



The Impact of US Strategy on Identity Conflicts between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union

Farzaneh Rahmati ¹, Mohammad Reza Dehshiri^{2*}, Reza Simbar³,
Garineh Keshishyan Siraki ⁴

¹PhD candidate in International Relations, Department of Political Science and International Relations, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

^{2*}Professor of Political Science, School of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, Iran

³Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science, Guilan University, Guilan, Iran

⁴Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Received: 17 Jan 2022 ; Accepted: 25 March 2022

Abstract:

In examining the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union, on the one hand, the identity gaps and the conflict between Islamic ideology and Western secular-liberal ideology created faults in the relations between these two actors; On the other hand, cultural and civilizational affinity, common interests and international treaties of the European Union and the United States of America have led to US influence in the performance of EU foreign policy towards Iran and has caused divergence in relations between Iran and the European Union. In this article, the researcher seeks to examine the role of the United States of America on identity conflicts in the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union? Accordingly, the findings of the study indicate that; The identity of the European Union based on the secular-liberal attitude of the West and the Islamic Republic of Iran based on political Islam in conflict with each other has led to distrust between the parties in solving global problems and different views on various issues; On the other hand, the US approach introduces various issues in Iran-Europe relations as a kind of threat against Europe. On this basis, in the framework of Waltz's theory of realism and the analysis of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse, it is possible to understand the role of identity and the influence of the international system structure on the divergence of these two important international actors. The research method is descriptive-analytical and the method of collecting materials is through books, articles and valid internet documents.

Keywords: Structure of international system, Identity, Islamic Republic of Iran, EU, Conflict

Introduction

The occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in the last decade of the 1970s was a severe shock to the materialist ideas and theories of the West and the East and created a new meaning and policy in the world. Relying on the revival of Islam, this emerging system challenged the camps of imperialism and socialism in the East and the West. The US influence on Iran-EU relations suggests that European perceptions of relations with Iran are built on actors seeking to change the EU's approach to Iran. In this context, the new strategy of the United States and its regional allies is to threaten the differences between Iran and Europe with the aim of building a consensus on sanctions and actions against Iran. To implement this approach, the United States is trying to present various issues of Iran and Europe as a real threat to Europe from Iran. (Bagheri & Qeisari, 2019, p. 7). The different value, cultural and civilizational spheres of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union do not have a strategic source and the political structure of the parties has negative effects on the relations between the parties. In the course of cooperation and interaction between Iran and the European Union, cross-sectional obstacles have hindered the development of bilateral relations over the past four decades. Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union have been uneven and fragile during various periods and have fluctuated. A description of the structure of the EU's foreign policy shows that the prevailing mentality in the EU towards Iran has been a negative one that has affected their relations. The European Union saw the thinking of Iranian policymakers as a threat to its social security and its secular-liberal ideology. Thus, in the structure of the international system, governments want a balance of power with

threatening governments to maintain or restore the status quo in the face of potential threats to the detriment of their security and national interests. Therefore, the US strategy and perspective have had a significant impact on the EU approach to Iran and have reduced the areas of trust between the parties. Differences in the two actors' relations based on factors such as identity gaps and Europe's beneficial view of the United States created challenges in their relationship. By examining the relations between Iran and the European Union, it is possible to understand the lack of trust and the influence of foreign powers in order to achieve their goals. Accordingly, the author seeks to examine the impact of the United States on identity conflicts in Iran-EU relations. In the context of Kenneth Waltz's theory of structural realism, cooperation and competition are the reality of the structural behavior of actors in politics and the international environment. And by changing the identity of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and its impact on the performance of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it created an emerging power with a different approach and attitude in the region; Faced with a third power in the international system and the region, the great powers considered it a threat to their security and interests and tried to prevent the development and influence of Iranian power in the region.

