Tajikistan to the UAE affect the development of bilateral trade agreements through open door policy frameworks. Future research may benefit from investigating the macro- and micro-economic effects of labor migration on FDI flows between the UAE and Tajikistan (Naufal&Gerc, 2014). Studies linking the economic factors of migration flows to UAE with Tajik-GCC relations allow researchers to analyze the effects of FDI flows on local and regional economies. As a nation sending large amounts of remittances to Tajikistan, an inference to make is that the UAE has a substantial migrant labor force from the Central Asian country. Because the GCC countries have a global status as sending some of the largest remittances to home countries, the policy implications drawn from insights found in future studies have significance for advancing a more developed understanding of Tajik-GCC relations.

In the next section on Qatar, Tajik-GCC relations confirm the theoretical insights of Wiseman (2010) regarding institutional isomorphism in foreign policy development. Based on policies regarding how students in GCC countries receive an education to succeed in a global economy, concerns about the hope for Qatar in succeeding as a leader in technological innovations often result in clashes over which policies have the most relevant fit for developing more balanced foreign policy directives. Unfortunately, no information to date emphasizes the importance of education within the context of Tajik-GCC relations. However, with respect to the

role of Qatar as a leader in technological innovations, adopting Western standards appears most inevitable (Wiseman, 2010). Institutional isomorphism in Qatar, in other words, shapes Tajik-GCC relations such that balanced foreign policy directives within a global economic framework must allow a compromise of religious differences.

Qatar

As one of the smaller GCC countries, Qatar enjoys a privileged place in the Tajik-GCC relations due to a mutual interest in cooperation and continuous efforts in boosting bilateral relations. With the national capital city of Doha operating as an economic hub, Qatar has a budding media and entertainment industry largely influenced by the popularity of the Al-Jazeera news network. Extending in to Central Asia, Qatar was among the first GCC states to recognize Tajikistan's independence. The first milestone followed from the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan to Qatar. During that meeting, memorandums on the coordination on various political issues, trade and economic relations and as well as development of bilateral cultural relations were signed²⁴. Official archives indicate that since 2000, there was a very low level of exchange in terms of visits or cooperation. However, May of 2007 suggested a turning point in Tajik-Qatari relations with a special focus on the investment opportunities in Tajikistan.

²⁴ Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, Department of Asian and African countries, folder on Tajikistan and Qatar, "Declaration of further relations development between Tajikistan and Qatar", 1993.

The negotiations of that visit resulted in the signing of four documents: the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, MoU between the Chambers of Commerce as well as inter-state agreements on Protection of Mutual Investments and Economic, Trade and Technical Support. Meanwhile, the first Tajik-Qatari business forum was also conducted in the framework of that visit (Ergasheva, 2007). In July of 2007, the Qatari senior delegation paid official work visit to Tajikistan. The Minister of Economy and Finance, Yousef Hussain Kamal, led the discussion on industrial, energy, construction and banking sectors (Mannonov, 2007). Negotiations ultimately had an economic impact of increasing FDI flows from Qatar into Tajikistan²⁵. However, the only scholarly literature available concerning this impact addresses global FDI levels since 2010 (Toone, 2012). The implications of this economic impact suggest that the focus of negotiations was on promoting short-term growth. At the same time, the available research on FDI focuses on investment funds flowing *into* Qatar.

Despite the research gap, FDI inflows between Qatar and Tajikistan have implications for interpreting percentages of similar inflows on a global scale (Toone, 2012). Qatar is one of many GCC countries that continue to resist Western economic influences particularly from the United States and the EU (Cronin & Masalha, 2011). Tajik-Iranian relations further shape its position as a global political leader in terms of foreign policy development. In 2008, Qatar used its political position as a member of the UN Security Council to vote against nuclear sanctions in Iran as the nation's

²⁵ Personal interview: Ardasher Qodiri, Doha, May 2015

military general threatened to close off the Strait of Hormuz through “blitzkrieg” tactics (Cronin & Masalha, 2011, p. 13). Voting against nuclear sanctions in Iran resulted from mounting concerns over the contamination of regional water supplies that would have further damaged an already weak agricultural infrastructure. However, while Qatar voted against nuclear sanctions in Iran, no information is available about how this affected international relations with Tajikistan.

