

Political and security alliances between GCC and Pakistan: a case study of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar

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Abstract: A country's geostrategic position is critical to its economic growth and development, particularly regarding its international border interactions. Pakistan is located on the Gulf's doorstep. The countries of the Persian Gulf are usually recognised as the global economic epicentre due to oil and natural gas resources. The study's overarching purpose was to better comprehend Pakistan's diplomatic ties with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. The study focused on their political, religious, cultural, and economic collaboration. The paper sought to focus on and deepen understanding of how mutual collaboration and a security alliance might generate mutual benefits. How successful has the political coalition of these states been in the face of religious divisions, economic challenges, and external threats from India, Afghanistan, and Iran? This study used qualitative research methods such as analysis, description, and argumentation. This study relied on primary and secondary sources, using a qualitative approach. Books, magazines, earlier studies and findings, articles, and case studies were the tools most often employed by researchers. The research shows that the Gulf states and Pakistan have been allies for decades, working together to secure their territory from global threats and assisting each other in economic and political advancement.

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1. Introduction

A country's geostrategic position is critical to its economic growth and development, particularly in terms of its international border interactions. Pakistan's advantageous location near the Gulf's coast gives it an attractive gateway for trade with Gulf Cooperation Council member countries. That is why Pakistan is known as the Gulf's front yard. The countries of the Persian Gulf (which produce oil and natural gas) are usually recognised as the global economic epicentre. The previous four decades saw a major shift in the Gulf region due to the discovery of oil and other mineral resources, which had a global impact due to the region's rapid economic expansion. In addition to the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, Gibraltar, the Bosphorus, Malacca, and Panama, and the Gulf of Mexico are the world's six major waterways. As a result, the Gulf of Mexico is one of the world's six major waterways (Javaid & Jathol, 2015).

Since the discovery of oil, the Gulf region has been plagued by wars, abrupt outbreaks of unrest that caused the state to collapse, rapid shifts in alliances, intra-Arab and regional crises, superpower interference, and societal difficulties. The Gulf states have struggled to create a strong military and political coalition since the oil boom. They began building new partnerships outside of the Arab world to ensure the ongoing production and safety of their oil. Pakistan helped Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman secure their borders, protect oil wells, and increase oil field output in 1971 by providing military and skilled people (Hasnat, 2011). The common Islamic ideals of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were critical in developing and deepening the two nations' political and security ties. Saudi King Saud bin Abdul Aziz originally created this connection on a visit to Islamabad in 1954. By agreeing to support each other in local and international politics, the two countries' ties grew stronger. King Saud signed a long-term political pact between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which declared that "Saudi Arabia and Pakistan will support each other and work towards maintaining peace in the region" (Weinbaum & Khurram, 2014).

Saudi Arabia provided Pakistan with oil to help it develop nuclear weapons, bolstering Saudi Arabia's influence in the region in its war against Iran. After all of these conflicts and challenges, the 2011 "Arab Spring" movement brought about new change in the Gulf area. Throughout this new wave of change, the Saudi, Qatari, and Omani elites recognised the importance of having robust support from outside the Middle East. To better their political and security systems, the Gulf states realised that they needed to build a strong partnership with Pakistan in their security politics. Therefore, they struck a long-term agreement with Pakistan (Panda, 2012).

Over the last few decades, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman have all shown an increasing interest in each other's security issues. Furthermore, three of these countries, namely the US and Pakistan, benefit economically from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman due to the large number of employment accessible to Pakistani nationals working overseas. These expats have played an important role in the Gulf states' progress and prosperity. Pakistan must handle its relationships with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman with zeal and determination in order to achieve the aims of "giving" security and "receiving" financial aid in order to maintain Pakistan's military system (Khan, 2015). The US has stationed security forces in these countries to ensure their protection, but this cannot replace the security services Pakistan has provided in the past or the security agreements it currently has with these countries.