Theoretical Framework: The Structural Realism of Kenneth Waltz

The international system consists of a set of actors who are in an arrangement of power (structure) and interact with each other based on patterns of order. (Dehshiri & Golestan, 2016, p. 5). Definitive structure is derived from the position, position, or arrangement of

the members of a system. International structures are defined in terms of influential and core political units in specific eras. Thus, structures emerge as a result of the interaction of states (the basic units of a system). The structure of the international system depends on the number of great powers and how power is divided among them. (Waltz, 2013, pp. 130-150). According to neorealists, structure is the determining factor of results at the system level and binds the behavior of actors to its appropriate. The structure of the political relations of the organized units is formed through the structure of the international system and determines the type and rules of the game. Accordingly, the foreign policy of all governments is influenced by systemic factors. In addition, if the system of government is considered a separate area from domestic considerations such as ideology, religion, mode of production, and social organization, it is possible to gain an understanding of the nature of international politics. (Sajjadpour, 2010, p. 32)

Waltz's theory of neo-realism emphasizes the influence of the structure of the international system on the behavior of states. In his view, the international system is composed of structures and units that are in mutual relations with each other. In this system, structures influence the behavior of governments and international relations are formed with the constraints they impose on the behavior of governments. According to Waltz, structures determine the behavior of governments and make changes at the unit level. Such as changing the identity of the European Union and its process of influence in the field of relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Whereas neo-realists emphasize the coordinates of the structure of the international system; And they believe that the pressures of the structure of the international system cause

them to adopt relatively uniform and homogeneous methods and procedures, despite differences between individuals and governments. This view is important in analyzing the behavioral similarities between Europe and the United States in dealing with the substantive issues of Iran; Because it considers the influence of the structure of the international system and the pivotal role of each of the great powers. According to neorealist, structure is the determining factor of results at the system level and binds the behavior of actors to its appropriate. In addition to structure, a system has an interactive execution that creates a pattern or patterns of interaction called the system process. Political processes in Waltz's view are the product of structure; In other words, the process represents the patterns of interaction between the actors of a system. Therefore, the basic variables of interaction are: the type of interaction (known as the cooperation / conflict dimension) and the intensity of the interaction, which is determined by the amount of interaction over a period of time. The link between structure and process is assumed that each structure has a proportionate interaction process; And a structure creates and maintains regular interaction. (Dehshiri & Golestan, 2016, p. 9).

The Impact of Identity on Foreign Policy

Every actor in the international system has defined an identity for himself that he observes in his foreign behavior with other actors. After the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the identity of Iran, which originated from Islamic teachings as well as revolutionary rituals, emerged in the field of foreign behavior. This new identity made a fundamental change in Iran's behavior with other actors and forced them to consider this new identity in the face of Iran. In fact, Islamic-revolutionary identity has had different

meanings in different years, depending on who held power in Iran. But in general, in many cases, from the beginning of the revolution until today, the Islamic-revolutionary identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran has caused the continuation of Iran's foreign policy. (Firoozabadi & Zabihi, 2012, p. 76). It is not enough to categorize the behavior of governments in foreign policy based on the degree of development, the degree of democracy, the geographical extent, the power large or small. (Ghahramanpour, 2015, p. 121). Especially since in practice the behavior of governments is not subject to fixed rules. Despite the multiplicity of actors, especially in foreign policy, the government is still the main actor and guide in foreign policy behavior. Therefore, the government is not independent of the internal and external level. As a result of interaction with internal and external structures, governments change their approaches and definition of interests and identity, and this can lead to changes in the external behavior of governments. Apart from the government, the actors who are influential in foreign policy are those who play a role in the construction and domination of norms at the domestic and foreign levels, and in a sense influence the normative contexts or structures.

The identity of states changes their foreign policy. In structural theory, priority is given to structure and government agents are subordinated to it, and by changing the system of actors, they pay attention to norms before they are subject to material interests, and interests are normative and valuable. Therefore, it causes a review of identity and interests. Revolutionary governments choose values and norms that have internal roots that reflect the importance of influencing the identity of governments on their behavior. In foreign policy, the dominance of a particular

identity can limit foreign policy options, and this is rooted in the consciousness of the actors. By knowing the socio-cultural contexts and, consequently, the identities, the actors know what behaviors are considered the government's red line in foreign policy and what behaviors are allowed. Actors define their identity based on the existing contexts and look at the world from the perspective of this identity, analyze developments and sometimes act according to the resulting requirements. (Ghahramanpour, 2015, p. 125). The interests and behavior of governments are directly related to changes in the dominant identity, and goals are defined in terms of interests and interests based on the dominant identity.