For GCC countries, the purpose of voting against nuclear sanctions was to exercise a type of regional economic control with supervision from political elites (Cronin & Masalha, 2011). In a seemingly underhanded move, French nuclear manufacturer Areva signed an electricity distribution and transmission deal with the Qatari government worth 700 million US dollars. This deal allowed Western firms to achieve economic and political objectives in Qatar and surrounding GCC countries as relations with the US served to increase production of nuclear technology (Cronin & Masalha, 2011). Considering how Qatar has a history of strong monarchical rule, open-door policy frameworks in this context have significant research implications for future studies in Tajik-GCC relations.

Future studies could investigate how adopting Western beliefs in technological innovation influenced the current political system. While Qatar liberalized its economic policies and re-wrote its constitution in the mid-1990s, the national government placed restrictions on how much the Al-Jazeera network could criticize political elites. For instance, the Qatari government strictly prohibits its citizens from engaging in public protest (Aydin, 2013). Moreover, during the Iraq

War and the Arab Spring, withdrawal of military forces did little to quell tensions between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.

Though Qatar has the potential to become an influential economic player in relations with Tajikistan, a tendency for exercising strong military force has severe regional consequences for Central Asia (Aydin, 2013). Striking a balance in foreign policy directives between Qatar and Tajikistan should not involve excessive use of military force to settle international conflicts. The post-Soviet civil war and the occupation of military troops in Afghanistan pose potential danger to national security and economic progress.

Concerns about economic progress in balancing Tajik-GCC relations suggest that excessive military force increases risks for market volatility and sector-specific shocks (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). Given the economic history of GCC countries, Qatar has the capacity to learn from its past mistakes. By embracing some Western standards, open door policy frameworks granted Qatar with opportunities to develop an influential media and communications industry.

The media and communications industry in Tajikistan could benefit from establishing contact with news networks like Al-Jazeera to spark global discussions of foreign policy affecting Tajik-GCC relations²⁶. As in Kuwait, economic volatility in Qatar has an idiosyncratic history unique to specific industrial sectors (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). The risk for shocks resulting from such an idiosyncratic history suggests that market volatility relies on specific country-related components

²⁶ Personal interview: Erkin Kasymov, Dushanbe, Dec. 2015

reflective of domestic policy. By extension, foreign policy directives that establish peaceful Tajik-GCC relations suggest a need for improvements in domestic policy.

Kuwait

As another of the smaller GCC countries, Kuwait has an economic history shaped by oil discovery in the 1930s. While the United Kingdom had placed an initial stake in Kuwaiti oil fields, in early 1970s, Kuwait led to independence and full control over oil production in the nation (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). However, the 1980s brought on consecutive years of negative economic growth with losses of at least 3.6 percent per year. Economic shrinkage during the 1980s resulted in Kuwait having difficulties of achieving growth at the beginning of the 1990s (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). Despite difficulties, Kuwait started to experience annual economic growth rates of at least 4.4 percent. Market volatility remained high in nearly all GCC countries with the exception of Oman.

Strikingly, a surge in economic growth during the 1990s heightened market volatility as the First Gulf War represented an idiosyncratic economic event presenting greater risk for shocks (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). Since the 1990s, Kuwait's economy continues to experience economic growth despite continued resistance against fully adopting Western-based policies based on a strong Muslim identity. Unfortunately, very little research information was available at the time of this study to conduct a thorough analysis of how market volatility affects international

relations between Kuwait and Tajikistan. However, regarding economic policy between the two nations, Kuwait remains the only GCC country that uses a “basket” of exchange units while including the US dollar as the central unit of currency for trade (Naufal&Gerc, 2014, p. 10). Even fewer studies examine relationships between FDI, remittances, and economic growth with respect towards the development of foreign policy directives. Despite this research gap, some of the literature suggests a complicated relationship.