Let us now discuss Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman's security cooperation with Pakistan. Mohammad Bin Suleiman, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, visited Pakistan in February 2019 and committed \$30 billion in investments and loans to assist restore the country's dilapidated infrastructure. Accepting the Crown Prince's invitation underlined Pakistani leaders' willingness to collaborate with Saudi Arabia. The welfare state and increased employment possibilities for Pakistan's impoverished were key goals of the two countries' accord. Saudi Arabia has frequently offered financial aid to Pakistan in order to support that country's weak government and economy. Leaders from both countries reaffirmed their commitment to assisting and empowering the people of Pakistan in a subsequent summit of this type (Jones & Roberts, 1983). This time, Saudi Arabia planned to invest \$10 billion in a new oil refinery and petrochemicals complex in Pakistan to counter Iran's ambitions to become a major energy provider. Qatar is also a participant with ambitions to supply LNG to Pakistan in exchange for significant investments (Ayaz & Javed, 2016). Regardless of Saudi Arabia's efforts to isolate Qatar, Pakistan's Prime Minister, Imran Khan, accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan. HE Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, and HE Mr. Imran Khan, President of Pakistan, met for an official meeting to examine possibilities for their countries to collaborate in the production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) (Anwar, 2006). Furthermore, Saudi Arabia intends to finance Pakistan up to \$12 billion immediately for the purpose of manufacturing military weapons and improving infrastructure (Wolf, 2021). Given the scenario below, any change in Pakistan will undoubtedly enhance Saudi Arabia's goal to consolidate power and govern the region.

Pakistan was also willing to provide its armed forces to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman in order to strengthen the security situation in these four nations. From 1980 to 1988, while Iraq and Iran were at war, Pakistan played a critical role in preventing a wider Muslim civil war. Pakistani government representatives visited Saudi Arabia and Qatar to express their support for those countries' efforts to maintain regional stability (Wirsing, 1996). Pakistan took a neutral stance and sought a peaceful resolution to the dispute amongst Muslim countries. Pakistan presented a variety of diplomatic ideas about this problem at the international gathering of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Strategy, 2021). Furthermore, Arabia, Qatar, and Oman should any unexpected strikes occur during this fight. Pakistan's diverse relations with the Gulf core states serve as the foundation for its interactions with these Gulf states.

Because Pakistan is an important country, we will also look at Oman, with whom it has tight bilateral relations. People can move between Pakistan and Oman for a variety of reasons, such as their proximity to the rest of the Gulf states. As a result of these factors, the troops and governments of the two countries have grown closer. Oman is strategically vital to Pakistan because it serves as a hub connecting the remainder of the Arabian Peninsula (Sial, 2015). High-level talks continued throughout the 1980s, commencing with General Zia-ul-Haq's visit to Muscat, when he met with King Sultan Qaboos to discuss peacefully creating an alliance. Multiple conflicts between Iraq and Iran, as well as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, brought the two countries together (Mukhtar et al., 2019). During General Zia's leadership in Pakistan, meetings like these were held often to discuss the country's myriad internal and external challenges. General Zia-ul-Haq's discussions with King Sultan Qaboos were critical in establishing security connections. The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan had an impact on the region; thus, a meeting was organised to examine strategies to stop the war between Iraq and Iran (McLaughlin & Corps, 2003).

These countries, which are physically adjacent to one another, are linked through interesting and historic defence and security links. In the 1960s and 1970s, Pakistani Baloch made up a substantial percentage of the Oman Army. Pakistan was keen to give security resources to Oman during its early years of independence when the country was dealing with a southern insurgency. Oman's decision later in 2010 to pursue strategic collaborations with Pakistan, despite the latter country's lack of defence capabilities, was inspired by the security alliance between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which prompted Oman to safeguard its territories from external assaults. Both the United States and Iran have considerable power over oil reserves. Currently, around 175,000 Pakistanis live and work in Oman (Ayaz & Javed, 2016). Pakistani residents and their contributions to Oman aided in the strengthening of Pakistan-Oman military ties (Malik, 2012).

The third major Gulf state's ties with Pakistan are discussed. Previous studies have devoted little attention to this element. Qatar needed security during its early years after independence in 1971. Concern for public safety drove the establishment of Qatar's modern administration soon after the country's independence (Asseri, 2022). Because of a shortage of domestically trained troops, Qatar has to turn outside the country to fill its military forces. At the time, some 15,000 Pakistani military had pledged to safeguard Qatar. Furthermore, Pakistani police officers who are well-organised and well-trained were sent to Qatar to train the local police force. We also brought in a few trustworthy consultants and technical assistants (Batool, n.d.). Pakistan contributed to the Qatari Tank Battalion, which fought in the Gulf War in 1991, stationing them near the Saudi-Iranian border. Those battalions performed brilliantly in warfare and in preventing the occupation of territory on the Saudi side of the Iraqi border (Curtis, 2007). Pakistan and Qatar were eager to collaborate on security issues in the 2000s. Therefore, they signed a series of security and defence treaties with each other. The graph below depicts the evolution of the two countries' military ties over time.

