RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE IN TAJIKISTAN: A CONFLICT RESOLUTION PERSPECTIVE

Madina Gazieva

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Major and Degree in Humanities

Bachelor of International Studies

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN

May 2015
Table of Contents

Introduction .......................................................................................................................3
Chapter 1: Background ........................................................................................................6
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework .....................................................................................8
Chapter 3 ........................................................................................................................15
  Nature of war: regional identity in Tajikistan ..............................................................15
  Tajikistan’s state capacity: a repressive government ...................................................19
  Third-party mediation and design of the 1997 peace agreement: democratic
  limitations ......................................................................................................................22
  Power-sharing: a naïve approach .................................................................................31
Conclusion ........................................................................................................................36
Bibliography .......................................................................................................................39
Appendix 1 .........................................................................................................................43
Appendix 2 .........................................................................................................................44
Appendix 3 .........................................................................................................................46
Appendix 4 .........................................................................................................................48
Introduction

Between the years of 1992-1997 Tajikistan immersed in a bloody civil war which claimed the lives of an estimated of 50,000 and displaced 700,000 (Akiner and Barnes, 16). The year of 1997 sparked hope in Tajikistan; after sixteen rounds of negotiations over a period of three years, a peace accord was signed between the Tajik regime and United Tajik Opposition (UTO). The UN-sponsored 1997 General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord resulted in the legalisation of the Islamic Renaissance Party, formed a coalition government consisting of ex-UTO members and the Tajik regime based on a 30% quota (valid until the first elections), and absorbed UTO commanders into the military structures, bringing an end to war in Tajikistan (Ibid.).

The case of Tajikistan was hailed as one of the most successful peace-making operations in conflict resolution history. Tajikistan’s ambassador to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has expressed that the signing of the agreement was “a major unifying act and truly one of the greatest moments in [the country’s] history” (“Ten Years of Peace Building in Tajikistan”). Yet in September 2010, a military convoy sent to track down refugees from a jail break in the Rasht Valley¹ was ambushed by militants, killing 28 soldiers, culminating in a political crisis. The hyped up media coverage portrays Tajikistan as a stronghold for militant Islamists from the Al-Qaeda affiliated Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, yet a closer look at the situation reveals that that the perpetrators were ex-UTO commanders who had participated in the post-war peace negotiations. If the agreement was a unifying act why was there a confrontation between the government and the Tajik opposition? This leaves one pondering whether the 1997 Peace Agreement deserves its reputation of success.

¹ See Map, Appendix 1
In order to identify the failure of peace in Tajikistan, I look at peace building through the lens of theory on conflict resolution which offers various insights into why some peace spells are more likely to last than others. I therefore ask ‘how can the 2010 resurgence of violence in Tajikistan be explained by conflict resolution theory?’ This vast field claims to provide direct answers to my question by using quantitative analyses but often lacks sufficient case study approaches. Most scholars test their hypotheses using statistical models which gather wide-ranging data, and tend to neglect the internal, socio-political dynamics that may take place in a post-conflict country. Studies on conflict in Tajikistan on the other hand mainly focus on context and internal factors while neglecting the way in which Tajikistan may conform to the larger trends proposed by conflict resolution theory. This study thus fills the gap by testing the relevance of the theory and applying it to practice.

This thesis follows a thematic approach. The first chapter is a brief background on the war and events that led to the 2010 insurgency. The second chapter elaborates on the theory which is later applied in the subsequent sections. A number of scholars on conflict resolution identify concrete factors which determine durability of peace. A review of literature has identified four of such factors, namely: 1) nature of war - wars that have stemmed from political/economic struggles are less likely to recur than those caused by identity, 2) state capacity - democratic states are less likely to resort to violence than authoritarian regimes, 3) third party mediation – conflicts mediated by third parties are less likely to recur and finally 4) power-sharing – agreements with power-sharing provisions tend to last longer. The third chapter is made up four sections which apply the above factors to Tajikistan. The section dealing with ‘nature of war’ investigates the problem of regional identity in Tajikistan and its resilience to this day. The second section evaluates state capacity and the regime’s repression of Islam and opposition parties. The third section analyses the mediating functions of
Uzbekistan, Russia and the UN and takes a closer look at the contents of the 1997 Peace Agreement. The final section addresses the failure of power-sharing in Tajikistan.

The study finds that conflict resolution can offer crucial insights into why peace failed in Tajikistan. It is argued that ‘identity’ and poor ‘state capacity’ are extremely relevant destabilising forces which have had a direct impact on the 2010 insurgency. Third-party mediation on the other hand was relatively successful yet failed to fully address certain issues and contributed to the creation of a system which hindered the balance of power between the warring factions in favour of the government regime. Power-sharing’s success was also limited and its manifestation in Tajikistan’s politics confirm its importance in ensuring peace durability. While confirming the relevance of conflict resolution theory in Tajikistan, this thesis highlights the superficiality of peace building and refutes the proclamation of its success.
Chapter 1

BACKGROUND

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the declaration of independence, Tajikistan saw frequent demonstrations and rise in political competition. The first multi-party elections were won by the former leader of the Communist party. Rebels took to the streets in protest of the allegedly fraud elections and eventually the competing sides took up arms. Less than a year after independence, Tajikistan plunged into a bloody civil war. The pro-regime side consisted of a Russia and Uzbekistan backed faction from Kulob, South-West of Tajikistan, which over the course of the war shifted the balance of power in its favour. The opposition comprised of a coalition of the Rastokhez movement, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, the secessionist movement La’li Badakhshon and the largest of these – the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), which fought to establish an Islamic state. In 1995 a military stalemate was reached and by 1997 the Government and UTO signed the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (Akiner and Barnes 17).

Despite the relatively peaceful resolution to the civil war, Tajikistan has seen occasional violent conflicts. Many of the commanders who were incorporated into the military and government structures have been either prosecuted or killed by the President Emomali Rakhmon’s regime (Heathershaw and Roche). In September 2008 one of such operations to eliminate an ex-UTO commander Mirzokhudja Akhmadov, was carried out in the Kamarob Gorge, Rasht Valley. The operation failed and resulted in the death of the national commander who led the operation, Oleg Zakharchenko. Rakhmon claimed to not have known of the operation and later met with Akhmadov to give a presidential pardon for Zakharchenko’s death in return for Akhmadov to give up arms and resign from his police post. On September 2010 government had again entered the region to track down the fugitives from an earlier prison break and reopened the case against Akhmadov for the death of Zakharchenko. The convoy
was ambushed. The government blamed Akhmadov and two other ex-UTO members, Abdullo Rakhimov and Alovuddin Davlatov for the attack. On October 14 Akhmadov agreed to give up his arms and help track down the remaining suspects in return for ‘full amnesty’. In 2011 Abdullo Rakhimov and Alovuddin Davlatov were killed by the military forces. The conflict did not end until 2012, after the capture of one of the last ex-UTO commanders and the militants’ surrender to the army (“Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent Threats” 5-8).

The reminiscence of civil war rivalries invoked by the conflict is impossible to ignore. Heathershaw and Roche effectively illustrate this link: “As late as 2002, helicopters crossed the valley searching for suspects, although the peace agreement had long been signed. From September to December 2010 once again dozens of helicopters and army vehicles entered the gorge in search of militant groups that are thought to hide somewhere in the mountainous terrain” (Heathershaw and Roche).
Chapter 2

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict resolution as a distinct field was formed during the height of the Cold War, at a time when the threat of nuclear warfare and superpower rivalries prompted a number of Western scholars from different disciplines to begin studying ‘conflict’ as a general phenomenon (Kriesberg 27). The field did not fully develop until the 1980s, when conflict resolution approaches were applied in a number of peace processes in war-torn countries in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Unsurprisingly, the termination of military and ideological competition which defined the end of the Cold War and the subsequent instatement of the ‘new world order’ was accompanied by a change in the ‘nature’ of conflict (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 5). This change led to the increasing salience of conflicts grounded in localised problems such as ethnicity, identity, language, political exclusion and other similar attributes (Kriesberg 34). As a result, conflict resolution attracted considerable attention from scholars of international relations, politicians and international organisations, especially the UN, which became a key player in conflict mediation (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall 5).

A large body of literature on conflict resolution identifies separate factors which ensure peace durability after the termination of conflict. Among these are the roles of the peace agreement and third-party involvement, peace agreement design and power-sharing provisions, effect of costliness of the war on duration of peace, war outcome, the nature of the war – political/economic or identity (religious, ethnic, ideological) and environment of the warring country. Scholars in this sub-field present their research by gathering data on intrastate wars from the last several decades and use the cox proportional hazards model to determine the effects of several simultaneous variables on the duration of peace. They then justify certain outcomes by using examples from intrastate wars or by including a case study at the end of their articles. However, these case studies tend to be short and rarely test the validity of the
conclusions derived from the hazards model, resulting in a limited number of theoretical application to practice.

