

Mixed analysis of factors influencing the security pattern of the West Asia region (based on the foundation and Delphi data approach)

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Abstract

As the connecting link between the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe, the West Asia region is a strategic region in the global power cycle, and its vast energy resources have made it a geostrategic and geopolitical arena. Therefore, the aim of the current research is to analyze the factors influencing the security pattern of the West Asia region (based on the Foundation and Delphi data approach). The present research uses a mixed-methods approach in two parts: qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative part, in addition to the study of scientific documents and letters, the research method of grounded theory and interviews with 20 thinkers and experts in the security field of West Asia was used to investigate the role and scope of the influence of the factors affecting the security pattern of the region, and finally, he analyzed the final codes were analysed with the Delphi method. The findings show that contextual factors such as: the geopolitical and geoeconomics structure of the West Asian region and the regional social, economic and cultural context and background, causal factors such as: the structure of the international system and superpower conflicts and intra-regional polarization and the internal policies of the countries in the region and intervening factors including: foreign presence and hegemonic policies of great powers, especially America and European countries have influenced the way the region's security is arranged and polarized.

Keywords: security patterns, Middle East, West Asia, security, Islamic Republic, mixed approach
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1 Introduction

The West Asia region, as the connecting link between the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, has always been coveted by foreign powers, both during the Cold War and after, and their role in the security campaigns of the region has been prominent and influential. Therefore, due to the great importance of the geographical, political and military location and the variety of security issues around it, the study of the security campaigns of this region is one of the most important topics of interest to security researchers and policy makers, and recognizing the developments

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of this security complex, as one of the most important powers of the region, is a necessity. It is inevitable. During different periods, various factors such as the context of the region, foreign influence, relations between superpowers including the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the foreign policy of regional governments have influenced the security pattern of the region. But so far, there has been no specific research on the role of the Islamic Republic in the change and transformation of the security order in the West Asian region and comparing the developments of this order before and after the Islamic Revolution. However, the role of Iran as one of the main countries in the region is of particular importance in the security campaigns of the region. It is obvious that if the developments and differences in regional security patterns are not taken into consideration, policy making will also face problems. Based on this, the aim of the current research is to investigate the impact of the Islamic Republic on the evolution of the regional security pattern. For this purpose, this article includes three parts:

1. Theoretical foundations include definition of concepts, background of research, description of theoretical framework (the theory of security complex) and introduction of security complex of West Asia.
2. Research findings. In this section, according to the theory of the security complex, the influence of the Islamic Republic on the pillars of this theory, especially the three pillars of "changing patterns of friendship and enmity", "distribution of power among the main units", and finally "changing the arrangement of units and the security pattern of the region" has been examined.
3. The last part is the conclusion and summary.

2 Theoretical foundations

In this section, the theoretical foundations including the definition of the main concepts such as security and security patterns are mentioned. Then, the background of the research and the description of the theoretical framework, i.e. the security complex theory, are discussed and finally the security complex of West Asia is introduced.

Definitions of concepts

The key concepts of the subject including the concept of security, security patterns and their types are defined in this section.

Security: "Security" literally means "to be safe" and "uninsured", whose synonyms are "assurance", "peace", "support", "protection" [30].

Terminologically, the most common definition of security is a situation based on the absence of threats to an actor's interests, which is based on a negative approach. According to the positive approach, security refers to a situation in which there is a balanced ratio between wants and possessions that produces satisfaction [15].

Bari Buzan, one of the well-known theorists in the field of security, and other thinkers of the Copenhagen security school, believe that the concept of security should not be limited only to military issues and threats, but the meaning of security is more general and in economic, social, political and environmental fields. It can also be used [10].

Security Patterns:

A pattern is a way of arranging construction and relationships between the elements of a reality and a simplified plan of the relationships between them. The meaning of security patterns is the way of construction and security relations between governments and security groups. There are different categories of regional security patterns and orders. A classification of regional security models includes the following: hegemony, balance of power, concert, collective security, pluralistic society, convergence [24], and another classification lists regional orders as follows: hegemon-oriented, power-oriented, coalition-oriented, homogram-oriented and irregular order [31]. Some theorists in the field of international security, such as John Ikenberry, in general, three types of order and security model include: balance of power (distribution of power among several regional actors), hegemonic order, and institutionalism (creating institutional and rule-based agreements) in order to distribute power) have recognized and categorized [20].

2.1 Research background

The existing texts about security, security patterns and their developments include several categories of texts, from descriptive texts to native texts and texts related to security patterns in the region. Various works (especially articles) have described and analyzed the security patterns of Iran and its surroundings, and its evolutions and developments, and presented suggested strategies and patterns based on their personal views. including the security patterns of Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf region, the security patterns of Central Asia, the Caucasus, Eastern Iran, Western Iran, etc. For example, the article "The effect of the construction of security complexes on regional security

(a case study of the Persian Gulf)" [33], examined the construction and security pattern of the Persian Gulf countries and individualistic security patterns (unilateral deterrence and balance of power) is dominant in it and called it unsafe.