Political links also played a significant role in Qatar-Pakistan relations. In times of crisis, such as the Iraq-Iran War (1990-1991), the Arab Spring of 2011, and the Gulf Crisis of 2017, both countries rallied behind one another. In 1971, Qatari and Pakistani officials met to consider forming friendly cooperation, but tensions with India remained, and local difficulties surfaced. As a result, Pakistan was unable to use the money it was supposed to receive from Qatar's oil production to fund armament manufacturing and border security ((Ghoshal, 2015)). Pakistan included Qatar in its nuclear plan as the government became increasingly concerned about its land after the 1971 battle. Both Pakistan and India, both nuclear powers, claim Kashmir. Pakistan has never claimed sovereignty over Kashmir; instead, it has called for an impartial poll to be monitored by the UN to ascertain the actual desire of the Kashmiri people and free them from illegitimate Indian tyranny. As the Muslim majority in Kashmir proclaimed their desire for independence, Qatar took the lead in settling the conflict and allied with Pakistan (Hussain, 2021). In 2017, the Gulf crisis erupted as the most important political issue between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Saudi Arabia broke links with Qatar, banned exports, took control of the country's border, and enforced an illegal embargo. Throughout the blockade, Pakistan fought hard to maintain relations with both countries since it was important that the country's devastated economy continue to receive the constant supply of humanitarian funds it needs. Pakistan's stance was once more favourable to Qatar, but it has recently turned to neutrality.

The influence of Jihad is one of the most serious challenges in these countries. In the 1980s, Afghan mujahedeen, funded by the US, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and many other Arab funders,

decided to battle Soviet soldiers from their hideouts in Afghanistan's rugged terrain. Since the 9/11 attacks on New York, the Pentagon, and other US targets, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (the Afghan Taliban, particularly its Haqqani Network) has been fighting against American and NATO soldiers from bases in Afghanistan and Pakistani cities such as Abbottabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, and Quetta. At a session in Doha, Qatar's capital, it was agreed that Afghan Taliban leaders may remain in the country. Some of the top-ranking US were at that meeting, and those three countries, as well as Qatar, met. Pakistan, together with Qatar, took a stern position in order to settle the issue between the US and Taliban commanders. Given that Afghanistan is Pakistan's border and a possible security danger, the government has considered liberating that country from American influence a primary objective. Despite US repression in Afghanistan, Qatar's relations with the Afghan government remain cordial, thanks to many security agreements signed between the two nations in the past. Pakistan and Qatar both backed Afghanistan to preserve regional peace and limit American influence (Khan, 2015).

1.1. Research problem

In the 1970s, when the Gulf States were just establishing and attempting to achieve regional power balance, most of them lacked secure borders. As a result, their country was vulnerable to invasion by nations such as Iran. Following Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979, these countries faced significant challenges. Qatar, Oman, and Saudi Arabia all had tense relations with Iran, and the latter's intervention in the region hampered their own infrastructure development. The Iranian leadership's Shi'ite basis and the Gulf States' Sunni emphasis intensified tensions between the two branches of Islam. The role of Pakistan in providing security to Gulf countries in order to defend them from Iranian dominance is explored, as are the issues that Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar have faced as a result of Iran's presence in the Gulf region. Pakistan anticipated that a stable administration would improve the country's economy and social order. Thus, it actively sought to reinforce its political underpinnings. Furthermore, India's intervention has been Pakistan's principal challenge for several decades. India's plan to attack Pakistan's border regions in order to impose its domination was intolerable for Pakistan (Cordier, 2013). The paper examines the key elements of Pakistan's alliance with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, as well as the challenges Pakistan faces from India.

1.2. Research objectives

The overall purpose of the study was to better comprehend Pakistan's diplomatic ties with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. This study focused on their political, religious, cultural, and economic collaboration. The goal of the research was to focus on and deepen understanding of how mutual collaboration might generate mutual benefits. The article also discussed how Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Oman are the world's top three oil and LNG exporters.