Through a literature review the author has identified four somewhat overlapping factors which have consistently been argued to influence peace durability. These factors are nature of war – identity or political/economic, state capacity, third-party mediation and agreement design, and power-sharing. In short, non-identity wars fought in democratic states, mediated by third-party actors and resulting in power sharing agreements are least likely to resort to war. Other variables have been subject to dispute by scholars and are thus omitted for the purpose of reducing the risk of ‘accidental’ explanations. The four ‘determinants of peace’ serve to explain why violence recurred in Tajikistan.

Nature of war

Theorists differentiate between wars that stem from political/economic disagreements and those rooted in identity, arguing that the former are easier to resolve. In this thesis, the understanding of ‘identity’ is derived from Hoeffler’s definition, where people who share an identity are “bound together through a common heritage that is real or presumed” (Hoeffler, 193). Conflict resolution theorists unanimously agree that especially ethnic identities have powerful mobilizing potential. As Walter quotes Gurr: “cultural identities - those based on common descent, experience, language, and belief - tend to be stronger and more enduring than most civic and associational identities” (Walter qtd Gurr 2004 372) adding that “once war breaks out, ethnic identities and hatreds tend to become cemented in ways that make cooperation and coexistence between the groups even more difficult, and these are the wars that are likely to recur over time” (Walter 2004 372). Doyle and Sambannis also conclude that identity is a key determinant of peace durability, adding that “the ease in which ethnic passions
can be mobilised into support for ethnic war... makes it harder to reconcile differences” (Doyle and Sambannis 783)

In his qualitative study, Azar states that multi-ethnic and communal cleavages and disintegrations, underdevelopment and distributive injustice provide the foundations for intractable conflict (Azar 29). Azar’s argument forms the basis of Derouen and Bercovitch’s theory of enduring internal rivalries and conflict intractability, whose resilience is attributed to intangible needs such as identity, ethnicity and recognition (DeRouen, Bercovitch, 56). Licklider also argues that peace is less durable after identity wars and in his data set classifies Tajikistan as having undergone an ‘identity conflict’ (Licklider 689).

**State capacity**

With regards to state capacity, most scholars agree that democracies are better at sustaining peace than non-democracies (DeRouen et al., 344, Hartzell et al., 185, Walter 2004 385, Doyle and Sambannis 779, Gurses and Rost 469). State capacity refers to the level of strength of democracy, political institutions, education, unemployment and the overall ability of the state “to regulate and oversee individual and group compliance with social rules” (Hartzell et al., 185). Hartzell et al., find that a weak state is an impediment to the successful implementation of peace agreements and is unable to “contain predatory behaviour by elites” (Ibid). Additionally, the authors highlight two especially destabilizing factors: state domination by a single group which oppresses the out-group and lack of sustained leadership to the society as a whole (Ibid).

Relevantly, Walter concludes that “only mature democracies are able to avoid repeated civil wars” and that “citizens who are able to express their preferences about alternative policies and leaders, who are guaranteed civil liberties in their daily lives and in acts of political participation, are less likely to become soldiers” (Walter 2005 385) Gurses and Rost add that
political and economic discrimination are the most influential factors in determining whether peace will last; a politically inclusive government is less likely to resort to war while discriminatory policies increase the likelihood of war (Gurses and Rost 484). A politically inclusive government can alleviate post-war ethnic tensions through policies and institutions that promote peaceful coexistence and eventually depoliticise ethnicity, strongly reducing the risk of renewed conflict (Ibid).

**Third-party mediation and agreement design**

Due to the high degree of intersection of third-party mediation and agreement design, the two themes have been grouped under one category.

*Third-party mediation*

Despite acknowledging that third-party mediation is not always successful, scholars champion the capacities of mediators in fostering trust between oppositions and monitoring compliance (Walter 2000 13, Bercowitch Anagnoson and Wille 17). This sub-field within conflict resolution can be divided into two main spheres: causal –motivations for mediators to intervene and operational – actions undertaken upon intervention.

With regards to motivations for intervention, Greig and Rost posit that the success of third-party mediation by state actors is largely determined by the interests of the mediator:

“Mediation carries reputational, political, and opportunity costs for the third party serving as mediator. Failed mediation efforts by a third party can undermine their ability to manage future conflicts, and the diplomatic effort expended to deal with one conflict is energy that cannot be applied to others…. Given these costs, it makes sense to see conflict management efforts as strategic tools that are used when they are of interest to the third party.” (Greig and Rost 196)
Similarly, Touval deals with the “broader perspective of how goals and strategies lead them to mediate in a conflict” (Touval 93). She argues that the strategies which mediators employ are motivated by concerns external to the conflict thus “effectiveness is usually a secondary consideration, subordinate to the mediating state's primary domestic and foreign policy concerns” (Touval 92).

The UN in turn has often been seen as the agent of democratic transition in the context of conflict mediation. As Bertram explains, UN peace-building is “designed to address the root causes of conflict, it entails building the political conditions for a sustainable democratic peace, generally in countries long divided by social strife, rather than keeping or enforcing peace between hostile states and armed parties” (Bertram 388). By relying on concepts such as the liberal peace theory, conflict resolution thus suggests that peace can only be achieved through democratisation as is confirmed by Gurses and Rost who argue that politically inclusive states are less likely to resort to war. Additionally, Bertram addresses the “security-versus-democracy dilemma which is “an inherent tension between the immediate aim of peacemakers (securing an end to the bloodshed) and the longer term aim of peace builders (securing the necessary conditions for a sustainable and democratic peace)” (Bertram 396).

Within the operational domain, Walter identifies three important roles mediators undertake: 1) informational; 2) procedural; 3) coercive. The informational role pertains to “highlight[ing] common interests, encourag[ing] meaningful communication so that combatants can better locate a common middle ground” (Walter 2002 14). The procedural role refers to the mediators’ ability to arrange meetings between warring parties and structuring agendas and organising the grounds for negotiation. Finally mediators play a coercive role by “reward[ing] concessions made by the parties and punish[ing] intransigence in order to make disagreement costly” (Ibid). Similarly to Walter, Burton assigns mediators the tasks of

---

2 Walter recognises that this typology was developed by earlier scholars Saadia Touval and I. William Zartman in *International Mediation in Theory and Practice*
facilitating, supporting and directing the peace talks as well as allowing the parties to have frequent opportunities to discuss among themselves (Burton 107). Additionally, Doyle and Sambannis argue that UN intervention “signal international interest in ending the conflict and offers needed assistance to the parties” and is especially effective in the presence of “missions with extensive civilian functions, including economic reconstruction, institutional reform, and election oversight” (Doyle and Sambannis 785, 791).

Agreement design

Scholars researching agreement design stress the importance of specificity and enforcement of provisions. For example Badran argues that agreements should address “political, economic, social, cultural and legal foundations even if parties are only contesting political arrangements” (Badran 6). He asserts that the most successful peace agreements consist of structural and procedural provisions. Structural provisions aim to address the causes of conflict while procedural provisions are designed to facilitate their achievement. Furthermore he applies the concept of legalisation put forward by Abbot et al., (2000) to peace agreements. Here legalisation is defined by “a particular set of characteristics that institutions may (or may not) possess” and consists of three dimensions: obligation, precision and delegation:

“Obligation means that states or other actors are [legally] bound by a rule or commitment or by a set of rules or commitments. Precision means that rules unambiguously define the conduct they require, authorize, or proscribe. Delegation means that third parties have been granted authority to implement, interpret, and apply the rules; to resolve disputes; and (possibly) to make further rules” (Abbot et al., 401)

The effect of legalizations of peace agreements is the increased cost of violating its provisions. Mattes and Savun highlight the effectiveness of raised costs of violence in increasing peace sustainability and also stress the need of fear-reducing provisions such as power-sharing,
which after disbanding rebel forces expose them to the government, decreasing the likelihood of renewed violence (Mattes and Savun 739).

**Power-sharing**

Scholars treat power-sharing with caution and offer varying perspectives on its applicability, yet generally argue in its favour. For example Mattes and Savun posit that:

> “Power-sharing provisions contribute to peace by preventing that either the government or the rebels can control any area of government single-handedly and exclude their adversaries from making decisions in these areas. These provisions are intended to ensure domestic groups that they will not become victims of discrimination and violence in the new state.” (Mattes and Savun 740)

Walter offers a more realistic approach by arguing that civil war factions “look for ways to guarantee themselves independent control over key leadership positions in order to insulate themselves from future harm and to prevent their rival from consolidating power” adding that this can be done in the form of “specific quota of power, a guaranteed distribution of key ministries, or shared control over executive positions, all of which would ensure the competing factions a significance say in how the post-war state is run” (Walter 2002 30).

