



Islamic Republic of Iran's National Security Policy in its Nuclear Program within the Framework of Constructivist Theory

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Abstract

This study provides a qualitative and quantitative investigation on Iran's national security policy in the nuclear program within the constructivist theory framework and its central categories of 'identity', 'identification', and 'broker-structure'. 'identity' has been a fundamental (not the only) role player in Iran's different governments' national security policy regarding the nuclear program. It was also revealed that the 'identification' category had a greater impact than the other two systemic classic power and security seeking (Realism) and wealth seeking (Liberalism) factors. Given the effect and consolidation of Iran's cultural-identity characteristics and the international normative-institutional environment on formation of its national security policy, Iran's nuclear program future will depend on the 'look' and 'extent of interaction', the structure (international system) and the broker (the governments of Iran). Therefore, Iran's national security policy in its nuclear program (after the one-sided withdrawal of the USA from JCPOA) can be analyzed within the given framework of this study.

Keywords: Iran's security policy, Iran Nuclear program, Identity, Identification, Broker-Structure.

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1. Introduction

In the first decades of the third millennium, the concept of national security has entered a new phase. The growth of globalization together with factors such as changes in technology and revolution of information as well as change in global power system has evolved the concept of national security. In addition to the previously mentioned factors, rise in nation understands, security has shifted its hardware meaning to a software meaning. Parallel to these objective and subjective reforms, scientists and thinkers have evolved their perspectives and theories in theoretical and experimental domains. However, many security-related schools of thought especially two main schools of Realism and Liberalism and their main branches like Constructive Realism and Neoliberal institutionalism have been incapable of explaining many national and international security policies. These two theories, with an emphasis on structural effects on national policies (Structural Realism) and considering national interests of governments as exogenous by themselves (Neoliberalism), do not have the power of anticipating the political units' (Governments) national interests (Katzenstein, 2011: 24). This problem appears in a more prominent way for an analysis of Islamic republic of Iran's national security analysis. As for explaining the Islamic republic of Iran's national security policies in different domains and especially in nuclear program with considering hypotheses of systemic theory as a default (Neoliberalism or Neorealism), many of scholars are either incapable of appointing country's national security policies, or in many cases, they consider it as contrary to the national interest (pre-assumed).

The problem with all of the different types of Liberalistic and Realistic viewpoints in explaining the national security policy of countries such as Islamic republic of Iran especially in the case of nuclear program, is that, firstly, these views assume the government's position in the case of international structure only considering their physical power. Secondly, these viewpoints consider the equal effect of institutional limitations on the governments' interests as absolute and unquestionable and as a result, view governments with definite interests as rational role players and emphasize the selection of these role players in the framework of structures and international organization by distinguishing intellectual implements of these role players and marginalizing the meaning-identity (cultural-social) related facts and norms. However, research on interests and national security policies of a country such as the Islamic republic of Iran especially in the case of nuclear program requires a different type of theoretical approach.

Considering the mentioned factors, this research uses constructivist theory to understand and analyze Islamic republic of Iran's national security policy in the nuclear program. In this regard, this research focuses on investigating

and analyzing the effects of meaning structures, ideas, norms, mutual inter-intellectual values and the 'identity' risen from these values on the basis of Islamic republic of Iran national security policy in the case of nuclear program.

Emphasizing the characteristics of the environment and political identity of governments in the Islamic republic of Iran, this study has focused on two determining factors of Islamic republic of Iran's national security policy in the nuclear program that has not been much a subject of attention: the identity emerged from the political role players of Islamic republic of Iran (as broker) on the one hand, and cultural-institutional background of international system (as structure) on the other hand. For this reason, this research has considered understanding of Islamic republic of Iran (from 7th to 12th government) national security policy in nuclear program as a process in the framework of constructivist theory and its main concepts such as identity, identification, and stability (structure-broker).

2. Theoretical Framework

2-1. Constructivist Theory

Constructivist theory is one of the theories which give a particular attention to investigate the importance of non-materialist structures and the role of identity in creating national interest and foreign policy of countries (Mahdian and others, 2017: 145). This theory rejects hypothesis of mind, neorealism, and neoliberalism, and emphasizes the construction of mind, identity, role-players' interest and mutual act and creation of broker and structure (Riss, 2000: 1-39). Among improvement theories, the theory by Alexander Wendt has a special place (Abolhassan Shirazi & Nikoo, 2015: 17). The most important work of Wendt is the book 'social theory of international policy' which was written in 1999 in response to international theory policy by Kenneth Waltz. In this book the writer has tried to find a moderate way between the main stream of international relations (realists and liberalists) and postmodern constructivists and critical theoritions to establish a modernist constructivism (Atai & Mansouri Moghadam, 2013: 139). Constructivists like the followers of English schools of thought, and unlike the neorealism theory which considers the structure of the international system as distribution of tangible powers, considers international system as a society built up from social actors interacting with one another; and their interaction is based on rules and norms shaped in an inter-intellectual way (Kubáľková, 2001). Constructivists believe that international structure is not fore-given but it is emerged from a permanent dialectic of structures and role players (brokers) which act on the basis of their intellectual meanings and not necessarily expressive mindfulness (William, 2009: 69).