First interactions between Kuwait and Tajikistan can be dated back to 1992. In February of that year a delegation from Kuwait consisting of representative from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of Oil, Kuwait Development Fund and other high-rank authorities visited Tajikistan. Later, in April 1995 the President of Tajikistan paid an official visit to the State of Kuwait. Worth noting that this was the first official Tajik President’s visit to the Gulf States. President Rahmon’s visit culminated in signing several cooperation agreements in science, trade, economic and technical support, as well as support for mutual investments and protocol on bilateral MFA consultations.²⁷

Until recently, Tajikistan cooperated with Kuwait within the framework of the multilateral cooperation. Tajikistan received loan money from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development for several projects. However, an analysis of the Annual Reports indicated that the loan provision started in 2003 (Kuwait Fund for

²⁷ Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, Department of Asian and African countries, folder on Kuwait, “Declaration of further development of the relations between Tajikistan and Kuwait”, 1995, p.2-3

Arab Economic Development, 2004). Kuwait and Saudi Arabia expressed their solidarity during the Tajik humanitarian crisis in winter 2008. Kuwait disbursed \$5 million to Tajikistan for eliminating the damages experienced in the winter crisis²⁸.

With the establishment of the Tajik Embassy to Kuwait in 2013, bilateral relations improved significantly. President Rahmon arrived for an official visit to Kuwait City and personally inaugurated the new diplomatic mission (Khover, 2013). His visit also resulted in signing of additional seven interstate agreements that sustain positive bilateral relations. The overall purpose of boosting relations with Tajikistan was to provide support for its political infrastructure.

Implications for future research suggest that more studies on how economic volatility affects Tajik-GCC relations could draw insights from comparing and contrasting risks for shocks in Iran. To wit, the research literature has not emphasized how economic volatility in Iran influences Tajik-GCC relations. Though GCC countries produce FDI flows from remittances sent by expatriate workers in the UAE, similar flows from Kuwait to Tajikistan remain severely overlooked. Because of this oversight, the research implications suggest a need to determine how open door policy frameworks can help strike a balance in protecting against shocks resulting from market volatility in both Kuwait and Tajikistan. For the last two GCC countries of Bahrain and Oman, international relations with Tajikistan suggest a stronger tendency towards adopting bilateral trade agreements.

²⁸ Personal interview: Ardasher Qodiri, Doha, May 2015

Bahrain and Oman

The economic literature on Bahrain notes now that despite its membership in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), it remain largely inactive on a global scale aside from oil production (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). Interestingly, Bahrain has a largely overlooked reputation as the “earliest diversifier” by participating in “other activities” such as real estate, public administration, education, and health (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010, p. 6). For example, during the 1980s, other activities comprised approximately half of Bahrain's economy. Moreover, nearly ten percent of Bahrain's GDP derives from further diversification efforts during the 1980s that included the manufacturing sector (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). Yet, in spite of economic diversification, Bahrain remains vulnerable to market volatility and shocks. However, compared to other GCC countries, market volatility in Bahrain maintains a surprising level of consistency.

Still, the information presented in the research literature has limited availability and the most recently published studies to date note the effect of market volatility in Bahrain only until 2005 (Koren&Tenreyro, 2010). Because of this large research gap, the effects on Tajik-GCC relations suggest a need to conduct extensive investigations into how market volatility in Bahrain influences foreign policy development. For Oman, on the other hand, having an openness to technological innovation in the same manner as Qatar indicates how education influences Tajik-GCC relations concerning domestic and foreign policy (Wiseman, 2010).

Though overlooked in the scholarly literature, Oman has importance for how open door policy frameworks enhance global trade networks through increased privatization of businesses in multiple sectors and industries (Toone, 2012). In many ways, the economic trajectory taken by Oman has remarkable similarities with the UAE in that the capital city of Muscat has a trade-dominated economy. However, as Bahrain often experiences lower rates of inflation in spite recent political instability resulting from the Arab Spring, Oman has an economic history of experiencing high inflation (Toone, 2012). With respect to foreign policy development, hardly any research information to date articulates how improved international relations between Tajikistan, Bahrain, and Oman encourage economic development by establishing bilateral and even multilateral trade agreements.

An extremely limited number of diplomatic meetings have taken place between Tajikistan and Bahrain as well as between Tajikistan and Oman. Despite this gap, Tajikistan intends to improve relations by encouraging investors in Bahrain and Oman to develop bilateral trade agreements²⁹. Such agreements would bolster the hydroelectric, tourism, and mining industries of Tajikistan (“Huge Potential,” 2014). For Oman, cooperation remains a central feature of international relations with Tajikistan.