Reflection of identity in Iran-EU relations

Iran's relations with European countries, despite a long history, have been accompanied by ups and downs over four decades. The European Union took cautious steps in its relations with the new Iranian government after the Islamic Revolution. Changes in the prevailing ideology in Iran due to the Islamic Revolution and the change in the structure of foreign policy of European countries due to the common foreign and security policy of the European Union under the Maastricht Treaty and the impact of identity conflicts and contradictions arising from the discourse of each; created problems such as the nuclear case, human rights issues, terrorist issues and the approval of sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, and so on. The occurrence of these problems caused the failure and lack of development in the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union. Political relations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran within the framework of the discourse have originated from different identities in their

foreign policy. Iran's Revolutionary-Islamic identity versus the liberal-democratic identity of the European Union led to faults and gaps in the establishment of reliable and unequivocal relations at the regional and supra-regional levels. According to him, most of the history of the relations between the two actors has been spent in a dark and critical atmosphere. As a regional power, Iran, with its special position as one of the influential components in the world and its distinctive features in the region, has always been considered by the West. With such a situation, Iran was considered as a regional gendarme for the great powers in the Pahlavi era, based on Nixon's two-column theory. With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, after the Islamic Republic put the Islamic and revolutionary identity at the forefront of its relations, it was ignored by the great powers, especially the United States. On the other hand, given the situation, Iran's historical trade was a factor that casts doubt on any actions and reactions of foreign countries, even with the intention of friendship. The coup of 19 August and the US interference in the affairs of Iran and other cases such as the Soviet support for separatist efforts in Azerbaijan and the threat of military intervention in Iran and undeniable events in the history of the country. (Firoozabadi, 2012, p. 86) Given its strategic and geopolitical position as a major regional power, Iran considers its position special, and Iranian officials expect the world to recognize this power as well. The situation has intensified since the overthrow of the Taliban and the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2001 and 2003. (Perthes, 2010, P. 96)

Given the role of Islamic-revolutionary identity, Iran implements certain behavioral characteristics in relation to the international system and in front of international actors. Iran, with its Islamic nature and Islamic stan-

dards, applies Islamic principles in its foreign policy, which is considered by Western analysts as political Islam. Iran's foreign policy with an Islamic-revolutionary identity distinguishes it from other revolutionary systems and Islamic countries. Constructive identity and the main structure of decision-making and implementation of foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union after the victory of the Islamic Revolution

In the post-revolutionary era, Iran has played a major role in both Europe and the United States. Under Hashemi Rafsanjani, "critical talks" between Europe and Iran were held to resolve the problems. After the start of the talks, the EU's criticism was very similar to the US criticism of Iran, and it seemed that only dealing with Iran was different. Under Khatami, relations between Iran and the United States, followed by Europe, led to a relative improvement, and the Europeans' dispute with the United States over sanctions against European companies that signed contracts with Iran was resolved. With the Bush administration in power and its emphasis on Iran and nuclear weapons, and especially after 9/11, relations between the two countries once again deteriorated, with negative effects on the European Union. (Rostami et al., 2019, p. 246) During Ahmadinejad's rise to power and the revision of nuclear diplomacy, the European Union and the United States became closer; As far as they were concerned, negotiations with Iran were deadlocked and in January 2006 they demanded that Iran's nuclear case be referred to the Security Council. (Dehghani Firoozabadi, 2009, P. 540)

The European Union then acted in line with Security Council sanctions imposed in 2006,

2007, 2008 and 2010, and even independently imposed sanctions to double the pressure on Iran. It should be noted that, contrary to all human rights claims, the European Union has imposed harsh sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program. In fact, the nuclear issue became the biggest barrier in bilateral relations. However, the main blow to bilateral relations came in late 2012, when the European Union imposed oil sanctions on Iran. (Korteweg .2013, p. 12). And in a way, the EU-US consensus on Iran continued until the 2015 nuclear deal. (Rostami et al., 2019, p. 246). European countries used Iran as a winning card against US unilateralism.

Given the interest of European countries in establishing relations with the United States, there is an opportunity for the European Union to cooperate and align with the United States to be more influential in many international equations, including Iran. This means that despite some trade rivalries and different political tactics and more emphasis by Europeans than Americans on issues such as human rights and democracy, the EU has shared principles and goals with the United States. A clear example of this has been the cooperation and alignment of the evolution of the European view on the Iranian nuclear issue in recent years.