Constructivism has entered culture and identity into political literature in a

comprehensive way. According to constructivism, culture plays a preeminent role in the formation of politics and governments behavior; Anarchy is what governments understand, and our mentality and view of the world and the identity we have, plays a substantial role in our self-understanding of power and national interest of ours and others. Security, goals and national interests rise from the understanding of the nations from themselves and others. They are social, inter-intellectual, and constructed (Katzenstein, 2011: 7). Identity and governments' interests are created by norms, interactions and cultures, and this 'process' specifies the subject of interactions and relations between the governments. The relations between them are based on the meaning they consider for one another (Sajadpour & Ijtihadi, 2010: 33). Identity is linked to three categories of location (geography), space (network and social relations) and time (history), and is affected by the characteristics and developments of these three categories (Mossalanejad, 2012: 139). Constructivists, investigate approaches in which identities and interests of actors in a process of permanent social communication with other players are produced, reproduced, and sometimes changed (Abolhasan Shirazi & Nikoo, 2015: 17). From a constructivist perspective, identities reduce the uncertainty by providing meaning (Aghahosseini & others, 2015: 65). Constructivism as a norms approach places its emphasis on the ways in which interests are changed. Since the norms are created in a social context, it evolves and changes harmonious to changes in social interactions. Understanding of this development and normative evaluation and the identity shaped from it and the changing interests that it creates are the main interests of constructivists theory. Therefore, according to constructivism, pure intellect is not dominating relations between countries and their behavior; inner and international borders are not separate from each other the way the main stream shows them to be; evolution in national identities happens in interaction between internal and international (structure and broker) environment. Culture, identity, norms, and national and international values play a significant role in forming politics and behavior of role players in the world. (Katzenstein, 2011: 8).

Constructivists are of the opinion that since political leaders live in a social environment and are affected by norms and society values, they present these norms and values in political decisions. In constructivist analysis of foreign politics, intellectual models are transformed into determining factors of foreign politics. Politics and realities of international relations are created in an inter-intellectual way. Also, constructivists believe that leaders' decisions are affected by norms and values of the society and are not based in vacuum (Bayat & Dehghani Firouzabadi, 2015: 4). That how a political actor reacts against a strategic environment is unclear but this kind of reaction depends, to some extent, on how actors conceive of the world (Katzenstein, 1998: 17). The central and

pivotal point of constructivism is ontology. This goes so far that many believe that constructivists have basically shifted their point of discussion in the domain of international relations from epistemology (the main stream in modernism) to ontology (Heydari Zadshali, 2013: 18). Constructivism, in regard with ontology, supports idealism to materialism, and from 'subjectivism' to 'objectivism'. From this view constructivism does not believe in the existence of a world independent of human mind (realism). From an epistemological perspective also, this view does not accept the possibility of reaching the objective, innate, and fore-given truth (Mottaki & Kazemi, 2007: 210). The constructivist theory, due to its triple rules of ontology, is very beneficial in specifying foreign behavior of countries. These triple statements which shape the main core of specifying social and materialistic environment of foreign politics and help us in forming the interests and similarities and differences of foreign policies of countries are: First, intellectual and norm structures are as important as materialistic structures, because the environment wherein countries act is social, and this can help countries and governments to form their understanding of their interests and roles and also their foreign behaviors (As cited in Mahdian, 2017). Second, the creation of identity and its role in specifying the interests and acts of governments. From constructivists perspectives, social identities that are rooted in governments 'view of themselves and others and materialistic and social structure of their identity has an important role in the production of interests and behavior of the role players (Adler, 1997: 3019). Third, brokers and structures empower each other in a reciprocal way. In fact, norm and intellectual structures can condition the interests of the actors but if there were identifiable trends of those actors, there wouldn't be these structures too. In other words, constructivists emphasize the process of interaction between brokers and structures, and question the self-orientation of neorealism and neoliberalist methodology (Mousavi Zade & Moghaddam, 2008: 192).