The article "Islamic Republic of Iran and the Security Patterns of Southwest Asia" [19] explained Iran's desirable pattern in the security sub-systems of Southwest Asia and the balance of power model is the best strategy for the Islamic Republic in maximizing benefits. It is called a region. Both the article "Iran and the future of security relations in the Persian Gulf region" [25] and the article "Future scenarios of the geopolitical position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the regional system of West Asia in the horizon of 2010" [26], they have discussed different scenarios of power distribution in the regional security system and future studies about Iran's position in West Asia. Despite many researches regarding security patterns, no independent and comprehensive research has been done regarding the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in changing the security pattern of the West Asian region. Conducting this research can change the policy making process in security issues and the structuring of military institutions. Lack of research on the current issue causes security policymakers to pay less attention to the evolution of security patterns based on the Islamic Republic of Iran and its consequences or the efforts to change the security patterns according to the interests of the Islamic Republic should be developed according to the scattered or Westernist views and approaches.

2.2 Theoretical framework

After the end of the Cold War, the importance of regions as one of the important levels of security analysis in international relations has increased day by day. The theory of security complexes, like most other regional theories, observes the level of analysis that is placed between individual units and the entire international system. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, two prominent researchers of regional security studies, have tried to provide an intermediate understanding of the concept of security between national security and systemic security, and they advance the middle level of regional security. According to them, "regional security" includes both national and global components; Both security interdependence has been taken into account, and excessive expansion of the security scope has been avoided [10]. From Buzan's point of view, the regional security complex is defined as: "a group of governments whose main security perceptions and concerns are so intertwined that their national security problems cannot be reasonably analyzed or resolved." [7]. Buzan believes that in terms of security, "region" means a well-known quasi-system of security relations between a set of governments that are geographically close to each other [9]. Therefore, it can be said that the basic structure of a regional security complex consists of four main variables: 1. The border, which separates the regional security complex from its neighbors; 2. Anarchic structure in the sense that the regional security complex must consist of two or more autonomous units; 3. Polarization, which covers the distribution of power between units; 4. Social construction that includes patterns of friendship and enmity between units [10].

Among the four variables that make up a regional security complex, the variable that is very important in shaping the relationship patterns of a regional security complex is friendship/enemy patterns, which not only gives a constructivist dimension to Buzan's theory and makes it Different realist theories determine the type of relationship patterns governing member countries of a regional security complex. Security complexes are defined by stable patterns of friendship and enmity, which include several issues such as power distribution, territorial disputes, interest in ethnically related populations and ideological alignment, positive or negative historical relationships, etc. [9].

The meaning of friendship is that in their relationships, there is a spectrum consisting of a true friend to the expectation of support or protection. Enmity also means relations in which suspicion and fear prevail. What separates these two poles from each other is a wide distance consisting of indifference or neutrality in which friendship and enmity are either so weak that they do not count or mixed in such a way that it does not have an obvious tendency to any side [9].

From Buzan's point of view, the security complex of West Asia is inherently conflict-prone due to some security issues such as the regional context, ethnic and religious differences, and the competition of great powers, and the pattern of relations governing it is hostile.

The pattern of friendship and enmity in the theory of regional security complex [32]:

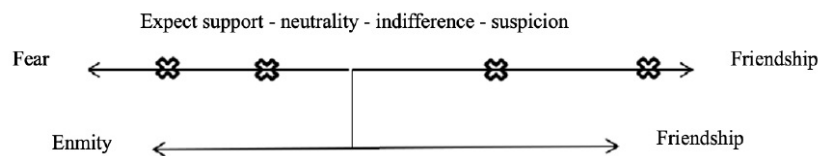


Figure 1: The pattern of friendship and enmity in the theory of regional security complex

The changes that affect each set of security are usually numerous and continuous. The relative power of the actors is constantly changing and even the patterns of friendship and enmity change from time to time. The criteria for evaluating important changes in each security complex are: 1. Arrangement of units and differentiation between them; 2. Patterns of friendship and enmity; 3. The distribution of power among the main units, the change of each of these three components requires us to reanalyze the set [7].

2.3 Security complex of West Asia (Middle East)

In this section, the borders of the security complex of West Asia and its sub-complexes, including the security sub-complex of the Persian Gulf, Shamat, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Eastern Iran, have been examined.

2.3.1 Borders of the West Asian security complex

In the West Asian region, in other words, the security and geographical borders of the Islamic Republic, signs of 4 geographic security areas can be considered:

1. Persian Gulf security sub-category: including 8 coastal countries of the Persian Gulf: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE and Oman, and of course Yemen.
2. Shamat security sub-category: centered on the countries of Türkiye, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, the Zionist regime
3. Central Asia and Caucasus security sub-category: including Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan
4. The security sub-category of eastern Iran including the countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan and emphasizing the role of India.

Considering the importance and focus of Iran's role in this research and for better focus, the security relations of Shamat and the Persian Gulf will be examined as two main subcategories.