Another approach is offered by Pospieszna and Schneider whose findings show that developing countries “that opted for institutions that are similar to the ones of their former colonial expropriators” especially experience instability in power-sharing governments. Furthermore, the authors differentiate between *de jure* and *de facto* power-sharing, concluding that “rules for [proportional representation] […] do [not] affect the real inclusiveness of policy-making in the post-conflict societies…” (Pospieszna and Schneider 59).
Chapter 3

1. NATURE OF WAR: REGIONAL IDENTITY IN TAJIKISTAN

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, theorists on conflict resolution argue that ‘identity’ conflicts based on communal and ethnic cleavages, language or religion are harder to reconcile than wars that resulted from solely political or economic exclusion. This section serves to explain the relevance of regional identity in Tajikistan in limiting prospects for peace. In Tajikistan’s case, the civil war stemmed from a fusion of regional identification and economic and political exclusion which had not been solved by peace-building efforts. A critical look at the developments of Tajikistan’s regional identities prior to, in the wake of and after the war serves to explain the resilience of rivalries in Tajikistan and provides a basis for understanding the difficulty of post-war reconciliation.

Scholars have established that the seeds for the Tajik civil war had been sowed during the emergence of the Tajik Union Republic in the SSR from the Uzbek SSR (Lynch 52, Roy 133, Olimov 1994). As part of the territorial enlargement in 1924, the existing land of Tajikistan was merged with separate regions of what was previously known as Turkestan, currently known as Khujand, Pendjikent, Eastern Pamir and semi-autonomous enclaves of Kulob, Darvaz and Qarategin and several others (Olimov 1994). Prior to the Russian revolution and Soviet expansion to the peripheries, Central Asian regions were made up of sub-ethnic territorial solidarity groups called *avlod* which were deeply rooted in local traditions and commonality of property. These groups were “adapted to the realities of collectivisation… [which] was created on the basis of pre-existent communal landownership” disguised later as kolkhoz (Nourzhanov 78)

Despite the Soviet efforts to create a unified economy and a national identity, the ingrained regional differences conditioned by social, political and cultural diversities of Tajik society had not been overcome. Thus the regionalisation of identity had become integral to the
Tajik SSR, and as Rubin confirms: “the clans that went to war in Tajikistan […] were solidarity groups or parallel power networks organised around the administrative and economic assets of the Soviet state” (Lynch qtd. Rubin 53). This is also supported by Olimov who states that *av lod* provided the basis for the formation of armed troops on both the National Front and the United Tajik Opposition (Olimov 1994).

At a higher level, Tajikistan’s politics were characterised by a lack of balance of regional representation initiated in 1946 by the appointment of the northerner Babajon Gafurov as First Secretary of the Tajik Communist Party, under whom “party structures became dominated by the elites from Leninobod” (Lynch 53). Despite Soviet attempts to balance power among regional groups, Leninobodis enjoyed higher levels of education, industrialisation, and political awareness as well as a wide-ranging patronage network (Nourzhanov 139). Kulobis also experienced some power-sharing in a patronage relationship with the Leninobodis and Soviet-funded projects while Gharmis and Pamiris were excluded from powerful positions in the government and economic development. The struggle for power-sharing increased; by the late 1980s Gharmis and Kulobis were competing for administrative positions in Qurghonteppa dominated by the Leninobodis (Nourzhanov 140). These tensions were later reflected in the composition of the opposing parties during the civil war.

At first glance, the Tajik civil war appeared to be an ideological conflict between ex-Communism and Islamism, which would give it the ‘political war’ label by conflict resolution theorists. Indeed the ideological dimension of the IRP is impossible to neglect – during the protests of 1992 the opposition called for a return for the Arab-Persian alphabet, read out quotations from the Quran and chanted slogans from the Iranian revolution (Roy 132). At the same time IRP’s Islamism finds its origins in the *basmachi* movement of the 1930s when Muslims mobilised to challenge Soviet hegemony. The primary stronghold for the *basmachis* were the regions of Gharm, Darvoz and Qarategin from where the majority of IRP members
origin (Nourzhanov 101). This adds a strong regional dimension to the war. Relevantly, Roy highlights:

“a closer study of political affiliations, on the national level as well as the local level, reveals that allegiance to a particular camp is determined not by militants’ political development but by their membership of ethnic or inter-ethnic solidarity groups.” (Roy 132).

The regional interests are even more pronounced in the aims of the secessionist Pamiri cultural revival movement La’li Badakhshon which allied with the IRP “to change the balance of forces in their own interest and used the newly emerging opposition movements to this end” (Nourzhanov qtd Olimova 221). This sentiment was further fuelled by Pamiri resentments of the political developments prior to the war.

It is worth noting that territorialism were not strong characteristics of the Rastokhez movement and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan which were comprised of Tajikistan’s intelligentsia (Lynch 54). However their lack of military, poor support base and intraparty disagreements signified their low impact on the outcome of the war (Nourzhanov 217).

The alliance between the pro-government Kulobis and Leninobodis also had a regionalist undertone. Faced by the opposition from the Pamiri La’li Badakhshon, Democratic Party, Rastokhez and the Gharmi IRP in 1991, the Leninobodi president Nabiev had chosen to enter into an alliance with the Kulobi faction. Such a coalition was of no surprise as the two factions have had the aforementioned history of cooperation (Nourzhanov 221). Additionally, Kulobi commitment to pro-Soviet leaders was attributed the entrenchment of the communist ideology which supported the intragroup solidarity strengthened by the kolkhoz and success of

---

3 In order to strengthen resistance against opposition parties, the government, run by the President Nabiev and the chairman of the Supreme Soviet SAFarali Kenjaev decided to dismiss the Pamiri head of ministry Mamadayoz Navjuvonov. Pamiris in turn saw this move as ‘an intolerable insult to their nationality’ and started demonstrating against the government (Nourzhanov, 296)

4 Nourzhanov however does mention that along with the IRP, the DPT could be seen as having represented the disadvantaged people of Gharm and Qarategin.
cotton cultivation under Soviet rule (Olimov). As a result, the Kulobis aimed to favour their regional interests by choosing to cooperate with the existing pro-communist government.

This account illustrates the extent to which deeply entrenched regional identification was a reality in the wake of the Tajik civil war. As was explained the previous chapter, Gurr argues that after a civil war, these identities become cemented in a way that makes cooperation even more difficult. Indeed, despite the extensive international mediation efforts, it appears that problems associated with regionalism had only undergone a power shift and still remain to this day. As Akiner and a number of other scholars highlight, with the rise of Kulobi president Emomali Rakhmon, there was a process of ‘Kulobisation’ “of state organs, especially the security forces, and major enterprises in all parts of the country… [which] inevitably aroused resentment” (Akiner 64). The Kulobis have as a result replaced the niche previously occupied by the Leninobodis which in turn suffered major economic losses and the some of the highest rates of unemployment (Akiner 67).

Despite the attempted power-sharing arrangements, post-war Eastern Tajikistan had remained politically and economically excluded. For example the main driver of economic development of Gorno Badakhshan had become the Ismaili Aga Khan foundation which filled the institutional void created by the lack of Rakhmon government’s attention. Interestingly, after the instatement of the post-war government, the Pamiris were hoping for the return of the Soviet regime which was evidently impossible. This resulted in the Pamiri people’s commitment to and association with the Ismaili NGO rather than the government, strengthening the regionalist sentiments among its peoples (Herbers 379).

Regional identity is also of extreme relevance to the Tajik insurgency of 2010. Contrary to the government’s assertions that the 2010 insurgency involved regional Al-Qaeda affiliated terrorists such as the IMU, Heathershaw and Roche analyse that the conflict was rooted in the same regional resentments that have caused the civil war in the first place, adding that “conflicts, such as the one that erupted in September, have occurred when the Dushanbe
government attempts to push [the opposition] aside” (Heathershaw and Roche). Bleuer confirms that the insurgency was “a local conflict between the regime and former commanders, who were incorporated into the state following the peace agreement, but now find themselves excluded from it once more” (Bleuer 9).

Thus as seen in the example of Tajikistan, the ‘nature of the war’ factor presented by conflict resolution theorists and which explains that peace after identity wars is less likely to be durable, is consistent with the outcome of Tajikistan’s context, where the deeply rooted regional identities pose challenges to reconciliation. These identities are shown to be heavily intertwined with economic and political exclusion developed from the power dynamics of the Tajik SSR favouring the Leninabadis, and after the war – the Kulobis. The status of Eastern Tajikistan on the other hand had not improved if not worsened, as in the case the Pamir region which became heavily reliant on the Aga Khan’s funds. The fusion of politics and regional identity also constituted a cause for the 2010 insurgency confirming that little had changed since the war.