3. Methodology

The theoretical framework for the analysis of the findings of this study is constructivist theory. This study has considered the concepts of 'identity', 'identification' and the process of interaction (structure – broker) using the constructivist theory and has tried to understand the Islamic republic of Iran national security policy. Then, with the achieved understanding, interpretation and analysis of the nuclear program of Islamic republic of Iran has been done. To this end, the effectiveness of the identity outcomes of the Islamic republic of Iran national security policy has been interpreted in the nuclear program. Next step is the investigation of the type of understanding and reaction of norm-organization international environment (as other) to 'individuality' of Iran and

its nuclear program. The last step of this study is the analysis of the process of inter-intellectual identity 'self' of (Islamic republic of Iran) and the 'other' (5+1 and especially the west members) and also understanding of Islamic republic of Iran's national security policy respecting 'formality' and 'identification' as one of the Islamic republic of Iran's abilities (knowledge of nuclear technology) from the norm-organization international environment as a process in the government of Ahmadinejad. To evaluate the hypotheses of this study with the idea of the experts of this field, in the mentioned theoretical framework, a questionnaire has been used. To this end, for the analysis of field data, the SPSS software was used in which Friedman test was adopted to specify the degree of effectiveness of each concept.

4. The Findings

4-1. Islamic republic of Iran's national security policy in the nuclear program

Islamic Republic of Iran views its nuclear program as peaceful and based on current international norms, including Article 6 of the NPT Treaty (Mahdian & Alihoseni & Aghahoseini, 2017: 204). To explain Islamic republic of Iran's national security policy in the nuclear program, at first, the question comes to mind that which of the identity, safety, economical cases was the main factor for the initiation and pursuit of Islamic republic of Iran's nuclear program for reaching and completing the technology of the cycle of nuclear energy at all levels? In this regard, the initiating and pursuing factor of Islamic republic of Iran nuclear program has been investigated in a field investigation and it was revealed that this initiating and pursuing factor of Islamic republic of Iran until reaching the knowledge and advanced nuclear technology has been recognized as a symbol of capability and independence of Islamic republic of Iran system in acquiring sciences and superior technology for increasing the prestige and upgrading the identity position of Islamic republic of Iran in the world of Islam and international system (table 2).

Table 2: Iran's policy in the initiation and pursuit of its nuclear program based on the degree of effectiveness in identity, economic, and security categories (**Source:** Research Findings).

	degree of effectiveness of categories of identity, economic, and security in initiating and pursuing Islamic republic of Iran nuclear program	Friedman test (Percentage of Average of Effectiveness)
1	Iran's reaching of nuclear electronic and industrial development and acquiring economical interest	32/08%
2	Iran reaching of the power of producing atomic guns and reaching defensive prevention	25/55%
3	Iran's access to advanced nuclear science and technology as a symbol of the capability and independence of Iran in acquiring superior science and technology to enhance the dignity and promote the Iranian identity in the Islamic world and in the international system	42/37%

The truth is that the nature of Islamic Republic of Iran's identity has inevitably affected the national security policy of this country in nuclear program. Considering this crucial issue, it should be stated that the current Iranian identity enjoys a complex structure. That is the primary basis of Iranian cultural-identity such as geography (land, race, language, position, ...), myth and historical happenings and also rules and religious beliefs in the passage of time through the layers of culture-identity (ancient Iran, Islamic-shiat, modernized, Islamic revolution) has been reproduced.

In fact, Islamic republic of Iran's foreign policy is the direct outcome of dialectics, layers of Iranian, Islamic, and modern identity, and elements of Islamic revolution discourse. Under the influence of mundane structures and norms of international system, and comprehensive, ideological, and passing identity of Islamic revolution, this identity context produces national and intra-national interest, and claimed and practicable foreign policy. Based on this, Islamic republic of Iran foreign policy is the product of a dynamic communication of mundane and meaning structures which have been formed in the context of an identity Supra discourse called Islamic revolution discourse and is a reproduction of Iranian identity-cultural outcomes.

The effectiveness of the Iranian-Islamic factors of identity-culture in the nuclear program on the way of achieving nuclear knowledge and technology as well as the completion of the nuclear energy cycle at all levels, has been a symbol of power and independence in acquiring cutting-edge technology or an increase of prestige and also upgrading the identity position of Islamic republic of Iran in the Islam world and international system. Iranians' ultimate goal is to achieve honorable development in the shadows of religion and preserving identity, and also attempts for reaching the highest levels of civilization and renewing the magnificent and honorable ancient civilizations.

The supporters of nuclear program in Iran are effected by identity outcomes of idealistic and self-confidence and Iranian supremacy seeking emphasize that having an advanced nuclear program brings pride and prestige for Iranians and can raise up Iran's position in the international system. The Iranian identity outcomes of independence-seeking and anti-dominationism had also been considered to be important for the pursuit of nuclear program. From this view, self-sufficiency in producing the nuclear energy on the basis of 'NAFY SABIL' as an absolute and stable rule from the Islamic republic of Iran system has been an issue of inquiry and examination for different governments in different times (Rostami & Ghoalmi, 2015: 163).