In 2010, when Tajikistan experienced earthquakes and flooding, Oman provided foreign aid in the sum of \$3 million to support the reconstruction of houses, schools, and mosques. In addition to that, with the spillover of the Yemeni crisis and

²⁹ Personal interview: Azamsho Sharifi, Dushanbe, Feb. 2016

launch of the Saudi Operation Restoring Hopes, Tajik side asked Oman to assist with the evacuation of its citizens from Yemen through their territory to Dubai. This request was quickly handled by the Omani side and Tajik citizens safely returned home.³⁰ Aside from this information, the research information on diplomatic relations between Tajikistan, Bahrain, and Oman deserves more in-depth investigations of how providing foreign aid to a relatively developing country in Central Asia bolsters economic growth. Though many large gaps remain present in the research literature, the available information allows for a comparison of advantages and disadvantages of how diplomatic relations shape foreign policy developments between Tajikistan and GCC countries.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Contemporary Tajik-GCC Relations

Tajik-GCC relations indicate positive growth. However, the strength of international relations in this geopolitical context reflects indicators of local and regional influence, political influence of leaders, mutual agreement between political leaders, and the potential for economic expansion. The research findings indicated that Tajik-GCC relations do not always reflect the political and economic realities of native Tajiks. Possible efforts for cooperation building between Tajikistan and GCC countries imply economic expansion of the hydropower, mining, and tourism

³⁰ Personal interview: Ardasher Qodiri, Doha, May 2015

industries³¹. Indeed, there are huge flows of investments coming from the regional hegemons such as China for instance. But for Tajikistan, the relations with the Gulf States are very crucial. It considers the Gulf State as a natural ally and feels more comfortable while cooperating with them based on the shared historical interaction, culture and religion. Especially in the light of the present events that are happening in the wider Muslim world, for Tajikistan now the top priority became the political stability in the country. In that context, having strong and friendly relations with the Gulf States are of an equal importance.³²

The hydroelectric power industry of Tajikistan suggests a possibility for obtaining a dominant position in Central Asia. Exporting hydropower resources to Central Asia and even South Asia poses major complications because of migration policies favoring low- or semi-skilled male workers employed only on a temporary basis (Sasikumar, 2014). Because of its heavily mountainous terrain, Tajikistan risks losing \$200 million annually for not having the resources to export its hydroelectric capacity. Despite this major drawback, US-backed foreign aid donated \$15 million towards expanding the Tajik hydroelectric power industry (U.S. Department of State, 2013). Considering its international relations with China, Russia, and India, the economic future of Tajik-GCC relations relies on a leveraging of soft power over consumers through a strategic combination of bandwagoning and balancing foreign policy efforts.

³¹ Personal interview: Erkin Kasymov, Dushanbe, Dec. 2015

³² Personal interview: Ardasher Qodiri, Doha, May 2015

The current state of Tajik-GCC relations remain critical for economic development in Central Asia. Tajikistan views GCC countries as geopolitical allies along historical, cultural, and religious lines. Because of the turmoil in Tajik-Afghan relations, the only possible method of importing and exporting goods into Tajikistan is to access routes along the Pakistani coast. Therefore, Tajikistan has highest interest in stability and peace in Afghanistan, which gives cause for establishing an important political projects³³. Support from Russia will likely facilitate the strengthening of Tajik-Afghan relations, though future research is necessary for any findings to provide any significant implications for foreign policy and practice.

³³ Personal interview: Erkin Kasymov, Dushanbe, Dec. 2015

Chapter Four: Discussion of Results and Implications for Future Research

To wit, this study was the first to explore the history of foreign policy developments as grounded in international relations between Tajikistan and GCC countries. In the foreign policy arena, such historical explanations have a formative influence in providing rich material for constructing possible alternatives to nation-building (Rosenau, 1969). The findings of this study indicated that Tajik-GCC relations stem from historical tradition dating back to the eighth century CE when the Samanid Empire was the first official Tajik state. Tajik-Arab relations began to deteriorate after the Turkic Invasion and deteriorated further after Tajikistan was no longer a protectorate of the Soviet Union. During its initial stages of independent statehood, Tajikistan was not able to accommodate itself to rapid shifts of the global economy. Complications in foreign policy developments resulted as the post-Soviet conflict from 1992 to 1997 coalesced with the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 1996. After the post-Soviet conflict, Tajik foreign policy consisted of three goals related to national survival, securing foreign aid or nation-building efforts, and developing effective national security policies. A large military presence of Russia reflected how Tajik foreign policy was bandwagoning strategy against political isolation.