1.3. Research questions

The research questions addressed in this study are: (a) what were the primary reasons that compelled Pakistan and three Gulf countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman? and (b) to what extent have Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Pakistan been able to form and sustain their political alliance in the face of religious concerns, economic constraints, and foreign threats from Iran, India, and Afghanistan?

1.4. Research significance

This study is significant for several reasons, not the least of which is that it presents a comprehensive and relevant body of knowledge that helps shed light on the political and security problems of Gulf countries in the past and present. The article affirms Pakistan's close bond with the Gulf States and argues that genuine mutual collaboration between the two is urgently required to meet the world's changing challenges.

2. Literature review

In this study, we examine the existing literature on the evolving dynamics between Pakistan and the Gulf states. Before delving into the political and security alliance between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman, the author explains the factors underlying the connection, something that other research has neglected to do. In addition, this research will examine and analyse this partnership utilising credible sources, about which there is currently a paucity of information. The researcher then examined the relationships between these nations and Pakistan after reviewing the literature of previous studies. The Gulf States looked to other countries for help when they first gained their independence. Pakistan's strength and stability at the time allowed it to back up these nations. Kamran (2013) argues that military concerns were the driving force behind the close connections between the Gulf states. There was an emphasis on national and personal security in these newly constituted Gulf states. As part of this deal, Pakistan will offer military aid to the aforementioned countries. Pakistan's dismal economic status was the second motivation for this alliance with the three Gulf countries. Pakistan was struggling economically, but the oil wealth of the Gulf states helped the country recover (Peterson, 2013). Politically friendly ties were forged between the three Gulf states and Pakistan in part to address shared cultural and religious norms (Kaye & Wehrey, 2023). These states are all members of the same international organisations, such as the Economic Cooperation Organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Returning to the original question, yes, the newly independent states of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman faced security challenges. When approached by these three Gulf States, Pakistan jumped at the chance to form a security pact (Kamran, 2013). Pakistan made an effort to maintain amicable relations with Gulf countries after its independence in 1947 on the grounds of religion and ethnicity.

People from Baluchistan (Pakistan) have been living in what is now Oman for the better part of two decades, and this has led to a significant influx of Baluch people into the country (Katzman, 2017). The newly constituted sultanate of Oman was not able to provide security for its people, as was explored in greater detail by (Friedman, 2011). Therefore, Pakistan dispatched two different groups of its armed forces, one to guard Oman's borders and the other to maintain order within the country. The United States and Iran have reached an agreement to counteract any negative effects on the government of Oman from domestic unrest, Iranian influence, and American pressure. According to (Miller & Cardaun, 2020) analysis, Pakistan's security concerns in the region stemmed from its shaky relations with India, prompting Islamabad to bolster its alliance with Oman against New Delhi. When it comes to accessing the security and financial aid offered by the other Gulf countries, Oman is the closest country that helps link and functions as a gateway.

In exchange for protecting the Gulf states, Pakistan received oil for use in the production of

weapons and other defence mechanisms, and Gulf countries aided Pakistan against India in the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict by providing oil for the production of nuclear weapons. The Gulf area, according to (Baskan, 2011), functions as a buffer between India and Pakistan because of the alliance that several Gulf countries have with India. According to Hussain's findings, which were published in 2021, Pakistan was economically poor before financial donations from Gulf countries helped.

Since Pakistan's independence, the country has kept open lines of communication with all the Gulf governments. During the Gulf crisis of 2017, however, tensions rose, and the political connections between Pakistan and the Gulf states were adjusted slightly. The political impact of the boycott between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as reported by (Peterson, 2013), had also affected Pakistan. According to the results of his research (Ehteshami, 2013), Pakistan sided with Qatar throughout the blockade. The two countries' top leaders got together and inked memorandums of understanding to cooperate on domestic and foreign fronts. Since this ban caused many Pakistanis to leave Saudi Arabia and Qatar in search of work elsewhere, the country was compelled to shore up its economic situation by fortifying its political relations. According to economic analysis (Allison & Cordesman, 2010), Pakistan made the right call to maintain neutral relations with Qatar because the country's economy could not afford to be at odds with any Gulf state.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used to describe the Gulf's connections with Pakistan is the subject of this chapter, which emphasises realism, draws attention to the criticisms of this method, and explains why it's relevant to the discussion of Pakistan and Gulf ties. Furthermore, the theory explains how the countries' media, culture, politics, and militaries all play a role in the formation of effective alliances for strategic purposes. Many different theoretical stances can be found in the study of international affairs. Some grew out of the field itself, while others came in whole or in part from elsewhere, most notably economics and sociology. Actually, the study of international relations has only made limited use of social scientific theories. Few academics are committed to both camps when it comes to the many competing theories of international relations (Kaye & Wehrey, 2023).