The Impact of US Strategy on EU Foreign Policy

The pattern of behavior of the "great powers" in the management of international crises is influenced by the extent of their capabilities and the conditions of the existing international system. During the Cold War, international crises were largely managed by the United States and the Soviet Union. In crisis situations in the "bipolar" system, crisis management was managed because of the transparency in the international system and the po-

larization between the superpowers based on the "balance of power approach". This issue has been studied in the following books. Chapters 6 and 9 of *The Theory of International Politics* by Kenneth Neil Waltz; "The Tragedy of the Politics of the Great Powers" by Mearsheimer; Benjamin Miller's *The Behavioral Pattern of the Great Powers in International Crises* and Michael Bercher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld's *Crisis, Conflict, and Instability*. (Dehshiri & Golestan, 2016, P. 2).

When the European Union was founded on November 1, 1993, following the Maastricht Treaty, many political analysts predicted that a new pole would emerge in the international system capable of challenging the new American order. But it did not take long for the European Union's political and international reactions to international developments and crises to show that it was following in the footsteps of US policy, as it was in the days of the unipolar system. Although the Europeans saw Barjam as an achievement from the beginning of the negotiations, they were not prepared and able to withstand US sanctions and eventually surrendered to the United States. As for the serious involvement of the United States in European politics, we can refer to the time of the First World War. Ever since the United States entered World War I, US policy has been to prevent the domination of potentially hostile powers over Europe. For this reason, the United States entered the world community after World War II and emerged from isolation. During the Cold War, opposition to the Soviet Union led the United States to become more and more involved in Europe and its policies and to act in its own interests. At the end of World War II, US aid to Europe; It saved a broken economy in Europe, and NATO was able to secure Europe. The US Delegation to the European Union was estab-

lished in 1961, and the European Commission reciprocally appointed a delegation to Washington, which in 1971 was upgraded to a full-fledged political delegation with political immunity. In later stages, with the process of globalization, economic relations between Europe and the United States became so interconnected that they led to cooperation and competition. (Mottaghi, 2016, p. 123). With the end of the Cold War, the partners on both sides of the Atlantic, who saw a new era in their relationship after the end of World War II, defined new tools and goals for cooperation. The turning point in these relations was the adoption of the Transatlantic Declaration in 1990, which sparked a series of regular political talks and economic and cultural consultations between representatives of the Atlantic. In this declaration, the two sides formally stated their will to strengthen their partnership in a number of cases, including the following; Support for democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the promotion of public welfare, etc. These factors were reaffirmed during the EU-US Summit in Madrid on December 3, 1995. (Rostami et al., 2019, P. 244).

Common positions of the United States and the European Union towards the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Islamic Revolution of Iran took place essentially in conflict with the international system and introduced values and norms that were in conflict with the interests of the powers that be to maintain the status quo. Some of these values are; Independence, freedom, justice, the right to self-determination, solidarity and unity of the oppressed, the awakening of Muslims, the legitimacy of deprived nations, the pursuit of rights, cooperation, cooperation and on the other hand, the

struggle against power-seeking, looting, coercion, monopoly, foreign base, aggression Imperialism, colonialism, ignorance, division and discord. By presenting these values in its foreign policy, Islamic Iran has tried to influence the public opinion of the deprived and oppressed nations of the Third World to change and transform the international system and to make these values the norm. Therefore, with the change in Iran's approach after the Islamic Revolution, the great powers, concerned about the emerging regional power of Iran, put forward common positions in dealing with Iran in order to weaken it from within and retreat from its regional positions. These positions include;

- Preventing the rise of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a regional power;
- Stop uranium enrichment program;
- Supporting the Israeli regime and maintaining Israel's presence in the region;
- Fight against terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism;
- Iran accused of supporting and cooperating with terrorism;
- Violation of human rights by Iran;
- NATO and EU-US security cooperation;
- Maximum pressure policy through sanctions and nuclear issues.

By examining the EU relations with different discourses of the Islamic Republic, we can see the indirect impact of US policies on the EU approach and the impact of the common positions of the two great powers in the performance of European foreign policy has played an important role in how the two actors communicate.

