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From Oil To Climate Diplomacy: The Evolving Geopolitical Identity Of Gulf States In A Deccarbonizing World

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Abstract

This study examines the strategic transition of Gulf states from oil-based diplomacy to climate diplomacy, necessitated by global decarbonization pressures and ambitious national sustainability mandates. Further, by utilizing an analytical framework, the research evaluates the shift toward renewable energy and carbon capture technologies while addressing critical impediments, including fossil fuel dependency, technical barriers, and socio-economic implications for human capital development. Findings indicate that despite systemic hurdles, the region's vast renewable potential offers a unique pathway to global leadership in clean energy. The study concludes that achieving carbon neutrality and bolstering geopolitical influence requires robust international cooperation, strategic economic diversification, and transparent environmental governance. By offering a viable roadmap for resource-dependent economies, this research underscores the pivotal role of smart infrastructure and green-sector investment in reshaping regional stability within a post-carbon global order.

KEYWORDS*:* Geopolitical Identity, Oil Diplomacy, Climate Diplomacy, Economic Diversification, Carbon Neutrality, Gulf Countries.

Résumé

Cette étude examine le passage stratégique des États du Golfe de la diplomatie basée sur le pétrole à la diplomatie climatique, rendue nécessaire par les pressions mondiales de décarbonisation et les mandats nationaux ambitieux en matière de durabilité. Par conséquent, en utilisant un cadre analytique, l'étude vise à évaluer la transition vers les énergies renouvelables et les technologies de capture du carbone tout en abordant les obstacles critiques, y compris la dépendance aux combustibles fossiles, les barrières techniques et les impacts sociaux et économiques sur le développement du capital humain. C'est donc en l'état que l'analyse démontre que malgré les freins structurels le gigantisme des potentialités renouvelables régionales permet d'envisager un leadership mondial dans le secteur de l'énergie propre. D'où la conclusion du travail sur la nécessité d'un effort concerté international, d'une diversification stratégique de l'économie et d'un environnement durable pour parvenir à la préservation de la neutralité carbone, tout en rappelant l'importance résultante du rôle central des infrastructures intelligentes et des investissements au secteur vert, comme étant les leviers pour rétablir la stabilité régionale dans un système mondial post-carbone.

Mots clés : identité géopolitique, diplomatie pétrolière, diplomatie climatique, diversification économique, neutralité carbone, états du Golfe.

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من النفط إلى دبلوماسية المناخ: الهوية الجيوسياسية المتطورة لدول الخليج في عالم يتجه نحو خفض انبعاثات الكربون

إعداد: الباحث / يوسف سلوم | الجمهورية اللبنانية

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للاقتباس: سلوم، يوسف، من النفط إلى دبلوماسية المناخ: الهوية الجيوسياسية المتطورة لدول الخليج في عالم يتجه نحو خفض انبعاثات الكربون، مجلة القرار للبحوث العلمية المحكّمة، المجلد التاسع، العدد 26، السنة الثالثة، 2026، ص–ص 307–322. https://doi.org/10.70758/elqarar/9.26.13

المُلخّص

تتناول هذه الدّراسة التحوّل الإستراتيجيّ لدول الخليج من الدبلوماسيّة القائمة على النّفط إلى دبلوماسيّة المناخ، وهو ما استوجبته الضغوط العالميّة لإزالة الكربون وتفويضات الاستدامة الوطنيّة الطموحة. لذا، ومن خلال استخدام إطار تحليليّ، تحرص الدّراسة على تقييم التحوّل نحو الطاقة المتجدّدة وتقنيّات احتجاز الكربون مع معالجة العوائق الحاسمة، بما في ذلك الاعتماد على الوقود الأحفوريّ، والحواجز التقنيّة، والآثار الاجتماعيّة والاقتصاديّة على تنمية رأس المال البشريّ. وعليه، تشير النتائج إلى أنّه على الرغم من العقبات النظاميّة، فإنّ الإمكانات المتجدّدة الهائلة التي تتمتّع بها المنطقة توفر طريقًا نحو الريادة العالميّة في مجال الطاقة النّظيفة. وفقًا لذلك، خلصت الدّراسة إلى أنّ تحقيق الحياد الكربونيّ وتعزيز النّفوذ الجيوسياسيّ يتطلّب تعاونًا دوليًّا قويًّا، وتنوّعًا اقتصاديًّا استراتيجيًّا، وإدارة بيئيّة شفّافة. فضلاً عن التشديد على أهميّة الدّور المحوريّ للبنية الأساسيّة الذكيّة والاستثمار في القطاع الأخضر في إعادة تشكيل الاستقرار الإقليميّ داخل النّظام العالميّ ما بعد الكربون.