2.3.2 The anarchic structure of the West Asian security complex

The anarchic structure is another structural variable of the security complex that is adaptable in the West Asian region. Because the security environment of this region is anarchic and lacks central authority.

2.3.3 Interdependence of security

If we consider the reason for using the criterion of "reciprocity" in the security complex to emphasize the impact and impression of security [1], West Asia is a security complex, because all the governments of the system are partially included in the security interdependence network. Interdependence, both in its negative dimension (insecurity in one group causes insecurity in another group) and in its positive dimension (if the increase of power in one unit has a positive effect on the security of another unit) has been experienced many times in West Asia. So that none of the countries in the region can be indifferent to their neighbors in their internal and external security issues.

2.3.4 Polarization in the security complex of West Asia

Polarization variable, which covers the distribution of power among units in a group, is also used in the West Asian region. All three polarization levels are effective in this region. America, as the world's first superpower, which is active at the global level and in all areas, acts at the first level of polarization. On the second level, great powers such as Russia, China, England, and France play an important role in the political-military-economic campaigns of the region. In the third and lowest level of polarization, the main powers of the region, i.e. Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Zionist regime and Türkiye, play a role in various security developments in the region.

2.3.5 Patterns of friendship and enmity in the security complex of West Asia

Due to deep religious, racial, ethnic, linguistic and social differences, the West Asian region lacks internal integrity as a geopolitical region. Based on the construction of the West Asian region, there are significant areas of divergence among the countries of the region. The conflict between religions, cultures, ethnicities, languages, generations, clans, regions, etc. has existed for a long time and still exists. Territorial disputes, disputes over water, intervention of foreign actors, etc. are among the factors that determine the patterns of friendship and enmity in the relations

between regional governments. The most important religious differences in the region come from the Sunni-Shia divide and the conflict between secularism and religion, especially Islamic fundamentalism [11]. Meanwhile, transnational powers take advantage of differences and multiplicity of cultures as a means of pressure on competing countries and groups.

2.3.6 Penetration

What links the comprehensive pattern of power distribution among global powers to the regional campaigns of regional security groups is the mechanism of influence [8].

This variable is clearly seen in behavioral calculations and security campaigns in West Asia. Because the governments of the region have entered security alignment with foreign powers and are heavily influenced by the influence of foreign agents.

3 Research methods

This research is fundamental in nature and practical in terms of purpose, and descriptive and analytical in terms of the researcher's approach. The present research method is a mixed method in two parts, qualitative and quantitative. To collect information, a documentary method was used using books, articles and internet resources, in-depth interviews with elites and professors were used in the qualitative part, and expert-oriented questionnaires were used in the quantitative part. The statistical population of the research in the qualitative and quantitative part is 20 university experts and thinkers and experts in the security field of West Asia. Since the current research seeks to discover the security patterns and its developments with regard to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, therefore, the research method is a qualitative part of the Grounded Theory type, and the Delphi analysis method has been used in the quantitative part.

3.1 Research implementation method

In the qualitative part, the data analysis method is based on open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. First, open codes were collected using semi-structured and in-depth interviews, and these codes were categorized into three categories: contextual, interventional, and causal. Finally, to screen the codes related to each of these fields, the Delphi method was used for final screening and extraction of selective (paradigm) codes. To implement the fuzzy Delphi method, the following steps have been taken:

First step: After preparing the evaluation factors, a questionnaire was prepared to prepare experts' opinions, and the experts were requested to give 1 to 5 points according to their agreement with the evaluation factors in the form of a fuzzy spectrum, and if necessary, add items to the provided list and give explanations if they disagree with the evaluation criteria.

Second step: After collecting and reviewing the questionnaire data, a number of experts announced the factors that should be removed from the proposed list.

Third step: another questionnaire with a complete list including the initial list and new opinions of experts was prepared and sent to the experts for commenting so that they can rate the factors again.

Fourth step: Every expert in every step must consider a level for each of the considered criteria and dimensions.

These levels have been provided to the experts in the form of language variables (very low, low, medium, high, very high). whose numerical values in the form of fuzzy numbers are defined as triangular fuzzy numbers as follows:

Table 1: Fuzzy numbers equivalent to verbal expressions				
Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low
(7, 5, 10, 10)	(5, 7, 5, 10)	(2, 5, 5, 7, 5)	(0, 2, 5, 5)	(0, 0, 2, 5)

At the end of each stage, the fuzzy average of each question has been calculated according to the following formulas.