The 9/11 terrorist-attacks involved US-led efforts encouraging Tajikistan to re-strengthen its international ties with GCC countries based on common cultural and religious ties. In the Tajik capital city of Dushanbe, President Rahmon identified a

need to include foreign policy mechanisms for preventing future terrorist attacks. Russian and US-led military efforts effectively led to Tajikistan applying a more balanced approach to foreign policy development. Balanced foreign policy efforts aimed to secure a place for Tajikistan in the global economy such that the introduction of open door policy frameworks suggested a willingness to cooperate on an international level. Open door foreign policy frameworks indicated a potential strengthening of Tajik-GCC relations with a special focus on bilateral trade agreements.

From the interview data, Tajikistan is in the process of engaging in diplomatic actions to guarantee stable economic flows. Despite the risk for growing tensions between Tajikistan, Russia, and Iran, the preliminary hypothesis is that, from a Tajik perspective, foreign policy efforts in Tajikistan have historical and cultural patterns of political behavior as underscored by early post-Soviet era political ideology receives only partial support. While historical and cultural developments indeed determined current Tajik-GCC relations, securing national interests after the 1991 Soviet collapse remained a top priority.

Contemporary perspectives on Tajik-GCC relations indicate a strong need for cooperation in the hydro-energy, tourism, and mining industries. However, barriers to cooperation in Tajik-GCC relations slow down the process of implementing effective foreign policy regulations. From this, future studies may want to further their understanding of how open door theoretical frameworks affect foreign policy development between small and larger states. Typically, smaller states do not have an

influential role in global economics, international relations between them and neighboring states provide insights for evaluating how foreign policy efforts may rely either on bandwagoning or balancing strategies.

Limitations of the Research

The following limitations of this study are worth noting. Perhaps the insufficient and inadequate amount of scientific research on Tajikistan was the most significant limitation. Another significant limitation was the lack of interview data. While an intended goal of this study was to conduct interviews with a large enough population sample, most of the desired participants indicated a lack of availability of a strong lack of interest in disclosing the diplomatic missions of Tajik-GCC relations. Only nine participants provided interview data for this study. However, despite the limited number of participants, in-depth qualitative interviews have methodological implications for future studies.

A third limitation to this study was how it did not assess present-day Tajik-GCC relations. The data lacked high quality for providing the researcher with an aim to explore possibilities for improving Tajik-GCC relations. A common limitation to conducting research in this area suggests a lack of reporting mechanisms for investigating the amount of foreign aid disbursed by GCC countries to Tajikistan. The available data indicate a general level of consistency in foreign aid disbursements over recent years, official reports were difficult to locate. As a result, the monetary

figures cited drew from observations of foreign aid disbursements by a ruling political party from notes in archived information drawing attention to the disbursements in critical periods.

Implications for Future Research

Because this study had an exploratory nature, the implications for future research are plentiful. The substantial number of large research gaps concerning Tajik-GCC relations indicate a further need to fulfill not only intellectual curiosity but also to test hypotheses of prior studies (Stebbins, 2001). However, this study relied on qualitative data from an extremely limited number of participants and information obtained from interviews with government representatives and non-state actors of Tajikistan with ties to GCC countries. Qualitative data useful to obtain research findings from the scholarly literature included references to news content, government documents, personal correspondence, and peer-reviewed academic studies.

As noted in the Introduction of this thesis, most of the research literature addressing issues on Tajikistan refer to this Central Asian nation in rather oblique ways. Drawing from the historical overview of Tajikistan, recent patterns of economic development by way of open door policy frameworks work to strike an important balance between local and regional economies. Tajik-GCC relations serve to provide a working model for achieving success in a global economy. Foreign

policy efforts involve the construction of bilateral trade agreements, though some GCC countries like Kuwait presented complicating factors referring to its use of multilateral agreements.

Continued patterns of diplomatic relations between Iran, Russia, and Tajikistan may also provide insights in future studies on how a Muslim religious identity shapes resistance to Western notions of global economic trade. While Tajik-Iranian relations depend on an affiliation of Persian identity and culture, Tajikistan maintains some influence from when it was a former member of the Soviet Union. Explorations in foreign policy directives between the three nations warrant future investigations on how to reconcile ideological differences founded in religious causes.