الكلمات المفتاحيّة: الهويّة الجيوسياسيّة، دبلوماسيّة النّفط، دبلوماسيّة المناخ، التنوّع الاقتصاديّ، الحياد الكربونيّ، دول الخليج.

INTRODUCTION

Oil has significantly shaped the geopolitical identity of the Arabian Gulf region since its discovery in the early 20th century. This discovery has led to a significant strategic shift in Gulf societies, from tribal entities reliant on pearl fishing and agriculture to modern countries with strong economies and global influence.

Further, the discovery of oil in the 1930s, notably Saudi Arabia's Dammam Well in 1938, was pivotal in transforming the Arabian Gulf region from a pre-oil economy into a geopolitically significant powerhouse, now holding over 30% of global crude oil and 20% of natural gas reserves, directly impacting energy security and international stability. [1]This wealth fueled extensive infrastructure and solidified the state's influence, integrating the region into global energy security with unprecedented geopolitical leverage. Yet, the global push for decarbonization and climate change impacts now compel these nations to redefine their geopolitical identity.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Gulf area - which is recognized as one of the most arid areas in the world - has been faced with the effects of the climate crisis that were severe due to rates of increases in temperatures doubling those experienced globally. As a result of the environmental crisis facing them, the Gulf state governments have determined that unilateral actions will be insufficient to address the environmental issues and international cooperation and strategic alliances are now imperative to provide the necessary geopolitical framework to deal with these transnational environmental crises. The GCC [2] member states have demonstrated the extent of their cooperation in addressing the transnational aspects of the climate crisis through their participation in international agreements such as the UNFCCC[3] and the Paris Climate Agreement[4]. Similarly, the

(1)Vitalis, America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2007, p.215.

(2) **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union comprising all Arab states of the Persian Gulf, except for Iraq. Established in 1981, its primary goals include fostering economic, social, and cultural cooperation, as well as enhancing regional security and stability among its member states.

(3) **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** is an international environmental treaty adopted in 1992, establishing a framework for intergovernmental efforts to address climate change. Its core objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous human interference with the climate system.

(4) **Paris Agreement** is a legally binding international treaty on climate change, adopted in 2015. It aims to keep the global average temperature rise well below 2°C (preferably 1.5°C) above pre-industrial levels,

GCC member states have established for themselves very ambitious goals to achieve "net zero emissions" by mid-century.

Since the early 2000s, there has been a global increase in climate change awareness and the need for reducing carbon emissions has caused a rapid transition toward developing carbon-neutral economies. This fundamental global transition presents a major challenge to the existence of the Gulf states whose wealth and historical geopolitical importance have rested upon their ability to produce oil. Realizing oil's negative environmental impacts, the Gulf states are implementing a new strategic approach of moving from "oil diplomacy" to "climate diplomacy". Through the use of investment in renewable energy sources and carbon capture technology, the Gulf states are attempting to ensure their continued relevance in a post-carbon world while utilizing the climate-related challenges to create new opportunities for the states to serve as a leader in global environmental leadership. This creates a significant question regarding how successful the Gulf states will be in maintaining their geopolitical stature in a post-oil world and whether they can develop solutions to the challenges they currently face as opportunities to provide climate leadership and promote sustainability.

I. **The Importance of Study**

1. Joint Gulf Cooperation is needed geopolitically to have a sustainable future beyond oil.

2. The transition toward a carbon neutral economy will be supported through the development of Strategic Policy through the provision of practical Recommendations to Decision Makers and Experts.

3. Monitoring the Historical and Systematic Transformation of the Gulf States from "Oil Diplomacy" to "Climate Diplomacy" as a critical aspect of International Security.

4. The investment in Renewable Energy has immediate Benefits to National Security and Future Economic Stability within the Region. Addressing existential challenges by investigating how to transform the climate crisis and decarbonization challenges from economic threats into opportunities for global environmental leadership.

II. **Study Objectives**

requiring all countries to submit "nationally determined contributions" (NDCs) outlining their climate action plans.