2. TAJIKISTAN’S STATE CAPACITY: A REPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT

Conflict resolution theorists claim that democratic, politically inclusive states which allow their citizens to participate in the daily political life are less likely to resort to war. Conversely, conflict is more likely in undemocratic and repressive states. Building on the conclusions made in the previous section, this section delves into the state of democracy in Tajikistan to evaluate whether it has contributed to the reduction of the scale of the 2010 conflict. It is, however, important to note that state capacity broadly covers both procedural and substantive aspects of state politics, and so is directly related to the problem of regional identity. Thus an isolated analysis does not attempt to separate the two factors, but to present another side to the problem.

Similar to other Central Asian states, Tajikistan has inherited the authoritarian modes of governance from the Soviet period. Additionally, given Tajikistan’s post-civil war context
characterised by war weariness, rapid impoverishment of the population and general economic
and political instability, the process of democratic consolidation has been extremely slow.
Between 1992 and 1996, Tajikistan’s GDP fell to less than a third, inflation grew by several
thousand percent, industrial production collapsed and the country was consistently within the
twenty poorest states in the world (Urunov 23, Lynch 67). A review of the OSCE Election
Observation reports shows that since 1999, Tajik elections failed to live up to standards of
transparency, accountability, fairness and secrecy. Even as late as March 1, 2015 the OSCE
reported that parliamentary “elections took place in a restricted political space and failed to
provide a level playing field for candidates… freedoms of expression and assembly, and access
to media limited the opportunity to make a free and informed choice”, (“Republic of Tajikistan
— Parliamentary Elections” 1). Indeed, Rakhmon had been president of Tajikistan since 1994.

Scholars have pointed out that the civil war had redefined the role of political Islam in
Tajikistan. In response, the Tajik government made attempts to control the politicisation of
Islam by banning unregistered mosques and establishing a Council of ‘Ulamas that is
subordinate to the Committee for Religious Affairs, signifying that the election of prayer
leaders is possible upon the approval of local authorities. Additionally, in 1998 a law was
introduced banning “mosques and madrasahs from setting up primary organisations of a
political and military-political nature” (Olimova 1999). Furthermore, in 2005 the government
introduced a ban on headscarves and launched another crackdown on illegal mosques in fear
of Islamic extremism (Peck 2007). As Roche and Heathershaw argue:

“Underpaid teachers, a shortage of teachers and corruption within the education system
have run down most state schools so they stand as symbols of the weak state. The
discrepancy between a discourse, which places high value in education, and the practice
of an impoverished educational system increases every year. As a consequence of this
decline, many young people have come to recognize in Islam a source of knowledge
less susceptible to the corruption found in state schools and profit-making of expensive private lyceums” (Roche and Heathershaw)

The authors state that the population’s interest in Islam does not signify radicalism, however the government’s lack of recognition of such and subsequent repressive policies have further alienated the population of the Rasht valley and are likely to have contributed to the eruption of the conflict and the youth’s support for the opposition fighters in the region⁵.

The 2003 the International Crisis Group report states that despite IRP’s legalisation, the Tajik government had slowly undermined the party’s position in the political system leading to the increased popularity of other Islamist groups such as the non-violent Islamic transnational organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir. The group further recommends that the government “end[s] low-level harassment of the Islamic Renaissance Party and permit[s] it to operate freely throughout the country” (“Central Asia: Islam and the State”).

However, the years leading up to the insurgency demonstrated that after over a decade, little had changed in the government’s attitude. In effect, this is confirmed by the 2008 assassination attempt on Mirzokhuja Akhmadov by the paramilitary unit of Oleg Zakharchenko for which the fighters of the Rasht valley later endeavoured to revenge. Akhmadov was a former junior UTO commander who after the agreement was made chair of the local department of the anti-organised crime directorate. Despite Rakhmon’s repression, Akhmadov continued to hold on to his position and control over the Rasht valley (“Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent Threats” 2). The 2008 confrontation was seen as an “unsuccessful attempt by the president to remove one of the last UTO veterans with any regional influence” (Ibid). This indicates that Rakhmon and his cronies continued consolidating their hegemony and

---

⁵ In fact the government responded to the 2010 conflict by increased repression of Islam. Roche and Heathershaw strongly recommend that Tajikistan halts its repressive tactics, arguing that: “A government campaign against Islamic education and political movements in Tajikistan, prompted by an armed conflict with ‘mujahids’ in the Rasht valley, risks creating the very militancy it aims to prevent” (Roche and Heathershaw).
alienating ex-UTO members, as a result failing to establish control over the Rasht valley. This further confirms the weakness of democracy and state capacity of Tajikistan.  

Again these findings show that conflict resolution theory can, in respect to state capacity, provide insights into the nature of the 2010 insurgency. The section on Tajikistan’s regional identities explains that the nature of political and economic balance of power had remained relatively unchanged compared to that of before the war and Gurses and Rosts’s depoliticisation of ethnicity had not taken place. This section demonstrates that the government has been marginalising the political opposition and limiting the expression of religion throughout the post-civil war period. Thus given the resilience of regional identities and the scale of authoritarianism of the Tajik government, it is intriguing that the insurgency did not lead to a more severe conflict. The comparability of the current conditions with the pre-civil war context and the diminished scale of conflict suggests that other influential conflict resolution factors may have come into play.

3. THIRD-PARTY MEDIATION AND DESIGN OF THE 1997 PEACE AGREEMENT: DEMOCRATIC LIMITATIONS

As elaborated upon in the theoretical chapter, third-party mediation is divided into the causal and operational spheres. With regards to the former, the theory claims that countries that act as mediators do so because of political, economic, regional and or reputational interests, and as Greig and Rost posit “conflict management efforts [are] tools that are used when they are of interest to the third party” (Greig and Rost 196). Touval adds that effectiveness of the mediation

---

6 The state of democracy in Tajikistan had not improved after the 2010 events. In May 2013 Tajikistan’s Media Group Asia Plus summarised a Freedom House report stating that the government lacks an understanding of political competition. The report lists a number of arrests including that of Zayid Saidov a former Minister of Industry who was accused of taking large bribes, fraud and abuse of position in office. These charges were brought out at a time when Saidov announced his initiative to form the party ‘New Tajikistan’ and expressed the need for the Tajik government to begin addressing economic and social problems (“Freedom House: Political Repressions”).
is subordinate to the concerns of the mediator’s domestic and foreign policy. Naturally, the higher the risk of damage the continuation of the conflict poses, the more intense will be the efforts of the mediator. The purpose of UN’s involvement in mediation has in turn been interpreted in the context of the promotion of the democratisation process.

The operational function of mediation serves the purpose of informing the parties of common interests, organising grounds for negotiation between the parties and ensuring the costliness of incompliance.

Literature on peace agreement design states that agreements need to address the causes of conflict and facilitate their achievement, as well as include fear-reducing provisions such as power-sharing.

The purpose of this section is thus to apply and evaluate these conditions within the context of Tajikistan in order to determine the successes and failures of civil-war mediation and assess their effect on the 2010 insurgency.

A number of foreign state actors had been involved in the Tajik civil war and the subsequent peace process, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran (Akiner 44). However, for reasons of scope, focus is placed on the motivations and operations of two influential players, Uzbekistan and Russia to show that as suggested by conflict resolution theory, both of these countries had vested interests in ending the war and thus largely contributed to its termination.

Uzbekistan had especially felt threatened by the events taking place in Tajikistan, with the country’s president Karimov referring to the war as a “time-bomb a hundred times worse than the conflict in Karabakh” (Akiner 47). The advent of war posed a hazard to the large Uzbek population of 1.2 million in Tajikistan while the rise of nationalism in the latter brought the thorny issue of Bukhara and Samarkand7 to the fore (Tadjbakhsh 21). Additionally,

---

7 In 1924, Tajikistan’s traditional capitals Bukhara and Samarkand with a Tajik majority have been allocated to Uzbekistan under the Soviet leadership which remains to be a source of resentment to this day.
Uzbekistan was grappling with an internal threat of politicised Islam\textsuperscript{8} which had to potential to exacerbate by the instability in both Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Initially, the Uzbek government had chosen to remain neutral, however, faced with increased threats it began supporting Rakhmon’s faction; officially, it offered technical assistance while unofficially in 1992-1993 it supplied the Popular Front with forces to attack the Karategin Valley, an act which had been described to have determined the outcome of the war (Akiner 48, Horsman 29). Uzbekistan was also actively involved in early peace negotiations by urging Tajikistan to reach a negotiated settlement and along with Russia, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Iran becoming an official observer in the inter-Tajik talks (McAuliffe 3).