Identity Challenges in EU-Iran Relations

After the victory of the Revolution, the semantic approach of the Islamic Revolution in Iran transformed all political, social, economic and cultural spheres. Semantic structures

and common intersubjective concepts have consolidated Iran's identity, and an important element of identity in the Islamic Republic of Iran has been paying attention to the values and ideals of the revolution and its consequences. The change in the identity of the Iranian political system after the Islamic Revolution and the focus on Islamic ideology versus Western secular-liberal ideology created great identity and conceptual gaps between Iran and Europe and pitted the ideological and identity foundations of the two sides against each other. (Khalouzadeh, 2012, p. 189)

The occurrence of the Islamic Revolution, which clearly sought to reunite the two realms of religion and politics and transform religion from a social institution to a general level for socio-political life; has been and is directly and indirectly influential all over the world and Europe. This influence has provoked reactions that are more in the field of controlling the flow of meaning that the Islamic Revolution has created; These efforts at the level of the Western media have been about the specificity of the Islamic Revolution and showing the inefficiency of the Islamic Republic and general cases of anti-Islamism and putting pressure on currents aligned with the Islamic Revolution in Europe. (Fouzi & Pirzadi, 2018, p. 85) On the other hand, the European Union in 1993, according to the Maastricht Treaty, led to the formation of the European Union within a common legal framework between European countries. The adoption of EU-aligned positions has increased its role on the international stage. One of the dimensions that can be studied in the nature of Iran-EU relations is the issue of identity. Identity and normative conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union has been one of the main reasons for the union's behavior to-

wards Iran. (Wendt, 1999, p. 45) The conflict between the identity characteristics of Islam and the West paved the way for the common positions of Europe and the United States towards Iran. Europe aims to transform the identity system of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to adapt Islamic-Iranian norms to Liberal-Western norms and values. From a European perspective, political Islam is considered a threat to security in the way of life and liberal values. Therefore, the historical resentment of the confrontation between Islam and the West showed its effects in the process of communication and trust in Islam and Muslims after the victory of the revolution.

An integrated model of post structuralism and structuralism

The poststructuralist integrated model of Laclau and Muffe's discourse and structuralist or neo-realist examines both the structure of international politics and power and the identity formed in the discourse of each actor and the attitudes of the elites. Conceptually and theoretically, in order to understand the relations between Iran and the European Union, as well as to understand the mentality and thought of the political elites of Europe and Iran, it can be explained and examined through the assumptions and components in neorealist theory and Laclau and Muffe discourse analysis. This hybrid model can be responsible for the impact of identity on Iran-EU relations. In the approach of Laclau and Muffe's discourse, the identity of the actors was not inherent and predetermined; Rather, it is derived from the articulation of elements, signs, signifiers, and signified based on a common ideology in the form of a discourse that itself plays a constructive role in action and reactions. Identities based on constructs of different

discourses under the influence of international structures adopt different behaviors. (Laclau & Muffe, 1985, p. 115).

Poststructuralists such as Laclau and Muffe believe that the thinking and ideology of the political units that make up the international system and their social structure can affect the relations of each of the actors and change the relations between the parties; While neo-realists consider units to be influenced by the structure of the international system and the security mechanisms of the international system, the structures of the international system determine the behavior of the actors. This difference of attitude in different areas of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union is evident and can be analyzed. Neo-realist theorists raise the issue in international politics that regional and international alliances are on the one hand to pursue strategic interests and goals and on the other hand to counter threats. (Mottaghi, 2013, p. 181) Based on this model, it is possible to understand the political behavior of the European Union towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and the involvement and influence of US strategy in European policies. The combination of these two theories has the necessary analytical comprehensiveness to analyze the relations between the two actors.