1. A closer look at the geopolitical significance of oil and the way that oil has established the strategic identity of the Arabian Gulf as we have moved through the 20th century.

2. Evaluating the responses of the Gulf countries to climate change and assessing the adequacy of their current approaches to address those challenges.

3. Reviewing both the challenges and opportunities for transitioning to an economy that is less dependent upon oil and increasing the diversification of each Gulf country's economy.

4. Evaluating the impact of the global transition toward lower-carbon energy systems on the ability of Gulf states to maintain or increase their regional and international influence during the process of de-carbonization.

5. Suggesting appropriate policy recommendations to support greater integration among the Gulf states and facilitate their shift toward a low-carbon, sustainable energy future by mid-century.

6. Measuring the impact of green initiatives: Analyzing green initiatives adopted by GCC countries and their impact on enhancing future stability.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts two main scientific methodologies to analyze the geopolitical identity of the Gulf states in a world moving towards decarbonization. In this context, extrapolation methodology is used to project and analyze the future impacts of climate change and energy transition strategies. This approach allows predicting possible scenarios for how climate change will affect the region, and how Gulf countries will adapt to these challenges as they seek to diversify their energy sources.

Additionally, the study relies on analytical examination to understand the dynamics of regional cooperation and current climate challenges. This approach enables us to unpack the complex factors affecting the stability of the region, and evaluate the effectiveness of joint initiatives between the Gulf states to confront the growing climate challenges. By integrating these two approaches, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive and in-depth view of the changing geopolitical landscape of the Gulf countries in light of global transitions towards a carbon-neutral economy.

I. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF OIL

Since oil has grown to be a powerful tool for influencing global affairs, it has always played a significant role in forming the geopolitical environment of the Gulf states. This "black gold" has granted them influence, becoming critical to the national security and economic growth of importing nations worldwide.

Holding about six percent of all of the world's oil reserves; for Gulf States such as Kuwait, this resource has provided an enormous source of liquidity and has had a profound impact on their development. The wealth generated by oil allowed them to implement many large-scale infrastructure and development initiatives, and to increase their economic stability. Additionally, oil has given Gulf States considerable influence on the global stage politically and diplomatically, especially through their collective leverage at organizations such as OPEC(1) which influences global oil production and prices, and subsequently the world's economy.

The political and strategic significance of oil production has resulted in the development of many alliances and conflicts in the Gulf and beyond. The major global powers (US, EU, Russia, and China) have made alliances with the states of the Gulf to ensure that oil will continue to flow into the global economy and that regional security is maintained. However, the control of oil has also led to regional conflict and crisis.

This can be illustrated by the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait(2) where one of the primary motivations for the invasion was to gain control of Kuwait's oil fields and its strategically located oil export facilities which demonstrated the high level of geopolitical significance of oil as a cause of regional conflict. In addition, the unilateral actions of the upstream states(3); the involvement of non-regional powers; and the ambition of regional actors to

(1) **OPEC** stands for the **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries**. It is a permanent intergovernmental organization founded in 1960 by major oil-producing nations to coordinate and unify their petroleum policies, aiming to stabilize oil markets and ensure fair and steady income for producers.

(2) **Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait:** This act of aggression stemmed from disputes over oil production, debt, and territorial claims, ultimately triggering the Persian Gulf War.

(3) **Unilateral policies of upstream countries** refer to the actions taken by nations located higher up a shared river basin or resource flow, without consulting or securing agreement from downstream countries. These policies, often involving dam construction or water diversion, can significantly impact the water supply and security of nations further down the river.

increase their influence in the region through the increasing intensity of international geopolitical competition for regional influence, for example, the agency strategy of Iran.

Moreover, Iran's proxy strategy not only relies on its affiliated extremist groups, such as those in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, to threaten maritime security, but also reflects Iran's foreign policy approach of sponsoring and supporting militias throughout the Middle East. This strategy allows Tehran to extend its influence, exert pressure, and achieve its regional interests without direct military intervention. In vital waterways such as the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz, it serves as a pressure card to impose its influence in the Arab region. However, these factors increase the complexity of the geopolitical landscape in the region, and make protecting the security of oil supplies a very important security issue for the Gulf countries and the world.

II. NATIONAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHALLENGES

The Middle East, particularly the Gulf states, confronts severe climate challenges, including a water crisis impacting 60% of its population and a 30% drop in rain-fed crop yields, threatening food security. Subsequently, rising temperatures and sea levels further expose coastal cities to displacement and economic losses, prompting UN Secretary-General António Guterres to urge Arab nations to embrace a green economy and renewable energy.(1)

Confronted by escalating climate risks, Gulf states recognize that their enduring geopolitical influence in a decarbonizing world necessitates reducing their oil dependence. This context propels them to adopt ambitious economic diversification strategies(2), intrinsically representing a profound geopolitical transformation designed to secure their future relevance.(3) As well as this; The Gulf states have ambitions to develop into a global hub for investment, innovation, tourism, and logistics, rather than solely relying on their resources

(1) A. Guterres, Secretary-General's opening remarks at press encounter on climate (and situation in the Middle East), United Nations, 2023, Available at: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2023-11-27/secretary-generals-opening-remarks-press-encounter-climate-and-situation-the-middle-east.

(2) **Economic diversification strategies** are deliberate plans implemented by nations to broaden their economic base beyond reliance on a single sector, typically natural resources like oil or agriculture. The goal is to develop multiple, varied sources of income and employment, increasing resilience to external shocks and fostering sustainable growth.

(3) J.D. Smith, The geopolitics of decarbonization: Energy transitions and regional power in the Middle East, 2023, Routledge, 2023, p.150.

(oil) to provide a means for them to gain more geopolitical independence and lessen their vulnerability to fluctuations in oil sentiment.

The pursuit of these new sources of revenue is also clearly demonstrated in the Saudi Vision 2030 with the aim of increasing the proportion of private sector GDP[1] from 40% to 65%, reinforcing Prince Mohammed bin Salman's desire to utilize the substantial financial resources available to him to assist in the country's economic diversification efforts. The Arab Gulf states have made it clear they intend to pursue a firm path toward a green transition by undertaking large scale renewable energy projects that will serve as a fundamental component in their plans to diversify their economies and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

In Saudi Arabia, the NEOM project[2] is a prominent example of this transformation, as it is designed to be a future city that runs entirely on 100% renewable energy, including pioneering green hydrogen projects. This ambitious project aims to significantly reduce carbon emissions, while contributing to the diversification of the Saudi economy and placing the Kingdom on the map of global leadership in sustainable development.[3] Further, in the United Arab Emirates, the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park[4] is considered tangible evidence of leadership in this field, as it is one of the largest solar parks in the world. The complex will use photovoltaic solar panel technology[5] and concentrated solar energy to create massive amounts of electricity, which can be used to supply power to tens of thousands of homes each year. This project also has the potential to reduce millions of tons of carbon emissions annually. In addition, this project is significant for Kuwait's goal of producing 15 percent of its total electric power using renewable resources by

(1) **GDP contribution** refers to the portion or percentage of a country's total **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** that is generated from a specific economic sector, industry, or activity. It helps to understand the relative importance and economic impact of various components within a nation's economy.

(2) **NEOM** is a futuristic, highly ambitious megacity project being built in northwest Saudi Arabia as a cornerstone of Saudi Vision 2030. It aims to be a global hub for innovation and sustainable living, featuring cognitive cities like The Line, powered entirely by renewable energy, and focused on diversifying the Saudi economy beyond oil.

(3) S. Hertog, the political economy of Saudi Arabia: Reshaping a kingdom, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2023, p.39.

(4) **The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park** is the world's largest single-site solar park, located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. It aims to generate 5,000 megawatts of clean energy by 2030, utilizing both photovoltaic and concentrated solar power technologies to support Dubai's clean energy goals.

(5) **Photovoltaic (PV) solar panel technologies** involve devices that directly convert sunlight into electricity using semiconductor materials. These panels, composed of numerous solar cells, harness the "photovoltaic effect" where photons from light excite electrons, generating an electric current.