Despite how Tajikistan indicates significant potential to obtain a role as a key economic player for the Central Asian region, its geography prohibits the influx of essential goods. Future studies can then investigate the causes and effects of specific aspects related to foreign policy development within the context of providing regional security and political stability. Since Islam remains the dominant religion in both Tajikistan and GCC countries, open door policy frameworks must rely on a continued process of integration with Central Asia.

Issues of food security have critical importance especially for Tajikistan based on its heavily mountainous terrain. While GCC countries have relatively limited opportunities for fully engaging in strong agricultural policies, open door policy frameworks may involve Tajikistan placing restrictions on food imports in coming

years. The agricultural industry in Tajikistan and GCC countries does not give the impression of economic nor environmental sustainability. Preservation of water resources should hold top priority as the Middle East and Central Asia must now depend on global economic networks influenced by Western standards. With particular concern for Saudi Arabia, foreign policy directives may benefit from constructing trade agreements emphasizing the importance of food security and water supply.

Concerning relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), future studies may benefit from evaluating the macro- and micro-economic effects of labor migration on FDI flows between Tajikistan and other GCC countries. The effects of FDI flows have implications for the amount of funds sent as remittances sent by migrant laborers to their home country. For Qatar, future studies can investigate the effects of open door policy frameworks for controlling the production of nuclear technology. In light of recent negotiations between Iran and US over nuclear energy, future studies may provide clues for how this affects Tajik-GCC relations.

Also for Qatar, openness to technological innovation after economic liberalization warrants continued studies on how a media and entertainment industry has the potential to shape discussions about foreign policy directives. For the remaining GCC countries—Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman—future studies will benefit from investigating the effects of global economic expansion on foreign policy development. Results of this study indicated how an economic history of market volatilities presented significant risk for incurring shocks. Yet, a significant research

gap warrants in-depth studies about how market volatilities and risk for shock affect Tajik-GCC relations.

Perhaps the political and economic future of international relations between Tajikistan and GCC countries depends on a leveraging of consumer markets while striking an important balance in foreign policy developments. Relations between Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Russia, Iran, and China all affect the economic future of Central Asia. Enhancements to foreign policy directives will likely involve shifts in how Tajikistan and GCC countries negotiate over which routes for economic trade will produce the greatest profits for all involved parties. Although support from Russia and Iran has the potential to strengthen Tajik-GCC relations, the implications for policy and practice remain largely undiscovered.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking part in this study.

My name is Aziz Bobohojiev and I am a graduate student in the Gulf Studies Department of College of Arts and Sciences at the Qatar University. The study that I am conducting is a part of the research that will be done for my thesis. In sum, my thesis is about the Tajik-GCC diplomatic and socio-economic relations. It aims to determine what has led to the development of relations between the Gulf States and Tajikistan, and do the historical and cultural relations help in anyways in enforcing this relation. Further the study will analyze the economic relations between two parties and will suggest priorities for the development of cooperation in a short and long run.

For the sake of your time and availability, the interview will be conducted in a place and time that will suite you best. The interview will be made up of open-ended questions about the establishment and development of the relations of Tajikistan and GCC. Ideally, the interview will be 1 hour long, but however, it will not exceed 1,5 hour. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, and all responses to the questions will be kept confidential. You may refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time.

As was mentioned before, your participation is completely voluntarily, it will not have any financial benefits, nor it will pose any penalty on you in case of your withdrawal. Your participation, however, will help to better understand Tajik-GCC relations as well as their foreign policies towards each other as it is the first attempt in academia to map these relations. All the collected data will be strictly confidential and in no way will be shared with third parties. However, for the sake of quality assurance of the research, the interview might be shared with the thesis supervisor only. None of your identification information such as your name, title, employment institution... etc will be mentioned in the study, unless you wish to be cited. After the completion of this thesis project, only myself might use gathered information in the future while conducting further research on the relevant studies.

Although the interview will be conducted only once, I would seek your permission to contact you via e-mail or phone call in case of needed clarification of your answers.

Would you have any further questions or concerns about this study or the researcher himself, as well as your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact our University or the Supervisor:

Gulf Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences, Qatar University, PO Box: 2713, email: gulfstudiesprogram@qu.edu.qa; tel: +974 4403 6523.