$$F = \langle U, R \rangle$$

$$U_R(x) = \{y \in U | xRy\}$$

$$\underline{apr}_R(X) = \{x \in U | U_R(x) \subseteq X\}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{apr}_R(X) &= \{x \in U \mid U_R(x) \cap X \neq \emptyset\} \\
POS_R(X) &= \text{apr}_R(X) \\
BND_R(X) &= \text{apr}_R(X) \setminus \text{apr}_R(X) \\
NEG_R(X) &= U \setminus \text{apr}_R(X) \\
\gamma(P) &= \sum_{X \in P} \frac{|POS_R(X)|}{|U|} \\
IT &= \langle U, A, V, \rho \rangle \\
IND(B) &= \{(x, y) \in U \times U \mid \forall a \in B(\rho(a, x) = \rho(a, y))\} \\
\delta(x) &= \{y \in U \mid \Delta(x, y) \leq \delta\} \\
\Delta(x_1, x_2) &= \left(\sum_{j=1}^m |x_{x_1j} - x_{x_2j}|^p \right)^{1/p} \\
R_\delta &= \{(x, y) \in U \mid \Delta(x, y) \leq \delta\} \\
\text{apr}_{R_\delta}(X) &= \{U_{R_\delta}(x) \subseteq X\} = \{x \in U \mid \delta(x) \subseteq X\} \\
\text{apr}_{R_\delta}(X) &= \{U_{R_\delta}(x) \cap X \neq \emptyset\} = \{x \in U \mid \delta(x) \cap X \neq \emptyset\} \\
P &= \{G_1, G_2, \dots, G_c, \dots, G_k\} \\
b_c &= \begin{cases} \frac{\sum_{x \in G_c} x}{|G_c|}, & |G_c| \neq 0 \\ \frac{c_{nearest} = \arg \arg \|x - b_c\|}{1 \leq c \leq k}, & \text{exception handling (otherwise)} \end{cases} \\
T &= \{l \mid \|x - b_l\| - \|x - b_{c_{nearest}}\| \leq t, l \neq c_{nearest}\} \\
x \in U(c_{nearest}) \quad \text{and} \quad x \in U(l), \quad \forall l \in T \quad (\text{if } T \neq \emptyset) \\
x \in U(c_{nearest}) \quad \text{and} \quad x \in L(c_{nearest}), \quad \text{otherwise} \\
b_c &= \begin{cases} w_{law} \frac{\sum_{x \in L(c)} x}{|L(c)|} + w_{upp} \frac{\sum_{x \in U(c) \setminus L(c)} x}{|U(c) \setminus L(c)|}, & |U(c) \setminus L(c)| \neq 0 \\ w_{law} \frac{\sum_{x \in L(c)} x}{|L(c)|}, & (\text{otherwise}). \end{cases} \\
b_c &= \begin{cases} w_{law} \frac{\sum_{x \in L(c)} x}{|L(c)|} + w_{upp} \frac{\sum_{x \in U(c)} x}{|U(c)|}, & |L(c)| \neq 0 \\ w_{law} \frac{\sum_{x \in U(c)} x}{|U(c)|}, & (\text{otherwise}). \end{cases} \\
0 \leq w_{law}, w_{upp} \leq 1, w_{law} + w_{upp} = 1.
\end{aligned}$$

4 Findings and discussion

Answers received from each of the experts:

$$A^i = (a1^{(i)}, a2^{(i)}, a3^{(i)}, a4^{(i)}) \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

$$A_m = (a_{m1}, a_{m2}, a_{m3}, a_{m4}) = (1/n \sum a1^{(i)}, 1/n \sum a2^{(i)}, 1/n \sum a3^{(i)}, 1/n \sum a4^{(i)})$$

Calculation of average opinions of experts in each stage as fuzzy numbers:

Fifth step: At the end of each step, a threshold value is selected in order to screen inappropriate factors. Basically, the threshold value is determined by the subjective judgment of the decision maker and will directly affect the number of factors that are screened. There is no simple way or rule of thumb to determine the threshold value. Often, the number 3 is considered as the threshold. This research also considered the number 3 and eliminated the factors that had a geometric mean lower than 3.

4.1 The final factors calculated in the formation and transformation of the security model of the West Asian region

Most of the thinkers in the field of security consider the main and most influential factors in the design and implementation of the regional security model in the background factors: the geopolitical and geoeconomic construction of the West Asian region and the regional social, economic and cultural background. After that, regarding the causal factors: the structure of the international system and the conflicts of the superpowers and intra-regional polarization and the internal policies of the countries of the region are seen as having the most effective scope.

And then in the intervening factors: foreign presence and hegemonic policies of great powers, especially America and European countries, are considered as the determining factors of the security order of the West Asian region. A factor that ignores them creates a big shortcoming in the analysis and assessment of the security pattern of the region.

Table 2: The final factors calculated in the formation and transformation of the security pattern of the West Asian region

	Axial codes	Open source	Frequency
Background conditions	Geopolitical and geoeconomic construction of the region	The presence of huge oil and gas reserves	A
		Unique geography at the junction of three continents and the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman	O
		The neighborhood of the region with Russia	O
	Regional social, economic and cultural background	Ethnic, religious and racial background	AN
		Identity differences	AN
		Territorial disputes	O
		Water crisis	O
		Poverty and inequality	O
Causal conditions	The structure of the international system and super-power conflicts	The bipolar structure of the international system and its movement towards a unipolar structure	KBIO
	The collapse of the Soviet Union and the change of the global security pattern	The collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites	LDBDM
		The region's governments belong to the east or west or independent camp	ME
	Domestic policies of regional countries	Democratic or authoritarian form of government	O
		The amount of the military budget and the role of the military and militarism in the power and politics of the countries of the region	EL
		The role of Iran's Islamic Revolution in changing the regional security order	ANCLIMH
	The victory of the Iranian Islamic Revolution	The emergence of resistance groups	ANHEGBO
		Iran's role in disrupting American hegemony	DCNANH
Intervening conditions	Foreign presence and hegemonic policies of great powers, especially America and European countries	US attack on Iraq	LACNGB
		The spread of American hegemonic policies	AKDCIBO
	Transformation in the role of transnational actors and the emergence of transnational and non-governmental actors	Increasing the role of transnational forces	LGOIH
		The rise of terrorist groups	LOAH