2030. This complex is considered unique in its kind for combining solar and wind energy technologies under unified management, which enhances energy security in Kuwait and contributes to creating new job opportunities and supporting local industries, and in its entirety reflects the vision of the Gulf countries to be global centers for sustainability and innovation in a post-carbon world.(1)

These initiatives not only bolster energy security and reduce carbon footprints but also align with international climate accords like the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. The UNFCCC is an international environmental treaty adopted in 1992, and represents the cornerstone of international efforts in the field of climate, as it aims to stabilize concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous human interference with the climate system. The Paris Agreement, which emerged from the UNFCCC and was adopted in 2015, is a legally binding agreement that brings together all countries for the first time in a common framework to address climate change. The agreement mainly aims to keep the global average temperature rise well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to continue efforts to limit the rise to 1.5°C. The agreement also requires countries to submit "nationally determined contributions" (NDCs) (2) outlining their plans to reduce emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change. Thus, Gulf countries' investments in renewable energy and carbon capture projects are directly consistent with the Paris Agreement's goals for reducing global emissions, and enhance their ability to meet their commitments within nationally determined contributions, contributing to broader international efforts towards a sustainable, low-carbon future.(3)

Also, these strategies reflect comprehensive awareness and international commitment from Gulf states, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. These efforts are supported by national visions such as Qatar National Vision 2030(4),

(1) S. Hertog, S., & G. Luciani, G. (Eds.), The future of the Gulf: Politics, economics, and the environment in a changing region, Hurst & Company, 2023, p.51.

(2) **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** are national climate action plans submitted by individual countries under the Paris Agreement. They outline each country's specific commitments and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, reflecting their "highest possible ambition" to achieve global climate goals.

(3) F.H. Al-Mansoori, Climate statecraft: The Gulf's new role in a decarbonizing world, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, p.36.

(4) **Qatar National Vision 2030** is a comprehensive strategic framework launched in 2008 that aims to transform Qatar into an advanced society capable of achieving sustainable development and providing a high standard of living for its people. It is built upon four interconnected pillars: human, social, economic,

which aims to transform Qatar by 2030 into an advanced society capable of achieving sustainable development and ensuring a high standard of living for its people for generations to come. The strategies for strengthening the collective bargaining power of the Gulf states in international forums include the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Water Strategy(1) for the years 2022-2030 that focuses on the management of water resources with the goal of being able to use them in an efficient way and protect them from challenges created by water scarcity. Therefore, by making investments into renewable energy, carbon sequestration and participating in other international initiatives, the Gulf states seek to make their dominant geopolitical position in a post-carbon environment even stronger.

III. FROM OIL DIPLOMACY TO CLIMATE DIPLOMACY IN THE GULF: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Gulf region is undergoing a significant energy shift by adopting a comprehensive strategy to bolster its geopolitical standing in the post-carbon era. As Saudi Crown Prince Abdul-Aziz bin Salman highlighted, Saudi Arabia has demonstrated remarkable transformation in recent years, pivoting from oil dependence to pioneering clean energy projects like green hydrogen and carbon capture.(2) So, backed by substantial investments, the Kingdom aims for carbon neutrality by 2060(3). The entire Gulf region is rapidly advancing this climate diplomacy, keenly aware of both its opportunities and challenges, which are as follows:

a. **Transformation Challenges**

The Arab Gulf states' shift from energy to climate diplomacy presents a multifaceted stra-

and environmental development, seeking to diversify the economy away from hydrocarbon reliance.

(1) The **Gulf Cooperation Council's 2022-2030 Water Strategy** is a regional framework adopted by the GCC member states to ensure sustainable water security across the arid region. It outlines common objectives and collaborative initiatives aimed at improving water resource management, increasing water-use efficiency, promoting sustainable desalination, and enhancing resilience to water scarcity and climate change impacts through coordinated policies and investments.

(2) Saudi Green Initiative, Saudi Green Initiative - Vision 2030, 2025, Available at: https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/explore/projects/saudi-green-initiative.

(3) The term "Kingdom aims for carbon neutrality by 2060 - Saudi Green Initiative - Vision 2030" refers to **Saudi Arabia's national commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2060.** This ambitious goal is a key component of the broader **Saudi Green Initiative**, launched in 2021 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which itself is part of the Kingdom's overarching **Vision 2030** for economic diversification and sustainable development.

tegic challenge. As highlighted by Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Dr. Muhammad Bushehri, this transformation demands intensified efforts, stronger companies, and an integrated approach. While these nations recognize the imperative of adapting to global sustainability trends and emission reduction, the region hurdles challengesasfollows:(1)

1. **Structural economic dependence on fossil fuels:** The Gulf states' deep dependence on oil and gas as a major source of government revenues, project financing, and job creation is a natural obstacle to any rapid transformation. The huge infrastructures invested over decades to extract and export these resources also make the cost of abandoning or diverting them prohibitive and time-consuming.