In the end of 1994 Karimov’s attitude towards Tajikistan had become ambiguous and as Akiner notes, “President Karimov became openly critical of the Tajik leadership’s intransigent stance in the peace negotiations” (Akiner 48). In 1995 Karimov received the members of Tajik opposition leaders in Tashkent to offer assistance to “help them gain support from the Kazakh and Kyrgyz governments” leading to suspicion on the part of Rakhmon (Ibid). Additionally in 1996 Uzbekistan was associated with a military uprising led by a Leninobodi former member of the Central Committee of the Tajik Communist Party who demanded the resignation of a number of government officials, leading to a further deterioration of Uzbek and Tajik relations (Horsman 39). Nevertheless, the loss of Uzbekistan’s support contributed to Rakhmon’s decision to cooperate with the UTO to settle the conflict (McAuliffe 7).

Russia was the most influential foreign player in the Tajik civil war “because there was a large Russian population and because the only professional troops in the country were under Slav command” (Akiner 45). In 1991, the Russian 201\textsuperscript{st} Motor Rifle Division based near Dushanbe, Qurghonteppa and Kulyab, Air Defence Forces as well as KGB border guards along

\textsuperscript{8} This is in reference to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the founders of which had started their activities by establishing the Adolat movement in the Ferghana valley in the early 1990s. After failure of negotiations with Karimov’s government and subsequent heavy crackdown on Islam in the region, the majority of Adolat members fled to Tajikistan where they fought along with the forces of the UTO (Naumkin 24).
the Afghan and Chinese borders had all been stationed in Tajikistan (Akiner 45). Moreover, Russia had strong interests in preventing increased drug trade resulting from the instability and the spread of Taliban influence from Afghanistan to Tajikistan. Officially, the Russian government had claimed neutrality in the conflict, however, a large majority of sources on the matter claim that it had shown significant informal support for the Tajik government, which in turn was heavily reliant for military sustenance (Rashid 104). Towards the end of 1992 the Russian government opted for a diplomatic solution by gathering several leaders of the commonwealth of independent states (CIS) from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and calling upon a 25,000 CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force. Yet the plan was difficult to implement as the contributions made by the Central Asian states were minimal, leaving Russia with the major burden of peacekeeping⁹ (Tadjbakhsh 15). Its active involvement extended to urging the opposition forces to be included in the peace talks, economic support and hosting the first round of negotiations between the government and opposition in 1994 with the sponsorship of the UN (Akiner 47).

In 1995, in fear of being trapped in a Chechen-like quagmire, Russia had also become critical of Rakhmon’s avoidance of discussions regarding power-sharing with the UTO and as a result changed its policy stance by entering into discussions with UTO’s delegation. A more alarming factor which urged Russia to bring an end to the conflict was the 1996 Taliban capture of Kabul which posed an increased risk of the spread of Islamism throughout Central Asia, a loss of influence over Central Asia’s natural resources and potential for the intervention of Western powers (McAuliffe 8)¹⁰. Subsequently, in 1997 Rakhmon, pressured by the loss of

---

⁹ The opposition claimed that Russia had on several occasions failed to maintain its neutrality. This was confirmed by Tajik government officials who justified that without Russian involvement, the damages would be far greater (Akiner 47)

¹⁰ The Taliban’s capture of Kabul was also a source of pressure for Rakhmon and the UTO (Barnes and Abdullaev, McAuliffe 7, Rashid 104). In this respect McAuliffe effectively explains the parties’ dynamics: “The Rakhmonov regime, already beset by mounting domestic problems, now faced in the Taliban a radical Islamic regime with potentially regional ambitions. The UTO, for its part, faced an equally pressing threat. Its military viability depended on the sanctuary and support it received from anti-Taliban ethnic Tajik guerrillas in northern
Moscow’s support had agreed to meet with Abdullah Nur, head of UTO to discuss power-sharing (Ibid.).

In terms of the existing framework of motivation for intervention and facilitation of negotiations, this account demonstrates that Uzbekistan and Russia had indeed acted in pursuit of foreign policy interests. The main concerns of Uzbekistan and Russia consisted of the instability caused by the continuation of the conflict in combination with the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and had led them to show support largely for Rakhmon’s faction. At the same time, the lack of mediation between Rakhmon’s government and opposition posed an even more severe security threat which caused the mediators to engage in a balancing act by entering into discussions with the opposition. Uzbekistan had thus performed a coercive role by withdrawing support for Rakhmon as a punishment for incompliance which in turn contributed to the initiation of cooperation between Tajikistan and the UTO. Russia had additionally played an informing role by urging the inclusion of the oppositions in negotiations, an organisational role by hosting conferences and a coercive role by exerting pressure on Rakhmon to agree to the negotiation of power-sharing provisions. The relative peace which accompanied the successful cooperation between the government and the opposition had meant that Uzbekistan’s and Russia’s foreign policy interests had been fulfilled. This demonstrates that their role as mediators had been in accordance with the theoretical framework and was thus successful.

The UN played an extremely important operational function, while its position along with the Organisation for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (which also

Afghanistan who, reeling from the Taliban campaign, had retreated into their stronghold in the Panjshir Valley.” (McAuliffe 8). It is important to stress that conflict resolution theory is limited in its explanation of the role of the international context as this factor has been contested by theorists. Richard Haas, the proponent of the notion of conflict ‘ripeness’, has argued that certain conditions are vital in providing the optimal setting for negotiation. This, however, has been contested by some who consider ‘ripeness’ unimportant, leading to the factor’s exclusion from the provided theoretical framework. This points to a limitation of conflict resolution theory in its failure to reach a consensus on the relevance of certain factors
contributed to the settlement) as an agent of democratisation had been less definite. At the request of the member states, in 1992 the UN Security Council authorised the UN to intervene in the negotiation process between the warring factions in Tajikistan. In addition to sponsoring the aforementioned 1994 inter-Tajik negotiations in Moscow, the UN carried out preliminary consultations with each party involved; the government, opposition, field commanders, NGOs as well as the governments of the observer countries. Furthermore, it organised grounds for cooperation by calculating the most appropriate venues for negotiations\textsuperscript{11} (Hay).

The UN additionally drafted the texts of agreements which in turn balanced the interests of both parties, showing that the UN effectively facilitated cooperation between warring factions (Hay). The coercive element however was not achieved, a problem that is common UN peace building operations. Relevantly, as Betram posits, “the shift to a logic of compromise comes only when all sides have become convinced that their interests are best served by peace and by the process of democratization, with its uncertain outcomes” (Betram 405). The UN therefore has little coercive function and relies on the pressures of regional powers, which in Tajikistan’s case were Uzbekistan and Russia.

The final peace agreement posed several challenges with regards to the perceived role of the UN and OSCE as agents of democratisation. In 1997 the UN “crafted a narrow mandate that focused on ending the war [and aimed to promote a process that] was oriented towards drawing the armed factions into a negotiation process that would conclude with an agreement capable of restoring stability” (Barnes and Abdullaev). Barnes and Abdullaev further add that:

“As a result, some political interests were not represented in the negotiations. Nor was the process designed to provide opportunities for effective public participation or for

\textsuperscript{11} As Hay explains: “If the UN team predicted that more concessions were needed from the UTO delegation, for example, then Islamabad, Kabul or Tehran were appropriate locations because the host government would have more leverage with the opposition because of its closer relations with UTO leaders”. A parallel policy was implemented towards the government faction which was supported by Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. (Hay)
popular ratification of agreements reached. The agreements represented the minimum point of consensus between the negotiators at the time they were drafted and did not attempt to provide a normative blueprint for the future” (Barnes and Abdullaev)

In effect, the 1997 peace agreement did not include other parties involved in the war (“Key Elements of the Tajikistan Peace Agreement”). It excluded the Leninobodi faction and the Uzbek minority which comprises almost a third of the Tajik population. This resulted in the aforementioned uprising of 1996 as well as in 1997 and 1998 led by Colonel Khudorbediev who demanded seats in the government (Lynch 65). The urgent need to stop war and the establishment of stability was reached at the cost of the provision of an inclusive agreement that laid the groundwork for democratic transition. This appears to be a classic case of Bertram’s security-versus-democracy dilemma explained in the theoretical chapter. It is, however, important to note that the subsequent actions on the part of the UN, OSCE and other international NGOs showed attempts to encourage democratisation:

“[these organisations] strove to bring democracy, security and development to Tajikistan under the maxims of international peace building. Elections were monitored, political parties were supported, border management was reformed, warlords were reintegrated and community conflict resolution projects were undertaken across the length and breadth of the country” (Heathershaw 1316).