4.1.1 Contextual relationship

Geopolitical and geoeconomic construction of the West Asian region

The unique geography at the junction of three continents and the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea in the West Asian region, which is the meeting point of the important continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, is considered one of the most important crisis-causing regions in the world due to its strategic location, dynamics and transformation. Because the occurrence of any crisis, insecurity and development in this region will have trans-regional and global effects, for this reason the great powers are strictly controlling the developments in this region and directing them if necessary. In this era, due to its great importance in the cycle of power and global economy, especially having geopolitical and geostrategic, geoeconomic and geocultural features, this region has had increasing effects on the global decision-making system [4].

4.1.2 The presence of huge oil and gas reserves

The Persian Gulf in West Asia is a region with special strategic and geo-economic conditions. The existence of the world's important energy sources in this region and the extensive commercial and economic connections of the coastal countries of this sea with other parts of the world show its importance in the global power equation [2]. The presence of huge oil and gas reserves in the countries of the Persian Gulf, before and after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, has played an essential role in the formation of the regional security pattern, and the two powers of the East and the West are trying to directly or indirectly dominate these reserves in order to have a more dominant military presence

in oil and gas rich countries, and in this sense, they sometimes go as far as eliminating the presence of competitors in these countries. Therefore, the existence of huge oil reserves amounting to 565 billion barrels of proven oil reserves means about 63% of the world's proven oil reserves, along with 30% of the world's natural gas reserves, which includes the largest natural gas reserves after the Commonwealth of Nations (former Soviet Union). In this region, it can be considered as its most important economic feature.

4.1.3 The region's neighborhood with the former Soviet Union and current Russia

During the Cold War, in every political and military action and reaction in the region, the neighborhood factor with the former Soviet Union played a direct or indirect role, and the two poles, East and West, tried to have a greater and more decisive role in these countries. For example, Iran, which was a neighbor of the former Soviet Union through the Caspian Sea and the provinces of Khorasan and Azerbaijan, was the place of open and hidden competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, and every military and political activity of Iran was carried out with this bipolar competition in mind.

4.1.4 Territorial disputes

A look at the history of nation-building after the First World War in the Persian Gulf region shows that all the countries of the Persian Gulf region have territorial disputes with each other, the effects of which can be seen in the past wars in the Persian Gulf. The war between Iran and Iraq, Iraq and Kuwait have been the most obvious examples in the region. The geopolitical region of the Persian Gulf has an extremely complex pattern of territorial disputes, each of which can ignite a full-scale war. Out of about 15 maritime borders between the countries of this region, ten borders have not been demarcated due to differences in delimitation [13]. That each of these unresolved differences can become the basis of conflict and instability. The existing territorial and border disputes and the territorial ambitions of some Arab countries in the Persian Gulf area have provided hope for extra-regional countries to interfere in the region's affairs in the shadow of various methods such as apparent defense and military cooperation [14].

4.1.5 Water crisis

Lack of water resources has long become a serious problem in the Middle East and many other parts of the world. The large and dry lands of the Middle East are also dependent on water, which is provided by limited rivers. Most countries in the region are rapidly experiencing water scarcity, which may increase the effects of climate change on all dimensions of water use. In fact, the share of water per capita in some countries of the region has decreased to less than 168 cubic meters per year, this becomes more prominent when it is known that the international standard for water per capita is 1888 cubic meters. This lack of water resources will mean less food production, slower economic development and social instability in the entire Middle East countries. The rapid increase in population and lack of food are the main factors of the increasing need for fresh water, and this situation has made the countries of the region more dependent on food imports. The geography of the region indicates the fact that most of the rivers in the Middle East are international, and there are serious disputes about the water rights of many of these rivers among the countries of the region. Disputes that are often based on how to use underground aquifers that cross national borders [5]. In addition, the dry and semi-desert climate of most Middle Eastern countries raises the concern that future conflicts in West Asia will be over the control of water resources. Therefore, the lack of water resources has become a security challenge, in addition to the fact that water has become an identity issue for some, including the Zionist regime [22].