Despite this variety, a number of significant schools of thought may be identified, most of which can be distinguished by the particular characteristics they stress. Power, money, or ideology are all examples of such factors. Anarchy, according to realists (also termed "structural realists" or "neorealists"), characterises the international system as the absence of a central authority, in contrast to the prior "classical realists" (Friedman, 2011). Because of their independence and autonomy, the states might be considered sovereign. There is nothing inherent in them that could ever form a civilisation to regulate their interactions with one another. Only by mutual agreement or the threat of force can they be held together. In an anarchist society, state power is the only thing that matters, as it is the sole means by which states can protect themselves and maintain their existence. The realist perspective on international politics places primary emphasis on the distribution of coercive material capacity, which can be understood in a variety of ways (military, economic, diplomatic, etc.). There are four presumptions upon which this worldview rests (Arafat & Arafat, 2020). To begin, realists argue that state survival is the first priority. Every nation faces the constant danger of invasion and foreign occupation, despite the fact that more altruistic or cooperative international goals

are mandated by internal interests and strategic culture or a commitment to a set of national ideals. Due to the chaos of the international system, it is imperative for governments to ensure they always have adequate military and economic might. Second, realists hold that states are rational actors, meaning that when faced with the prospect of extinction, states will take whatever measures are necessary to ensure their own survival. Third, realists believe all states have some level of military capability and have no idea what their neighbours' intentions really are. To rephrase, we live in a perilous and unknowable universe. Fourth, there are great powers all throughout the world; these are the countries that have the most resources and might, both economically and militarily (Nasim, 2021).

The dominant theories in international relations tend to be the most influential. From this vantage point, the history of the politics of the world's major powers is the essence of international relations. There are areas where realists can't even agree. So-called offensive realists contend that nations would always seek to increase their own strength at the expense of their neighbours (Hasnat, 2011). A state cannot be safe if its enemies have the military might to threaten it. Dominance is the optimal option for a country, if at all attainable. However, defensive realists view dominance as a dangerous tactic for a state's continued existence (Sial, 2015). They make the point that a state's destructive disputes with peers might be triggered by rivalry for power/control. Defensive realists place a premium on a system of stability that ensures a delicate balance of power in which no nation is in a position to attack another. The main notion of realistic theory is "polarity," or the allocation of power among the Great Powers. Realists have a dim view of international law and institutions because they place so much stock in chaos and power (Khokhar, 2015). Realists hold that these factors in international politics are only epiphenomenal, meaning that they merely reflect the balance of power but do not link or influence the behaviour of the state. Realists argue that law enforcement is impossible in a hierarchical, anarchist society because only the state can enforce the law. A state shouldn't waste its limited resources on an execution if it has nothing to gain economically from the outcome. Why would a state agree to collaborate through a treaty or institution if application is impossible and fraud is likely? This means that governments are free to implement the norms of the code and construct international laws and international organisations.

The hypothesis lends credence to the ongoing investigation by providing a framework for dissecting the pragmatist stance of the countries under scrutiny. International law and alliances are theoretically established by states in order to help one another with both external and internal problems (Kaye & Wehrey, 2023). Due to its long-standing economic problems and its need for aid from countries well-equipped to maintain its financial sector, Pakistan forged strong relationships with the three Gulf States to secure its political and economic structure. Pakistan set its sights on expanding its network of international allies in order to accomplish this. However, Saudi Arabia had external concerns with Iran, and the newly formed governments of Qatar and Oman needed stability in the region. In exchange for Pakistan's help in defending its territory, the Gulf states have promised financial aid. When looking at these countries from a realist perspective, it is evident that they have used power balancing. The countries involved also formed political and security alliances, which led to the transfer of troops and resources. Pakistan's political situation was stabilised, and the country's infrastructure was built with the help of economic aid from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman after they signed an agreement and permanent law in the 1980s. Therefore, realism offers a practical and pertinent theoretical framework for thinking about the concerns raised by the study topics (Allison & Cordesman, 2010).