At the same time these attempts were futile as Rakhmon supressed his rivals, cracked down on freedom of speech and “gerrymandered referendum” (Ibid). Failure of democratisation is also explained in the previous section which illustrates the repression of Islam and the threats such actions pose. Heathershaw argues that international intervention had given Tajikistan’s peace a virtual quality where democratisation and public reform is only observed by those in the liberal international community where “success’ is identified by international monitors and
evaluators of aid programmes” (Ibid). This indicates a clash between the initial goals of UN mediation and later unsuccessful attempts at democratisation.

Through the lens of the theory as provided by Bertram (referenced in the theoretical chapter), an instatement of the democratically limited peace agreement in Tajikistan could be interpreted as the only option for building the conditions for peace from which a sustainable democratic peace would be developed. However, the exclusive agreement, despite its attempt to not provide a normative blueprint for the future, had undermined future prospects of democratisation as it failed to deliver a framework for future political representation and competition, allowing Rakhmon to consolidate the power to use it against his opponents, thus increasing the threat of future violence.

Structurally, Tajikistan’s 1997 agreement is in line with the requirements provided by the theory. The final agreement, includes nine annexes which are individual agreements signed over the course of the years leading up to the final agreement. The structural provisions address the causes of conflict through power-sharing (although the government was never forced to comply), absorption of UTO commanders into the military structures, clauses dealing with refugees and amnesty of prisoners. Their implementation is facilitated by organisational bodies such as the Commission for National Reconciliation (CNR), UN Missions of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and Contact Group of Guarantor States all of whom oversee legal and institutional building. The agreement structure thus fulfils the obligation and delegation functions of legalisation as provided by Abbot et al., by obliging parties to commit to rules and allowing organisations to implement those rules.

However, the content and precision aspect of the legalisation function of the agreement with regards to the CNR is limited. The CNR was chaired by a UTO member and comprised

---

12 Heathershaw attributes Tajikistan’s relative post-war peace to the people’s respect for ‘stability’ over democracy.
13 See Appendix 1/2/3
of an equal number of UTO and pro-government representatives. Zoir and Newton argue that despite its intended flexibility, the agreement failed to “identify clear directions or guidelines for the CNR in its work of constitutional reform and in the structural bias in favour of the pre-existing system” (Zoir and Newton). This is supported by the provisions of the Protocol on the Main Functions and Powers of the Commission for National Reconciliation found in Appendix 3 which lack the “procedural safeguards to ensure its independent functioning” and favours the pre-existing system by conferring joint responsibility of drafting constitutional amendments on the CNR and the President who “already had the power to appoint half the commission members” (Ibid.). Such an outcome put the UTO, “an alliance representing diverse political groupings, at a structural disadvantage” as it already lacked internal cohesion and was a weak balancing force for the government. The lack of guidelines for democratic consolidation contributed to the CNR’s inability to alter the highly centralised form of government after the referendum which introduced the constitutional amendments (Ibid.). The agreement’s lack of precision facilitated Rakhmon’s power consolidation by failing to ensure the balance of power between the government and the opposition thus providing the basis for future discord between the two factions.

In short, through the depiction of the motivations and operations of Uzbekistan, Russia and the UN during the inter-Tajik negotiations, this section shows that the behaviours of third-party mediators largely correspond to the theory. As state mediators which aimed to see an immediate end to the war, Uzbekistan and Russia successfully exerted pressure on Rakhmon to begin negotiations with the opposition, and by doing so have fulfilled their own foreign policy interests. The UN in turn effectively facilitated the talks by consulting with all parties, selecting hosting nations and drafting every agreement, thus fulfilling its ‘procedural’ function. An overview of the agreement design also demonstrates that structurally, the agreement was comprehensive and included a wide range of components provided in the theory. At the same time the UN faced a security-versus-democracy dilemma where its need to balance peace and
democracy resulted in a democratically limited agreement which failed to include Leninobodis and Uzbeks in its provisions. The agreement itself lacked *precision* in its guidance for the CNR to achieve a successful democratic transition and created a setting which favoured Rakhmon’s faction. While these shortcomings are in line with the theoretical framework which accounts for the security-versus-peace dilemma and explains the importance of *precision* in peace agreements, they have serious implications for Tajikistan. The failure of peace building efforts to limit Rakhmon’s power consolidation had devastating impacts for the future of democracy in Tajikistan and limited the potential for successful power-sharing as is demonstrated in the next section.

4. POWER-SHARING: A NAÏVE APPROACH

Theory on power-sharing offers varying insights regarding its effectiveness after civil wars. Mattes and Savun argue that it may contribute to peace by preventing either faction from single-handedly controlling one area of government. Walter in turn claims that civil war factions look to guarantee key positions in government to secure themselves from harm and to have decision making powers in the government. Finally Popieszna and Schneider argue that power-sharing provisions on paper do not necessarily translate into reality nor do they ensure that war recurs in the future. This section tests the relevance of these claims by evaluating the success of the *implementation* of the power-sharing provisions of the 1997 peace agreement.

In 1997, with the signing of the agreement, the head of the UTO and the IRP - Said Abdulloh Nuri - came back from refuge in Afghanistan to chair the CNR. The allocation of ministerial posts on a 30% quota that were to hold until the next parliamentary elections had slowly begun and progress was seen with regards to the registration of opposition groups, fully legalising the activities of the IRP\(^\text{14}\), and making Tajikistan the only Central Asian country with

\(^{14}\) The IRP was first registered as an official political party in 1991 with support from Yeltsin who had an interest to weaken communist parties in Central Asia (Yilmaz 138).
a legal Islamic political party (Akiner 55). However, several commanders and fighters such as Abdullo Rakhimov did not trust the government to “keep its word on power-sharing” and joined the Taliban in Afghanistan (“Tajikistan: Changing Insurgent Threats” 2). Indeed, the process was extremely slow; the 30% quota was not met and from April to June 1999\(^\text{15}\) the UTO suspended its activities from the CNR\(^\text{16}\) (Abdullo). Further problems arose in the wake of the presidential elections of the same year when the UTO “member parties claimed that the government had set unequal conditions for both the nomination and registration of candidates for the presidency and for their pre-election campaign” and that they were prevented from collecting signatures for nomination (Abdullo, Akiner 59). However, due to international pressure, the IRP presidential candidate Davlat Usmon was registered, despite failure to meet the required quota of nomination signatures. As a result of the government’s failure to comply with the agreement, the IRP threatened to boycott the elections. The conflict was solved by a compromise between Nuri and Rakhmon and Usmon ran for presidency (Lynch 64). The election outcome was 96.97% in favour of Rakhmon and 2.11% for Usmon with the alleged turnout of 98.9%. Akiner notes that “given that an estimated 700,000 Tajiks … were abroad, this was not plausible; it merely added substance to allegations of serious irregularities in the counting of the vote” (Akiner 65). The 2000 parliamentary elections solidified Rakhmon’s ascent to power with Rakhmon’s People’s Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) winning 36 seats, the Communist Party – 13 and the IRP only two seats, marking an end to short-lived power-sharing.

Power-sharing thus took place in an atmosphere of distrust in which Rakhmon’s government marginalised the activities of opposition groups. This is in contradiction to the theory’s first claim that power-sharing prevents one faction from single-handedly controlling

---

\(^{15}\) By 1999, the coalition that had formed the UTO – the DTP, La’li Badakhshon, Rastokhez and the IRP collapsed (Akiner 58).

\(^{16}\) The conflict ended in a UNMOT and OSCE brokered settlement.
any one area of the government. However, it is in line with the claim that power-sharing on paper does not translate into reality – the failure of the government to ensure a fair environment for elections suggests that attempts were not genuine and Rakhmon was determined to secure his position regardless of the intentions of the agreement.

Yet even if power-sharing had been successful and the elections – fair, it is unlikely that the outcome would have been different. The IRP “was never able to overcome the problems of regionalisation, which increased at the end of the war after it failed to establish a countrywide party” (Rashid 108). Additionally, support for politicised Islam is limited due to the legacy of Soviet ideology and many scholars admit that Rakhmon would have won the elections regardless, as he has become “a symbol for post-war stability” (Yilmaz 141). Post-2000s thus saw a return to the pre-agreement order in which one faction dominated most of the powerful positions. Power-sharing appears to have been only a short-term method of appeasing the opposition.