EU adherence to US approach to nuclear case

The withdrawal of the United States from JCPOA in May 2018 and the inability of Europe to fulfill its independent obligations in JCPOA, including the establishment and operation of a simple financial mechanism (INSTEX) to transfer currency from the sale of oil and other Iranian goods; And the revelation of Europe's limited capacity to stand up to American economic power; Gradually, it

led the European troika to compromise with the United States and try to reach a new agreement that would include a broader regional and missile dimension to Iran that would ultimately satisfy the new president. Europe's mainstream is more influenced by the American view and its two main regional allies, Saudi Arabia and the Israeli regime, in terms of regional positions and the dangers of strengthening Iran's missile power. This mainstream is in the form of containment and the role of Iran's regional influence through the transfer of missile technology to Tehran's allied groups in the region, especially Iraq and Yemen. (Barzegar, 2020, p. 52).

The EU's opposition to strengthening Iran's missile capability is in line with the US policy of balancing US forces in the region to ensure security and Western interests among regional powers; According to the Europeans, increasing Iran's missile capability will increase Iran's power in the region and disrupt the regional order. On the other hand, the transfer of Iranian weapons and missile technology to militant and non-governmental groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Yemeni Ansarullah movement weakens the position of Western allies such as Saudi Arabia and Israel.

US influence on EU performance on Iran's nuclear program and publicity of political identity conflicts

The insistence of the West countries on Iran's motives in nuclear activity and the impact of nuclear achievement on other countries in the region are among the external factors that play a role in the framework of structural realism theory and the West's view of Iran's nuclear issues. In addition, the West claims to Iran based on support for terrorism, the consequences of Iran's nuclearization on Israel's position,

and Iran's access to nuclear weapons as Iran's human rights record in the West are rooted in neo-realist assumptions.

The United States and its allies saw the continuation of its nuclear program and ongoing regional activities and the increase in Iran's missile capability as detrimental to their security and national interests. The dominant and strategic view of the United States was that the best regional order is in a situation where there is a balance of power between the major powers in the region to minimize the US cost of controlling the current political, security and economic trends in the region. This approach was further strengthened by the coming to power of Trump and also influenced the mainstream Europe (Britain, Germany and France). (Barzegar, 2020, p. 39) Thus, the strategy of maximum pressure to weaken Iran from within and curb Iran's regional role in Western foreign policy played a role. European countries, by adopting the US strategy and vision for Iran's nuclear program with specific geopolitical and ideological goals, sought to prevent the expansion of Iran's regional role in the Middle East and to limit Iran's nuclear program and missile program. According to the Europeans, the transfer of nuclear and missile technology from Iran to Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Ansarullah movement in Yemen, as well as non-governmental and militant groups, could weaken the position of Saudi Arabia and Israel as allies in the European region; And the shift in the balance of power will disrupt the regional order. Politically, from the European point of view, conflicts between governments and non-governmental groups can pose serious dangers for Europe, such as the influx of refugees and migrants into European countries, and create internal problems for the governments of these countries in terms of facilities, capacity and cul-

tural conflicts. Since 2003 and after 9/11, the rise of the Iranian nuclear issue has become more important, and with the seriousness of the nuclear issue and the prevention of its production and expansion by the West, the issue has gained international dimension. Following the increasing importance of Iran's nuclear issues, the European Union entered the Iranian nuclear equation and played a role as one of the main parties in resolving the crisis, due to the increasing sensitivity of its members. (Ebrahimifar, 2010, p. 110)

The European Union has adopted a two-pronged policy on Iran's nuclear program. On the other hand, the European Union is focusing on the process of resolving the nuclear crisis by emphasizing negotiation and diplomatic solutions; On the other hand, by approving the draft resolution against Iran's nuclear program and exerting pressure on Iran by passing the resolution and synchronizing with other members of the Security Council, it seeks to prevent Iran's nuclear process and abandon Iran's uranium enrichment. According to former EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, the Europeans pursued a two-pronged policy aimed at preventing Iran from continuing the process, which they believe would lead to the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Europe's two-pronged policy of punishing Iran is for ignoring the Board of Governors in not stopping uranium enrichment and controlling nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. According to the West, the proliferation of nuclear weapons will lead to an arms race in the Middle East and the beginning of World War III. From the point of view of European countries, if any of the Middle Eastern countries achieves asymmetric power, then they will be able to change the regional and international balance. According to this view, any attempt by Iran to acquire

nuclear power could have consequences for changing the balance of regional power; And this means that Iran will have the position as well as the potential tools to change the equation of international politics. (Mottaghi, 2005, p. 6)