Thesis Supervisor: *Dr. Abdullah Baabood, Director of Gulf Studies Center, College of Arts and Sciences, Qatar University. Email: baabood@qu.edu.qa; tel: +974 4403 4983.*

I am willing to participate in this study and by signing this consent form I hereby grant permission to use the information I provide for the purpose of the research.

Signature:

Date

Appendix B

Interview participants:

1. Mr. Azamsho Sharifi – former Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Advisor on Foreign Relations to the President of Tajikistan;
2. Mr. Ali Mubarak Al-Mohannadi – Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Republic of Tajikistan;
3. Mr. Ardasher Qodiri – former Head of Asian and African Department MoFA, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the State of Qatar;
4. Mr. Erkin Kasymov – former Deputy Minister of Tajik MoFA, Ambassador of Tajikistan to the UK;
5. Mr. Mukhtar Aliev – One of the first Tajik entrepreneurs established business in the UAE, currently Representative of Tajik Chamber of Commerce to the State of Qatar;
6. Mr. Zuhursho Rahmatullaev - CEO and co-founder of Alif Capital³⁴ and Peshraft Charity Fund (Tajikistan), Trustee of Tajikinvest Charitable Trust (UK);
7. Barotzoda Faizullo – Director of Center for Islamic Studies, Tajikistan;
8. Loiqnazar Imomi – Senior Specialist, Department of Analysis and Prediction of Foreign Policy, Center for Strategic Studies, Tajikistan;

³⁴ Established in 2014, this is the first and only organization in Tajikistan providing financial services based on the principles of Islamic banking.

9. Official from NGO specialized in a regional security, who preferred to stay anonymous

Appendix C

UAE Disbursements in 2012, against Commitments since 2010, by Country

Country	Funds Committed in 2010		Funds Committed in 2011		Funds Committed in 2012		Funds Disbursed in 2012	
	In AED	In US\$	In AED	In US\$	In AED	In US\$	In AED	In US\$
Afghanistan	46,415,720	12,637,005	-	-	18,732,300	5,100,000	28,262,978	7,694,793.90
Albania	-	-	183,650,000	50,000,000	-	-	63,671,719	17,335,071.88
Azerbaijan	-	-	223,000,000	60,713,313	-	-	193,607,832	52,711,089.57
Bahrain	183,650,000	50,000,000	44,340,000	12,071,876	-	-	17,210,932	4,685,796.90
Djibouti	-	-	-	-	25,711,000	7,000,000	25,711,000	7,000,000.00
Egypt	183,650,000	50,000,000	-	-	156,469,800	42,600,000	4,576,251	1,245,916.48
Eritrea	-	-	-	-	183,650,000	50,000,000	183,650,000	50,000,000.00
Gambia	-	-	36,730,000	10,000,000	-	-	7,428,503	2,022,462.02
Montenegro	43,600,000	11,870,406	-	-	-	-	23,162,130	6,306,052.27
Morocco	707,961,747	192,747,549	14,200,000	3,866,050	68,076,533	18,534,313	7,439,883	2,025,560.30
Somalia	-	-	-	-	1,250,000	340,321	686,313	186,853.53
Tajikistan	55,095,000	15,000,000	-	-	-	-	12,061,367	3,283,791.72
Tonga	-	-	18,365,000	5,000,000	-	-	18,365,000	5,000,000.00
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	14,692,000	4,000,000	11,019,000	3,000,000.00
Multi-country (Global)	91,825,000	25,000,000	2,571,100	700,000	-	-	19,099,600	5,200,000.00

UAE Foreign Aid Disbursements, by Continent, Region, Country and Assistance Category (In AED, 2013)

Continent Region Country	Development	Humanitarian	Charity	Total
Central Asia	30,562,759	673,000	13,656,395	44,892,154
Kazakhstan	13,899,238	368,000	11,733,771	26,001,009
Tajikistan	12,592,421	305,000	1,292,622	14,190,043
Kyrgyzstan	3,890,000		540,002	4,430,002
Turkmenistan	180,000			180,000
Uzbekistan	1,100		90,000	91,100

Source: Source: Annual reports from the UAE Ministry of International Cooperation and Development