4. Research methodology

Methods from qualitative research, including analysis, description, and argumentation, were applied in this study. This approach is being used to learn more about the significance of the political and security links between the Gulf states and Pakistan in explaining their behaviour, actions, and interactions. In addition, the qualitative approach was used for this study since it provides the most accurate answers to the research questions through the utilisation of both primary and secondary sources. All of those materials are culled from reliable Pakistani and Qatari research facilities. The original sources for this paper were found in the collections of the International Islamic University's library and the Embassy and Gulf Studies Center in Pakistan. The structure of qualitative research is such that it facilitates my investigation into the target population's attitudes and actions in relation to the topic at hand. Researchers in my study employed a variety of qualitative research strategies, such as document analysis, content analysis, case study analysis, historical research, and analytical research.

Watching news, reading updated stories, and collecting old newspapers from the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan" Embassy in Doha, Qatar, were all part of the planned observational methodology for this study. The qualitative research is strengthened by paying close attention to the political and security ties between Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Pakistan. This report draws on the findings and interpretations of previous studies on the nature of ties between the Gulf states and Pakistan; however, this study employs a variety of methods for gathering primary material, including documentary analysis, case studies, and direct observation because this study is about human behaviour and viewpoints, the qualitative research approach is strongly recommended. This research strategy was chosen so that we could better understand the issue at hand and provide insightful, critical commentary backed up by solid evidence. This method of inquiry is argumentative because it relies on contentious claims, which is especially important in the context of Pakistan-Gulf relations, where shifting alignments have been the focus of attention and sparked heated debate over previous academics' findings.

4.1. Data collection

The most common methodologies and tools have been used to acquire this data, and the results are reliable. Books, newspapers, results from other studies, articles, and case studies are all examples of qualitative research that can be applied here. Togia and Malliari (2017) state that archival materials like historical records and papers are best preserved through library study. Secondary data includes things like articles, journals, published and unpublished dissertations, and newspapers gathered from the library for this study. Primary and secondary sources are used to compile information for this study. A review of relevant literature, followed by analysis and evaluation, constituted secondary data. The literature study compiled information from a wide range of sources, such as periodicals covering topics like ties between Pakistan and the Gulf. The discussion and conclusion sections of descriptive and argumentative research also make use of secondary material. Moreover, secondary data is gathered from the Gulf Research Centre in Qatar, the Centre for Security Studies in Pakistan, the Qatar National Library, and the libraries of Qatar University, and the International Islamic University, Islamabad.

4.2. Case study

According to Adi (2012), the case study approach has matured into a robust qualitative research

tool in recent years, and it is better suited to this field of study due to the in-depth knowledge of data collection and inference required. Case studies of Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia throughout the stage of relationship building between Gulf countries and Pakistan aided the researcher in understanding and improving the arguments.

4.3. Record keeping

The researcher used the library because it contains reliable study articles, as well as books, references, and online data to compile the necessary records for the study. Because many records are saved on legitimate websites, I will be able to provide pertinent facts and convincing arguments from this research, making online data an advanced and dependable source.

5. Discussion and findings

The three major Gulf states—Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar—share a desire to strengthen military and political ties with Pakistan. For many decades, Pakistan has provided critical support in the form of military aid when there were threats to national security from countries other than the United States, e.g. Pakistan has always been aggressive in protecting Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman against Iranian influence and the US impact on the Gulf sovereignty, and in return, these three states have provided financial aid to Pakistan for its economic stability, growth and development.

Pakistan's proximity to large oil reserves is another critical factor that has influenced its relations with these three countries. Because of their oil reserves, all three Gulf countries—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman—were of great importance to Pakistan. Pakistan also had a number of bilateral talks to discuss and improve its connection with other countries in order to advance the growth of the oil sector.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman were supposed to maintain a steady alliance with Pakistan in order to purchase its manpower whenever they wanted. Since the country's independence, Pakistan has sent workers to the Gulf states to build both the public and private sectors, including teachers, doctors, engineers, and construction workers.

Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar have distinct relations with Pakistan. However, as indicated by several peculiarities in the nature of their interactions with Pakistan, Pakistan has maintained a specialised foreign policy for these three Gulf states.

Pakistan's religious ties to the holy towns of Makkah and Madinah kept it in the longest alliance with Saudi Arabia. General Zia-ul-Haq had Saudi Arabia's support when he instituted an "Islamization" law, which required Pakistan to adhere to the same strict religious policies as Saudi Arabia. As a result, this law facilitated the improvement of Pakistan's economic situation and the strengthening of ties with Saudi Arabia.

Oman is an important country for Pakistan because of its strategic location and the presence of the Balochi tribe. The Gwadar port was their entry point, and they quickly settled down with their families. They have raised their families in Oman, and each generation now works in the public and private sectors there. The proximity of Oman and Pakistan also has a significant impact on the nature of the two countries' ties.

Historically, Pakistan and Qatar's foreign policy stances were dynamic and open to negotiation. When Saudi Arabia severed connections with Qatar in 2017, the blockade had a significant impact. Pakistan, however, promised to maintain its partnership with Qatar and continue to provide basic necessities even after Saudi Arabia cut off all trade with Qatar.

6. Conclusion

Researchers discovered that relationships between the Gulf states and Pakistan date back several decades. Better ties were established between Pakistan and the three major Gulf states in the 1970s while Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was in power, with his goal of promoting Muslim unity by strengthening ties with Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar. According to the paper, Pakistan's position in South Asia was stabilised, and new threats were kept in check because of partnerships it formed with countries in the Gulf. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have good relations because Saudi Arabia is the only Muslim country with substantial oil reserves, which Pakistan uses in its weapons industry and nuclear program. Pakistan's economy had been suffering for decades, and the government's ability to meet the needs of Afghan refugees had become increasingly difficult. Pakistani-Saudi relations were tense because Saudi Arabia sought a solution to the problem in Afghanistan. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia formed an alliance with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan to help them overcome these challenges. Pakistan regards Oman as an important neighbouring country because of the two countries' shared cultural heritage, strategic proximity, and historical ties. The Balochi tribe has been established in Oman for generations and is actively involved in the country's economy; these people originated from the Gwadar port, which was formerly part of Oman but is now owned by Pakistan.

Qatar and Pakistan have maintained constant communication. Military aid to Qatar was the catalyst for Pakistan receiving financial assistance from Qatar. Over the years, Pakistan and Qatar have developed close ties, and the people of both countries have begun to embrace aspects of each other's cultural standards, including language, behaviour, rituals, and religious affiliation. To accomplish this goal and keep the lines of communication between the two countries open, Pakistan agreed to send its security troops to Qatar to help stabilise the political structure there and ensure the safety of the country's oil fields and borders. Qatar and Pakistan have been working together on a wide range of issues, including trade, politics, defence, and security, in recent years. Pakistan was prompted to form a political and security partnership with Qatar due to the former's wealth. Pakistan's military support was always there when it was needed. The two countries have an arrangement for Qatar to provide free oil to Pakistan so that it can make nuclear weapons. During this time period, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan oversaw Pakistan's nuclear research and development efforts. Since Pakistan was the only Muslim country possessing nuclear power at the time, it was in Qatar's best interest to keep the peace with it.

This study also sheds light on how the Taliban have affected ties between the two countries, which is an important development. After 9/11, Pakistan's domestic crises, namely terror strikes from the Taliban, increased, making the Taliban's dominance unsettling. To find a solution, Qatar convened a summit to which the Taliban and Pakistani representatives were invited. Because Pakistan backed the Haqqani network and made a commitment to safeguard its land from external threats, the goal of this conference was to establish peace in the region and free Pakistan from foreign interventions (Mullen, 2019). The stated goal of this meeting

was to dismantle the dominance of the United States in the area. Pakistan made the right choice to send representatives, as its participation in the meeting yielded indirect benefits as well. First, it put to rest whatever lingering suspicions the United States may have had about Pakistan's ties to terrorism. Second, Qatar promised to help Pakistan work through its domestic financial crisis and ultimately sent the country about \$2.4 billion. Third, peace was restored in relations with Afghanistan. These considerations bolstered the peaceful alliance between Qatar and Pakistan.

Declaration of conflict of interest

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