US-EU Convergence Against Terrorism

After 9/11, the United States and the European Union have placed great emphasis on the need to intensify security measures against terrorist threats, placing terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism at the top of the list of threats; And widely increased their cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The most important US-European cooperation in the fight against terrorism is:

- US-European talks on intelligence exchange between police and intelligence on December 20, 2002;
- Adoption of a restraining order throughout the European Union, an agreement on the definition of terrorism and the freezing of terrorist assets in Europe;
- Concluding an agreement on extradition of criminals and mutual legal assistance;
- Signing of two agreements between Euro-pol (European Police) and the United States, including on the joint use of intelligence and personal data;
- Holding meetings between US and EU law enforcement officials at the ministerial level on counter-terrorism meetings;
- Concluding an agreement on the transfer of personal information and documents held by airports. (Sanaei & Heshmati, 2014)

Terrorism and the rise of identity differences between Iran and the European Union

The most important factors of divergence in the politics of the two sides in the concept of terrorist conflicts are the result of identity,

ideological and cultural differences between the two sides, which has created a challenge in bilateral relations. The phenomenon of Islamism and its tendency to the world and the challenge of liberal theories has caused Western concern. Some Western politicians have used "political Islam" instead of "communism" to glorify it, and have opposed it with terms such as Islamic terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, and violent and extremist Muslims. Accordingly, huge political and media propaganda has been carried out to put Islam and terrorism together; In such a way that by carrying out any action, including bombings, assassinations and the like, they are the first allies of Muslims, and Islamic countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, put these accusations at the forefront. (Abbasi, 2013, p. 43)

Following the hostage-taking of members of the US Embassy in Tehran, followed by the 1983 bombing of a US Marine naval base in southern Lebanon and its attribution to Iran by Western media, the Reagan administration declared Iran a sponsor of terrorism in January 1984. (Abbasi, 2013, p. 55). Other factors such as Iran's policy in the Middle East and the Islamic Republic of Iran's opposition to the existence of the Israeli regime are support for Palestinian liberation groups and support for Lebanon's Hezbollah.

In the view of the West and the European Union, Palestinian jihadist groups are violent and terrorist groups. There were also other incidents, such as the fatwa on the assassination of Shapur Bakhtiyar in 1991, the Mykonos incident in Germany, the explosion of a Jewish headquarters in Argentina, and the killing of some opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Europe; It caused these countries to accuse Tehran of carrying out terrorist acts and killing dissidents without having any evidence. (Abbasi, 2013, p. 56)

The above factors led the European Union to introduce Iran as a defender of terrorism and violence in the international supply. (Franssen, 2007, p. 2) Accordingly, terrorism has become one of the most challenging issues in Iran-EU relations. Differences in the different views of the two sides on the concept of terrorism and the contexts that provide the context for terrorism have led to criticism of each other's behavior.

Conclusion

The change of identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the tendency towards Islamic ideology after the Islamic Revolution was opposed to the secular-liberal ideology of the West and led to identity gaps and challenges in the ideological foundations of the two actors. After the victory of the revolution, Iran's foreign policy and the change in the attitude of the elites were rooted in the nature of Islam, which has been one of the biggest gaps and challenges in relations between Iran and the European Union. The European Union saw Iran's new identity, which was based on Religious-Islamic norms, values and ideas, as a threat to its interests and norms. The identity of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and opposition to it is a common position of Europe and the United States. Thus, the performance of the European Union and the United States in world affairs with Iran has created a similar approach and convergence between the two Western powers. From the neo-realist point of view, one of the signs of cooperation between countries is the mutual acceptance of each other's national interests in the face of threats. After the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were changes in the international system; The period when the great powers, together with the regional units, found themselves in a situation of identity in the Middle East, and the connection

between structure and identity created a new form of competition and cooperation in the region. From the perspective of identity theorists, the main cause of regional crises after the Cold War is the identity conflicts between countries, which lead to strategic conflicts. The emergence of Iran after the Islamic Revolution with a different approach than before as a emerging regional power was seen as a threat to the disruption of the regional order under American and European domination by the West; Accordingly, the European Union and the United States worked together to maintain a regional balance in order to contain Iran in order to prevent the expansion and infiltration of power in the Middle East.