Walter claims that civil war factions look to guarantee key positions in the government. This is extremely relevant in Tajikistan’s case as several influential members of the opposition had successfully secured positions of power in the government, an outcome which seems to have had a pacifying effect. Two of its most influential members – Akbar Turajonzade and Mirzo Ziyo (Nuri’s nephew) had been successfully absorbed into the government structures. In 1998, Rakhmon appointed Turajonzade as first vice prime minister who in turn changed allegiances by showing support for the former’s candidacy. As a result he was expelled from the IRP. Nuri also was seen to be “too soft towards the government”, leading to splits within the IRP and major losses to its support base (Rashid 108). Mirzo Ziyo in turn was appointed minister of defence as part of the power-sharing agreement and was known to harbour members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in his village in Tavildara, Rasht valley (Rashid 143). Other members were Shokh Iskandarov, a former commander of Rasht who “became a colonel in the border guards, in charge of a stretch of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border” and more importantly
the aforementioned Akhmadov (“Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent Threats” 3). With the weakening of the IRP and its exclusion from politics, it is of no surprise that an attempt to forcibly deprive the factions from their power positions could result in a violent conflict. This is confirmed by the 2008 attempt on Akhmadov’s life which prompted the 2010 insurgency:

“In the post-war years, President Rakhmon gradually squeezed most UTO figures out of their government positions. Ziyo was one of the last to go, replaced in late 2006. Iskandarov reportedly lost his position the next year. Ziyo returned to Tavildara, the valley just south of Rasht, where he continued to be an influential unofficial leader. Akhmadov, however, held on to his position, and contrived to keep the central government at arm’s length. A Western ambassador recalled that in 2008, any senior government official planning to visit Rasht had to clear the size of his delegation with Akhmadov. “The central government is not in charge in the region”, the ambassador added” (“Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent” Threats 2).

In an interview after the assassination attempt, Akhmadov warned that “if government forces tried to come for him again, they would be “received appropriately” (Ibid. 3). Indeed, two years later, on 19th September 2010, the military convoy moving through the Kamarob Gorge (Rasht) was ambushed by Akhmadov’s and his ex-co-commander Avoluddin Davlatov’s gunmen. Heathershaw and Roche note that the IRP never consented to the actions of these ex-UTO commanders, suggesting that the party has become atomised and incapable of resisting to the government’s pressures, making individual members an easy target for elimination (Heathershaw and Roche)

This account shows that power-sharing in the two years prior to the national elections was superficial; appointment of key government positions for UTO was slow and national elections – controversial. Rakhmon’s government’s successful marginalisation of the opposition refutes the theory’s assumption that power-sharing prevents any faction from
assuming total control. However it does support the idea that power-sharing on paper does not translate into reality, and as was demonstrated in the previous sections, little had improved since the war. Walter’s claim that civil war factions look to guarantee key positions for themselves is most pronounced in this case - certain important members had indeed received and had held on to certain key government positions, the attack upon which by the government had resulted in the 2010 insurgency.
Conclusion

The aim of this thesis to address the question of how conflict resolution theory explains the resurgence of violence in Tajikistan in 2010. It is found that for the most part, the resurgence of violence in Tajikistan can successfully be explained by conflict resolution theorists. In general, theorists claim that non-identity wars in democratic states with high state capacity mediated by third parties, resulting in detailed agreements and power-sharing provisions are least likely to recur. This thesis analyses each of these factors in the context of Tajikistan to evaluate their relevance and to understand the recurrence of violence in 2010.

With regards to ‘nature of the war’ as a determinant of peace, it is found that Tajikistan had indeed undergone an identity conflict resulting from deeply entrenched regionalism which had not been resolved after peace building efforts in 1997. In effect, the civil war had only reshaped the nature of regional power structures in favour of the Kulobi government. The 2010 insurgency appeared to have been an extension of the regional exclusion which had prevailed in Tajikistan’s history. This is in line with the theory which states that identity conflicts are more likely to recur.

Persistent regionalism was accompanied by low state capacity and poor democratisation characterised by unfair elections and Rakhmon’s repression of Islam and opposition parties. Additionally, the assassination attempt on Akhmadov is direct evidence of the failure of democratic structures and Rakhmon’s inability to cooperate with the former opposition. The resurgence of violence in a country with poor state capacity is thus also successfully predicted by conflict resolution theory.

Third-party mediation in turn was relatively successful in the pressures exerted by third party state actors such as Uzbekistan and Russia, extensive UN efforts to facilitate dialogue between the warring factions and in the detailed structure of the 1997 agreement which addressed a wide range of issues. However, the agreement itself was democratically limited as
it aimed to instate immediate peace at the cost including the Leninobodi factions and the Uzbek minority, hindering prospects for political opposition. The agreement also lacked precise guidelines for CNR and favoured the pre-existing system by granting Rakhmon excessive decision making powers in the formation of the new legislation. These shortcomings of mediation are accounted for by the theory which addresses the problem of the need to balance democracy and peace and stresses the importance of precise agreements in ensuring peace durability.

Given the imbalance of power resulting from the agreement, it is of no surprise that power-sharing was unsuccessful. Contrary to Mattes and Savun’s claims, power-sharing did not create a balancing force for the government as Rakhmon’s regime failed to comply to the 30% power-sharing quota and created unfair grounds for election campaigning. Such an outcome confirms the theoretical claim that de jure power-sharing does not translate into de facto power-sharing. Walter’s claim is appropriate in its assumptions that civil war factions will look to secure power positions for themselves as happened so in Tajikistan. The government’s attempt to deprive an influential member of his position culminated in a violent conflict. Power-sharing thus appears to have been a naïve, short-term solution which did not fully address the causes of conflict.

It can be thus be argued that within the given theoretical framework, two factors have led to a reduction in the scale of the conflict – successful pressure exerted by regional powers on the warring factions and the pacifying effect of the distribution of key government positions to opposition members which weakened the IRP and led to its atomisation, thus reducing the likelihood of resurgence of war. It is important to note that other factors such as war weariness and the shifting attitudes in Tajikistan’s politics may have also contributed to the reduced scale of conflict but are beyond the scope of this thesis.

On a final note, Iji effectively summarises the outcome of the civil war and negotiations in Tajikistan: “The power-sharing achieved has proved to be limited and superficial, to the
extent that regionalism still prevails in the country as a bar to efforts at consolidating the nation politically, economically, and socially. Therefore, the Tajik case stands not only as a success to emulate in trying to terminate violent civil conflict through negotiation and mediation, but also as a cautionary tale about the limits of such tools of conflict management.” (Iji 19) While the theory may have predicted the disintegration of peace, peace building failed to fulfil its democratic potential in Tajikistan and had indeed resulted in a shallow, negative peace, where the mere absence of war has been hailed as successful peace building.
**Bibliography**


Ramsbotham, Oliver, Hugh Miall, and Tom Woodhouse. "Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Concepts and Definitions." Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The


Appendix 1

Map of Tajikistan
(“Tajikistan: Insurgent threats” 20)
Appendix 2

Peace Agreements Digital Collection

Tajikistan >> General Agreement

General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan,
signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997

For the purposes of achieving peace and national accord in Tajikistan and overcoming the consequences of the civil war, inter-Tajik talks on national reconciliation have been conducted from April 1994 up until the present time under the auspices of the United Nations. In the course of eight rounds of talks between delegations of the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, hereinafter referred to as the Parties, six meetings between the President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, and also three rounds of consultations between the delegations of the Parties, which took place in Almaty, Ashgabat, Bishkek, Islamabad, Kabul, Meshkhed (Islamic Republic of Iran), Moscow, Tehran and Khusdekh (Afghanistan), protocols were agreed and signed which, together with the present document, constitute the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (the General Agreement). It includes the following documents:

- the Protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995 (annex I);¹
- the Protocol on political questions of 18 May 1997 (annex II)² and the related Agreement between the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Said Abdulllo Nuri, on the results of the meeting held in Moscow on 23 December 1996 (annex III);³ the Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation of 23 December 1996 (annex IV);⁴ the Statute of the Commission on National Reconciliation, of 21 February 1997 (annex V);⁵ the Additional Protocol to the Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, of 21 February 1997 (annex VI);⁶
- the Protocol on military issues (annex VII);⁷
- the Protocol on refugees of 13 January 1997 (annex VIII);⁸

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed that the signing of the present General Agreement marks the beginning of the phase of full and interconnected implementation of the agreements reached, which will put an end once and for all to the fratricidal conflict in Tajikistan, ensure mutual forgiveness and amnesty, return the refugees to their homes, and create the conditions for the democratic development of society, the holding of free elections and the restoration of the country’s economy destroyed by the many years of conflict. The
highest national priorities of the country are peace and the national unity of all nationals of Tajikistan, regardless of their ethnic origin, political orientation, religion or regional affiliation.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide assistance and cooperation in the comprehensive implementation of the General Agreement. They have also agreed to request the Chairman on Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Governments of the guarantor States to provide cooperation in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the General Agreement.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed to register the General Agreement with the United Nations Secretariat in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

(Signed) E. RAKHMONOV
President of Tajikistan
(Signed) G. MERREM
Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

(Signed) A. NURI
Leader of the United Tajik Opposition

Notes

4. Ibid., annex II.
6. Ibid., annex II.
7. S/1997/209, annex II.

Posted by USIP Library on: April 9 2002
Source Name: Text e-mailed from the United Nations Information Centre, Washington, D.C.
Date e-mailed: February 24 2000
Appendix 3

Annex II

Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation.