4.1.6 Ethnic, religious and racial background and identity differences

The West Asian region has been one of the most conflicted regions in the world and the main cause of these conflicts often goes back to the First World War and when the dominance of the Ottoman dynasty in the region ended and the existing borders were formed based on arrangements between Britain, France and some other powers involved in Middle East (West Asia) issues. These arrangements are often cited as the source of today's conflicts in the region, because they have created artificial borders for the competition of great powers for influence in the region and its resources [34]. As a result of these arrangements and the formation of artificial borders, most West Asian countries have a heterogeneous social structure and include numerous ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic minorities and are unsuccessful in developing their national identity. The countries of the region are internally diverse and therefore, it is not possible to establish an exclusive national identity from top to bottom [23].

Therefore, the structure of power and relations in the regional system governing West Asia is formed by a complex set of conflicting identities (national, transnational, ethnic and religious), competing ideologies, regimes emerging from

family governments and the geopolitical legacy of the colonial era [16]. In addition, the identity differences between Shiites and Sunnis in the West Asian region are such that it has led to an increase in the confrontation between Shiites and Sunnis. The creation of a new concept called "Shia crescent" by Abdullah II, the king of Jordan, who expressed concern about the appearance of the Shia crescent from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea, has fueled the fire of these disputes [35]. because it has been claimed that the aforementioned process has caused the expansion of Iran's backyard in the region, which is considered a threat to the Sunni regimes of the region. Also, a new concept called the competition between the axis of resistance and the axis of compromise has been invented, which has increased the conflict between revolutionary Islam and compromise Islam. These two opposite poles of identity have fueled the intensification of conflicts and regional crises and provided the ground for the increase of numerous religious, linguistic, ethnic and racial faults in West Asia [12].

4.1.7 Poverty and inequality

Income inequality significantly affects the daily life of people and the general functioning of society and governments and security interactions. In addition to causing inequality in people's social functioning; It leads the society to more violence and reduces public trust in the government [29]. The problems caused by the social divide within the societies as well as between the West Asian societies indicate that some regional governments are not only unable to provide for the needs of their people, but also have the ability to provide internal security. According to James Beale, the "wealth power equation" determines the economic model in West Asia; in such a way that it is power that leads to wealth; Therefore, in West Asia, the distribution of wealth by the rulers is more important than the production of wealth. Also, poverty has caused unemployed people to tend to extreme ideas [17]. The 2018 Global Inequality Report has also ranked the Middle East (West Asia) as one of the most unequal regions in the world. According to this report, only Brazil and South Africa have a worse situation than the Middle East in terms of income inequality among their citizens [6]. Therefore, in a region that has suffered many problems due to internal strife, sectarianism, and religious extremism, the risk of income inequality should be given more attention. As poverty and inequality are among the most important factors that started the events known as the Arab Spring. The continuation of poverty and economic and social inequality has caused a part of the region's population to turn to extremist beliefs and civil disobedience [29].

In the meantime, social indiscipline, unbridled inflation, gross corruption among politicians and the existence of full-fledged rentier governments have fueled internal divisions and increased internal chaos in West Asian countries.

4.1.8 Causal conditions

As it was said, during the Cold War period, the countries were divided into two groups, pro-American and anti-American, and both the United States and the former Soviet Union supported the countries under their hegemony militarily and politically. But first, with the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 and then 13 years later with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, a new chapter happened, which again changed the security composition governing the region.

4.1.9 The structure of the international system and superpower conflicts

The bipolar structure of the international system and its movement towards a unipolar structure caused the intra-regional polarization to be affected by the bipolar system during the Cold War, and the governments of the region were assigned to the east or west camp. The bilateral nature of the structure of the international system and the balance of global power between the United States and the Soviet Union had forced the countries of the region to become members of one of these two blocs due to the threats that occur in the region. The two top powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, were also trying to rule with the collective security union along with the balance of power, and by recruiting actors, they sought to attract more committed actors with the collective security plan under their bloc [36].

During the Cold War, the governments of the region were divided into two categories, each of which was related to one of the east or west poles, and based on that, they adjusted all their defense, security and military measures according to their level of connection and dependence with the respective pole. A clear indication of the tendency or affiliation of these governments to each of the two poles of East and West was not limited to economic and political cooperation or exchanges, rather, the type of weapons used in the armies under the command of these governments was also a telltale sign of the tendency towards one of the two poles; For example, the countries related to the East had MiG fighter-bombers and the countries related to the West had Phantom fighter-bombers. During this period, the Persian Gulf and most of the countries in the region (Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon,

Bahrain, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, etc.) were in the Western bloc, but with the revolution in Iraq and influence in Syria, Egypt, etc., the Soviet Union was trying to get its share of balancing [3].

In the meantime, Iran became a part of the alliance of the Western world since 1332, and all the alliances, pacts and agreements that Iran had with other actors show this fact that Iran has benefited from the coalition security system (coalition and alliance) with the western world and western actors. Iran's behavioral pattern in the shadow of the Baghdad Pact in 1355, the Sento Pact in 1958, as well as the twin pillar model or Nixon's friendship that was formed in 1969 and lasted until 1979 should be considered among the indicators and facts related to Iran's position and security approach in the years before the Islamic Revolution.