References

- Abbasi, Majid, (2013). Foreign Policy Challenges of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union. Tehran: Imam Sadegh (AS) University.
- Abbasi, Majid, (2013). The Impact of Terrorism on the Confrontation between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran after 9/11. *Strategy Quarterly*. No. 69. pp. 41-63.
- Bagheri, Ibrahim, & Qeisari, Mohammad. (2019). The United States and the construction of Iran's security threat in the perception of Europe. *Quarterly Journal of International Relations Research*. Ninth period. No. 31. pp. 38-7.
- Barzegar, Kayhan, (2020). US and European strategic goals for Iran. *Foreign Policy Quarterly*. No. 1 (34). Pp. 55-37.
- Dehghani Firoozabadi, Seyed Jalal (2013). *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Eighth Edition. Tehran: Samat.
- Dehghani Firoozabadi, Seyed Jalal. (2009). *Iran-Europe nuclear dialogue (from the beginning to the Brussels summit)*.

- Quarterly Journal of Political-Economic Information. No. 211 and, pp. 52-71.
- Dehghani Firoozabadi, Seyed Jalal & Zabihi, Reza. (2012). The Impact of Islamic-Revolutionary Identity on the Foreign Policy Behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Nuclear Issue (Khatami and Ahmadinejad Period). *Political Science Quarterly*. Fifteenth year. No. 59. pp. 75-107.
- Dehshiri, Mohammad Reza & Golestan, Muslem (2016). Behavioral model of the great powers in managing the international crisis in Syria in a unipolar system. *International Political Research Quarterly*. No. 27. pp. 38-1.
- Ebrahimifar, Tahereh. (2010). The new security order in the Persian Gulf after the military occupation of Iraq. *Journal of Political Science Research*. No. 10. pp. 7-36.
- Fouzi, Yahya & Pirezadi, Mehdi, (2018). Future study of Iran's relations with the great powers of the United States, the European Union, China and Russia. *Siyasat-e Karbordi Journal*. No. 2 (1). Pp. 69-112.
- Franssen, Herman (2007), A Review of U.S. Unilateralism Sanctions against Iran, [http //: www.Irantrade.Org/ Update / News / Aspid = 2448](http://www.Irantrade.Org/Update/News/Aspid=2448).
- Ghahramanpour, Rahman, (2015). Identity and foreign policy in Iran and the Middle East. First Edition, Tehran: Mojab.
- Khalouzadeh, Saeed (2012). A review of the EU policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Book of Europe* (10). First Edition. Tehran: Abrar Moaser.
- Khalouzadeh, Saeed (2012). Obstacles and challenges facing the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union. *World politics*. No. 1 (28). Pp. 187-212.
- Korteweg, Rem (2013). EU and Iran. Center for European Reform.
- Laclau & C. Mouffe (1985). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* London: Verso
- Mottaghi, Ebrahim & et al. (2017). Identity Implications of the Islamic Awakening and the Arab Spring in Southwest Asia; A Case Study: Syria. *Geopolitical Quarterly*. Year 13. No. 1. pp. 100-73.
- Mottaghi, Ebrahim & Mohammadi, Manouchehr (2005). The doctrine of constructive interaction in the foreign policy of the country. *Rahbord Journal*, No. 2 (1), pp. 232-304.
- Perthes, Volker, (2010). "Ambition and Fear: Iran of Foreign Policy and Nuclear Program", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 52, no. 3.
- Rostami, Farzad & et al. (2018). An analysis of the EU-US strategic relationship in the light of the Iran nuclear deal; Leading scenarios. *Quarterly Journal of Strategic Policy Research*. Seventh year. No. 28. pp. 239-269.
- Sajjadpour, Seyed Mohammad Kazem & Ejtihad, Saeedeh, (2010). Western security attitudes and post-Cold War international threats; Case study of the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Political knowledge*. No. 1 (6). Pp. 95-25.
- Sanaei, Ardeshir & et al. (2014). A comparative study of US and EU counterterrorism strategies. *International Relations Studies*. No. 27. pp. 64-57.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. (2000). " Structural Realism after the Cold War ", *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (summer).
- Waltz, Kenneth, (1999). " Globalization and Governance ", *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 4.
- www.news.xinhuanet.com