2. **Technical and economic obstacles:** Transitioning to renewable energy requires significant initial capital investments, climatic fluctuations, and advanced technical solutions for energy storage and grid management.

3. **Local environmental challenges for renewable energy projects:** Despite the great environmental benefits of solar power plants, their construction in desert environments may cause degradation of local ecosystems and consume scarce water resources for cleaning and maintenance. These projects can also negatively impact wildlife, such as birds and reptiles, through habitat loss or collisions with facilities.

4. **Social challenges**: Include creating job opportunities in renewable energy, addressing potential impacts on oil and gas, and investing in education and training for specialized skills.

The difficulties are not limited to this scope, but rather this transformation faces additional environmental obstacles represented by the necessity of activating sustainable management of natural resources. Despite these obstacles, the Arab Gulf states have enormous potential to achieve climate diplomacy, and can play an active role in this field at the regional and global levels.

b. **Sustainable Developmental Opportunities within the Transformation of Gulf Region's Energy Sector**

(1) International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Gulf states push for renewables but face challenges in climate diplomacy, 2023, Available at: https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2023/12/the-gulf-states-push-for-renewables-but-face-challenges-in-climate-diplomacy/.

There has been a major strategic shift in the Gulf Region's energy sector toward achieving environmental sustainability as a result of international cooperation and strategic partnership. This focus will aid in the implementation of modern clean technologies; promote economic diversification; and increase public environmental awareness, thus, furthering the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) 2030 sustainable development vision. There are several opportunities that can be realized from this transition including:

1. **Large amounts of renewable energy**: With large amounts of available solar and wind energy resources, the region is at the forefront of the world in terms of clean energy production. The abundance of these clean energy resources provides many opportunities for investment into renewable energy projects; it aids in the reduction of reliance upon fossil fuels; and contributes to the diversification of the region's economy.

2. **Increasing economic activity**: The renewable energy industry has created a multitude of commercial investment opportunities throughout the supply chain of the renewable energy industry. For example, the manufacture of components such as solar panels and energy storage systems; provide new employment opportunities; contribute to economic growth; reduce the region's reliance upon oil; provide multiple revenue streams; and support economic sustainability.

3. **A leading role in the region and globally:** The Arab Gulf Countries are positioning themselves to lead in the transition to a sustainable energy future by investing in clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. These investments will reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions; and accelerate the transition to a sustainable energy future.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gulf states are redefining their geopolitical identity to align with carbon neutrality, overcoming economic obstacles and infrastructure costs. Accordingly, they are increasingly focusing on economic diversification and investment in renewable energy, in addition to adopting clean technologies such as green hydrogen, in order to achieve long-term sustainability. Economic diversification manifests itself in the development of new sectors such as tourism, technology and logistics, with the aim of reducing historical dependence on oil. In the field of renewable energy, the region is witnessing huge investments in solar and wind energy projects, which contributes to building a more flexible and sustainable economic future.(1) In this context, the study presents the following proposals that we hope the governments of the Arab Gulf states, strategic policy experts, engineers, and research centers will adopt to strengthen the Gulf states' path towards climate diplomacy:

a. **Accelerating the pace of economic diversification:** The pace of economic diversification away from oil and gas must continue to be accelerated, by supporting promising sectors such as technology, tourism, logistics, and green industries, to create a more flexible and sustainable economic base.

b. **Enhancing Regional and International Cooperation:** The GCC States can work together to achieve a unified stance on issues of importance at the international level; and to develop strategic alliances with major world powers in order to obtain access to clean technology and to collaborate in R&D activities.

c. **Investing in Human Capital:** A transition of this type will require creating new skills and up-grading the skills of workers already in place. To address the emerging green **sector** employment needs, therefore, there must be an investment of considerable amounts in vocational education and training programs.

d. **Enhancing transparency and credibility:** To enhance their image as serious players in the fight against climate change, Gulf countries must continue to enhance transparency in their environmental reporting, and support concrete projects that demonstrate their actual commitment to reducing emissions and shifting towards a green economy.

e. **Smart infrastructure development:** Continue to develop smart infrastructures, modern energy networks and advanced energy storage systems, to ensure effective integration of renewable energy sources and enhance stability and security of supply.

(1) N. Al-Qahtani, Diversifying the Gulf: Economic transformation in a post-oil era, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, p. 41.

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