4.1.10 Domestic policies of regional countries

During the Cold War, the internal policies of the countries of the region were a function of the great powers due to the authoritarian form of government in the majority of the countries of the West Asian region. The amount of the military budget and the role of the military and militarism in the power and politics of the countries of the region caused the countries of the region under the hegemony of the United States to be constantly in a constant arms and military competition. The multipolar competition between the Zionist regime, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey, despite the hegemonic role of the United States or the Soviet Union in balancing, caused huge military costs for each of the countries in the region and the feeling of constant threat for each of the West Asian countries. On the other hand, the war-oriented policies and threats of some countries and regimes in the region, such as Iraq and Israel, actually prevented the formation of stability and lasting peace in West Asia. As the only regime possessing weapons of mass destruction in West Asia, Israel has not accepted any of the disarmament treaties. It is always considered as one of the factors that threaten the peaceful security order and atmosphere in the region, which also played the role of balancing the Western Bloc countries in the region during the Cold War.

4.1.11 Intervening conditions

Foreign presence and hegemonic policies of great powers, especially America and the Soviet Union

The genealogy of the region's security pattern in the 19th century shows that this pattern was influenced by two Iranian and Ottoman civilizations, and these two civilizations defined the region's security pattern. But over time, the West entered this region and became one of the determining components of the security pattern in the region. As history shows, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire until the beginning of the 21st century, the Westerners determined the security order of the region, and the countries of the region did not play a role and were only supporters or followers of these powers. In other words, the security model of the region before the Islamic Revolution can be divided into two historical periods:

- The period of England's presence and the determination of the security model by this country: during this period, the countries of the region were weak and governed as kingdoms. The hegemony of the region was England. There was no balance of power and there was no collective security.
- The period of America's entry and England's exit: the security pattern was based on force, and the arms race between these two powerful players in the world (the United States and the Soviet Union) drew the pattern of the region.

Foreign intervention and the direct presence of extra-regional forces and their impact on the emergence and incitement of transnational forces, especially terrorist groups, are considered as two main threatening factors for the security pattern of the region and disturb the natural process of regional security arrangement.

4.1.12 The direct military presence of extra-regional forces and the hegemonic policies of great powers

Despite the increasing role of Iran and regional forces, the great powers still determine the security pattern of the region. Even the Islamic Republic of Iran, in order to increase its power of influence, inevitably brings Russia (one of the great powers) into Syria's interactions and the front of the fight against terrorist groups and NATO. In such a way that in creating the security order of the West Asian region, foreign powers and after that, the political and international environment and finally the way of interaction of the countries of the region are considered as the third determining factor in the formation of the regional security model [3].

The extensive presence of foreign powers in the region and the militarization of the region on the one hand and the lack of security guarantees on the other hand are two issues that have affected regional stability. The paradox that

stands out in the region is the provision of security and order through destabilization or change of political systems through the use of force and subversion. Such an action in practice caused the growth of terrorism in the region on the one hand and the growth of the military expenses of the countries of the region on the other hand, which has increased significantly compared to recent years. Also, since the American attack on Iraq and Afghanistan, the range of instabilities in the region has increased every day, and not only these unrests have prevented the formation of a stable government in these countries, but the internal issues of these countries have affected the relations of other countries in the region [18].

The effort to promote guided democracy in the societies of the Persian Gulf region and the Middle East, which can be accompanied by the use of force and subversion in the political system, has led the region from action situations based on cooperation to defensive reactions of integration in extra-regional security systems [4]. In the meantime, the challenges between the Persian Gulf countries, including the challenge of Iran and Saudi Arabia over Bahrain, Yemen and Syria, have made the security atmosphere of the region tense.

In addition, the challenges regarding Iran's nuclear case and Iran's threat to close the Strait of Hormuz and the presence of American and British ships in the Persian Gulf region have accelerated the lack of security and stability in the region. Instead of looking for a comprehensive regional security system in the Persian Gulf and designing and creating the necessary mechanisms for cooperation and collective security, the countries of the region have been looking for security guarantees outside the region, and this has caused the largest presence of military forces of foreign powers in the region throughout history [21].

The military presence of foreigners in the Persian Gulf region, while keeping the threat potentials active, prevents the formation of regional order and stability and the cooperation of the countries of the region to shape the processes that facilitate cooperation. The Persian Gulf still lacks a comprehensive security system consisting of a security community and a system of collective security arrangements [27].

4.1.13 The impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union on changing the security pattern of the region

The security model of the West Asian region, until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, was the same as the Cold War model based on the interests of the two main power blocs, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequently after the Cold War, the monopolar region in the structure of the international system has spread to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

From now on, the Western security patterns, at the international level, went from the balance of power between the two poles to the hegemonic security system (with American hegemony). For almost a decade, collective security models (centered on the United Nations), cooperative security model (such as NATO), deterrence model and regional partnership model are all under the hegemonic security system and to achieve this security system, the consolidation of American hegemony over The whole world and the removal of non-aligned countries (challenging or rebellious) were used, but despite the predictions of American and European security theorists, who drew the end of the world and history in the victory of liberal capitalist civilization and the establishment of American hegemony, this notion has not yet been realized and has experienced great challenges. Both global rival powers (China, Russia) and non-aligned countries (Iran, Iran's regional allies, non-governmental movements, some Latin American countries) have not bowed to the pressure of this hegemony, and until a fixed pattern is reached, now the security pattern of the countries in the region is in transition and threat-oriented.