In connection with the beginning of a qualitatively new phase in the attainment of peace and national accord in Tajikistan and in accordance with the Agreement between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, the parties have taken the decision to establish for the transition period a Commission on National Reconciliation.

The main purposes of the Commission are the attainment of national reconciliation through the implementation of the agreements reached in the course of the inter-Tajik talks, the creation of an atmosphere of trust and mutual forgiveness, and the institution of a broad dialogue among the various political forces in the country in the interests of the restoration and strengthening of civil accord in Tajikistan.

For these purposes, the Commission is assigned the tasks of:

Devising a monitoring mechanism and monitoring compliance by the Parties with the agreements on the establishment of peace and national accord in the country jointly with the other organs established for that purpose;

Implementing measures for the safe and appropriate return of the refugees, their active involvement in the social, political and economic life of the country and the provision of assistance in reconstruction of the housing and industrial and agricultural facilities destroyed by the war;

Developing proposals for amending the legislation on the functioning of political parties and movements and the mass media.

During the transition period the President and the Commission on National Reconciliation will exercise the following functions and powers:

Submission to a nationwide referendum of proposals for amendments and additions to the existing Constitution;

Preparation and submission for approval by Parliament, and if necessary also by a nationwide referendum, of a new law on elections to Parliament and the local representative bodies;

Establishment for the transition period of a Central Commission on Elections and the Conduct of the Referendum;

Reform of the Government - inclusion of representatives of the opposition (the United Tajik Opposition) in the structures of executive authority, including ministries, departments, local authorities, judicial bodies and law enforcement agencies, in proportion to the representation of the parties in the
Commission on National Reconciliation and taking into account the regional principle;

Guidance and monitoring of the disbandment, disarmament and reintegration of the armed units of the opposition, and conduct of activities to reform the authorities responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the agencies of the Office of the Public Prosecutor;

Monitoring of the conduct of a full exchange of prisoners of war, other prisoners and forcibly detained persons;

Adoption of a Reciprocal Pardon Act and drafting of an Amnesty Act to be adopted by Parliament and the Commission on National Reconciliation;

Development of a mechanism for converting the military-political movements into political parties;

Submission for consideration by Parliament of proposals regarding the date for the holding of elections to a new professional Parliament, to be monitored by the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with the participation of the observer countries at the inter-Tajik talks.

Decisions adopted by the President and the Commission regarding issues of national reconciliation shall be binding on the authorities.

The activities of the Commission on National Reconciliation shall be conducted in close cooperation with the United Nations Mission of Observers and the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan.

The Commission on National Reconciliation shall cease its activities after the convening of the new Parliament and the establishment of its authorities.

The present Protocol forms an integral part of the Agreement signed in Moscow on 23 December 1996 by E. S. Rakhmonov, S. A. Ruri and G. D. Merrem.

(Signed) E. S. RAKHMONOV
President of the Republic of Tajikistan

(Signed) S. A. RURI
Leader of the United Tajik Opposition

(Signed) G. D. MERREM
Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Tajikistan

23 December 1996
Key elements of the Tajikistan peace agreement


Implementation

Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR)

The CNR is created as the mechanism to implement agreements. It is also charged with creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual forgiveness and instituting dialogue among various political forces to promote national reconciliation. The CNR is to be comprised of equal numbers of government and United Tajik Opposition (UTO) representatives and will be chaired by a UTO representative, with a government representative as deputy. It will form subcommittees on political, military, refugee and legal issues. The UN Special Representative, UNMOCT and the OSCE Mission will provide assistance to the CNR. The CNR will function during the transition period between the signing of the June 1997 General Agreement and will disband after the new Parliament is convened.

UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOCT)

The United Nations is requested to guarantee implementation of the General Agreement. UNMOCT is requested to monitor implementation and to provide expert advice, consultations, and good offices at all stages.

Contact Group of Guarantor States

The governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, who were official observers of the negotiations, are requested to act as political and moral guarantors of the General Agreement. These states – together with the UN, the OIC, and the OSCE – agree to form a Contact Group based in Dushanbe to monitor implementation and to provide expertise, consultations, and other good offices.

Additional mechanisms

Joint Commissions with equal numbers of government and UTO representatives will oversee implementation of the ceasefire and refugee return agreements. The CIS collective peacekeeping forces will assist with the ceasefire and with implementation of the military protocol. In the early agreements, the International Committee of the Red Cross, with UNMOCT, will assist with the exchange of military personnel, an important confidence-building measure. The OSCE, through its mission, will facilitate implementation of the General Agreement in areas related to human rights and establishing democratic political and legal institutions.

Political issues

The CNR will develop proposals to amend legislation on political parties, movements and the mass media. Together with the President, the CNR will develop proposals for amendments and additions to the Constitution – to be decided by national referendum – and a new law on elections.

Government reform

UTO representatives will be incorporated into the structures of Tajikistan's executive branch of government (ministries, departments, local government, judicial, and law enforcement bodies) on the basis of a 30 per cent quota.

Elections

A Central Electoral Commission will be formed for the transition period to conduct elections and a referendum on constitutional reform. UTO representatives will comprise 25 per cent of its membership. This will take place prior to the start of a new professional Parliament and a new Central Electoral Commission.

Parties and movements

The ban will be lifted on UTO political parties and movements after the second phase of the military protocol is implemented and they will function within the framework of the constitution and laws of Tajikistan.

Mass media

Bans and restrictions will be lifted after the second phase of the military protocol is implemented and the media will function within the framework of the constitution and laws of Tajikistan.
Military issues

Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the UTO's armed units and reform of the government power structures will be carried out during the transition period by the President and the CNR, in close cooperation with UNMOT. Uncooperative armed units will be considered illegal and forcibly disarmed. Implementation will be coordinated by the CNR Subcommission on Military Issues and a Joint Central Review Board with equal numbers of government and UTO representatives. The first to third stages will be completed within six months of the CNR beginning work. Constant contact will be maintained between unit commanders and joint training conducted to encourage mutual trust.

First stage  Within two months of the CNR beginning work, UTO armed units will go to assembly points for registration and medical exams. Their armaments will be inventoried and placed in secure storage. Units returning from Afghanistan will enter Tajikistan without weapons. They will be accompanied by the CIS collective peacekeeping forces supervised by UNMOT and their base camps will be dismantled.

Second stage  One month after the assembly process is complete, UTO armed units will be incorporated into the regular armed forces of Tajikistan as separate units and subordinated to corresponding chains of command. The UTO leadership will publicly announce that its armed units are disbanded. Units formed by local authorities (civil defence forces, etc.) will be disbanded and individual members given the opportunity to enter the Tajikistan armed services.

Third stage  The Joint Review Board will determine whether individual troops are fit for further military service and make recommendations for appointments to command positions. Those who do not want to continue service or who are deemed unfit due to health, incompetence, or a criminal record prior to May 1992 will be demobilized to civilian life. People who previously held positions in Tajikistan’s security services will be reinstated into their former or an equivalent position.

Fourth stage  By the end of the transition period, former UTO units will be completely merged into governmental power structures. They will be sent to places of permanent assignment and quartered in separate barracks.

Refugee issues

- The government will assume the obligation to reintegrate returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into the social and economic life of the country. This will include restoration of all rights, provision of humanitarian and financial aid, assistance with employment and housing, and return of homes and property.

- The government will not undertake criminal proceedings against refugees because of their participation in the political confrontation or war.

- A Joint Commission will address problems relating to refugees and visit regularly places where refugees and IDPs are concentrated.

- The UN, OSCE, and UNHCR are requested to provide assistance to ensure the safety of those returning voluntarily.

- Governments of the CIS states are requested to issue temporary identity documents to Tajikistani refugees and to assist the UNHCR with ensuring their safety.

Amnesty

The 'reciprocal-pardon' Act on Mutual Forgiveness will be the first political decision taken by the CNR in its initial days of work. Within a month of this act, it will issue an Amnesty Act. According to these acts:

- All prisoners of war will be released.

- The convictions of those sentenced to imprisonment for activities in the political and military confrontation from 1992 will be annulled and their conviction record erased; outstanding criminal cases will be discontinued.

- Criminal charges will not be brought against those who committed crimes against the state during the political and military confrontation.

- Persons accused of certain crimes in the Tajikistan Penal Code are not released from punishment and criminal charges.

- Anyone who uses force in the future to settle political disputes will be held responsible under the laws of Tajikistan.