4.1.14 The impact of Iran's Islamic revolution on the transformation of the security pattern of the West Asian region

As it was said, the criteria for evaluating important changes in each security complex are: 1. Arrangement of units and differentiation between them; 2. Patterns of friendship and enmity; 3. The distribution of power among the main units, the change of each of these three components requires us to reanalyze the set [7]. Therefore, in order to determine the role and extent of the impact of the Islamic Revolution of Iran on changing the security pattern of the region, the impact of the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran on each of these three criteria must first be examined:

The impact of the Islamic Republic of Iran on changing the patterns of friendship and enmity in the West Asian region:

The Islamic Revolution of Iran, for the first time in the region, changed the pattern of security based on the great powers and put an end to the show of power of the great powers in the region. Iran, after the revolution, created a break between the security model of the West and, of course, was placed in a conflict-oriented model with monarchical

governments [26].

Iran's withdrawal from the alliance with America and changing the pattern of hostilities

With the occurrence of the revolution, Iran itself first left the ranks of America's allies and became a government independent of the superpowers. In the next step, Saudi Arabia and Iran, as two influential political and religious actors in the region, have been moving in a bilateral balance of power for a long time. Before the revolution, although these two regional poles had economic (especially in the field of oil energy) and political competition, both countries were known as the regional allies of America, in the form of friendly policy. America's interests demanded that Iran and Saudi Arabia have a model of friendly relations in order to prevent the influence of communism in the region. But after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, two internal variables, namely the emergence of a new Shiite ideology and the emergence of a democratic government structure, faced the authoritarian regimes of the region. Due to the promotion of Islamic extremism in the region, Saudi Arabia considered the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a threat against the promotion of Wahhabism and Salafism in the region and the pattern of relations between these two powers gradually turned from competition to enmity. Therefore, with a common threat in the region, Saudi Arabia and the United States have entered into a strategic alliance against Iran [28].

The relations of other countries in the region with Iran and with each other have been greatly affected by this change in the pattern of hostility. In such a way that the relations between the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf and the Zionist regime, which were openly hostile before the revolution, have turned into secret or open friendship and alliance under the influence of the increasing regional power of Iran. On the other hand, new alliances and coalitions have been established between Iran and other regional powers such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and especially transnational groups in the countries of the region, which has created a new form of friendship and closeness. In such a way that with the attack of terrorist groups on Iraq and Syria, the relations of these countries with Iran have changed from a state of suspicion or even hostility (8-year war with Iraq) to a state of expectation of support and friendship.

Table 3: Pattern of relations between Iran before and after the revolution (Changes in the pattern of friendship and enmity relations in West Asia (before and after the Iranian Islamic Revolution))

The pattern of relations after the revolution (current situation)	The pattern of relations before the revolution	The country	The country
enmity	unity	America	Iran
enmity	Competition - friendship	Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Jordan, Zionist regime	Iran
competition	competition	Türkiye	Iran
friendship	Enmity - competition	Russia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen	Iran
friendship	friendship	Qatar, Kuwait, Oman	Iran
Competition - enmity	Unity - friendship	Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Qatar	Arabia
friendship	enmity	Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Oman	The Zionist regime

5 Conclusion

How each country communicates with its neighbors and surrounding security environment is one of the most important concerns of policymakers, especially in defense and security matters. The region of West Asia and the Islamic Republic of Iran is not an exception to this rule due to the great importance of its geographical, political and military location and the variety of security issues around it, and recognizing its environment in terms of security issues and the evolution of security patterns in the region is an inevitable necessity. If the constitutive and effective factors on regional security patterns are not taken into consideration, policy making will also face problems.

In this sense, in addition to the study of scientific documents and letters, the present article has studied the factors affecting the security pattern of the region using the grounded theory research method and interviews with 20 thinkers and experts in the security field of West Asia. In this method, by evaluating interviews with experts, experts and strategists in the field of security using open coding technique, axial coding and selective coding, conceptual propositions, dimensions, components and indicators regarding the subject of changes in security patterns and their consequences. Certainly, the similarities or differences in the data are checked by referring to the sentences and key phrases of the interviews, so that the connection of the sub-components is established in one direction and the central categories are determined. And then the central category is selected.

Most security thinkers consider the main and most influential factors in the design and implementation of the regional security model in the background factors: the geopolitical and geoeconomic construction of the West Asian region and the regional social, economic and cultural background. After that, regarding the causal factors: the

structure of the international system and the conflicts of the superpowers and intra-regional polarization and the internal policies of the countries of the region are seen as having the most effective scope, and then in the intervening factors: the foreign presence and hegemonic policies of the great powers, especially America and European countries, are considered as the determining factors of the security order of the West Asian region.

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