All in all, it can be said that Islamic republic of Iran is pursuing the move towards nuclear knowledge for the following reasons:

- 1) Concerning domestic dimension, although the previous regime started the

nuclear program in Iran and their development in the program, if ruled the country for 10 more years, was more than the 4 decades of Islamic republic age, according to Iran's officials the nuclear program and the technology related to it in the Pahlavi period was completely based on imports and Iranians did not have special share in this knowledge. Therefore, the only thing that could distinguish Islamic republic of Iran system from the previous regime which was under question for being dependent to outside of the borders was the 'independence' in different areas including nuclear knowledge and technology. For this reason, internalizing the nuclear knowledge and giving access of this knowledge to the Iranian scientists was so much more important than a regular industrial development for the Islamic republic of Iran.

2) Considering the foreign dimension, Islamic republic of Iran was in spiritual contrasts with foreign powers specially the western countries in regards with identity issues. This scientific-technological lagging and independence on countries which are regarded as inferior by Islamic republic of Iran concerning values and identity, is in contrast with the; Idealistic patriotism, 'independence' identity of Iran to foreign powers.

4-2. Iran's National Security Policy in Nuclear Program in Khatami's Government

Internalizing Iran's nuclear program was initiated in the presidency of Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani, and it achieved its results in the presidency of Mr. Sayed Mohammad Khatami. More importantly, Iran's nuclear program achieved an international face in this period, and the challenges of nuclear program were revealed from this period. This was a crucial period in which not only Iran's nuclear program achieved outstanding developments, but also entered the international domain, and it was proposed under the title of nuclear document in the international agency of atomic energy. Furthermore, it became as an instrument for implementing pressure on Iran from America and other Western countries (Jafari & Janbaz, 2016: 107).

America and three European countries in 2003, after having a comprehensive knowledge and reaching an 'unreturnable' knowledge of their own nuclear activities, have started an intense advertisement wave against Iran's nuclear program as well as asking Iran to cooperate with international agency of atomic energy.

At that point, the American and European stance on Iran and its nuclear program was negative. First, the Western (US and European) countries saw Iran as their 'Another self', and consequently did not agree on Iran's progress in nuclear knowledge and technology. On the other hand, some cases (such as the lack of timely knowledge of the agency) in Iran's nuclear program were added to

their 'pessimism' against the program, which caused a heavy atmosphere in the international arena against Iran. The government, therefore, needed to take the best policy considering the development and progress of the nascent nuclear program, in contrast to pessimisms and international pressure formed against Iran.

Numerous studies and field evaluation revealed that during President Mohammed Khatami's government, various factors, including economic (economic development and achievement of industrial power), as well as defensive and security considerations on national security policy of Islamic Republic of Iran had an impact on the nuclear case. However, the main factor affecting the national security policy in this case was based on identity factors and macro-strategy (approach) of Islamic republic of Iran system. In fact, the initiation and pursue of Iran's nuclear program in that era was well in line with Iran's access to advanced nuclear science and technology as a symbol of the ability and independence of Iranians. hence, it increased their prestige and identity status in the Islamic world and the international system.

Table 3: Iran's national security policy in initiation and pursuit of nuclear program based on effectiveness in Khatami's government

	Islamic Republic of Iran's national security policy approach concerning the nuclear program in Sayed Mohammad Khatami's government	Freidman Test (The average of effectiveness)
1	Iran Access to Nuclear Power and Industrial Development and Economic Benefits	37/09%
2	Iran Access to Atomic Weapons and Achieving Defensive prevention	22/29%
3	Iran's access to advanced nuclear science and technology as a symbol of Iranian to increase prestige and identity status of Iran in the world of Islam and the international system	40/62%

Source: Research Findings

in that period, according to the situation and the 'understanding' and 'look' that had been formed toward Iran and its nuclear program, among the identity products of Iranians, the outcomes of 'compatibility and the Iranian interaction' and 'pragmatism', were among the effective identity factors which were more influential than other identity outputs concerning the views of the statement toward the Iran's situation and the conditions of international environment.

The effect of identity factors mentioned on national security policy of Islamic republic of Iran in the period of Sayed Mohammad Khatami can be seen in the adoption of approaches including: 1) Tension elision 2) Dialogue of Civilizations 3) building trust and 4) Discourse multilateralism in the nuclear program (Dehghani firouzabadi & Attai, 2014: 103). in that period, the nuclear policy of the Islamic republic of Iran was based on the principles of dialogue and inter-intellectual meanings to eliminate misconceptions and pessimisms and attract

public confidence. thus, the dialogue and cooperation with international institutions and organizations, especially the international atomic energy agency, was followed and tried to build confidence and transparency, the country's main way to achieve peaceful nuclear technology without tension with other countries in the world (Tabatabaei & Toupchi, 2015: 120). In this regard, Khatami's government has been working with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in order to build confidence at the same time with the talks with International Atomic Energy Agency (Soltani & Ekhtiari Amiri, 2010: 204). In the wake of negotiations with the suspension of nuclear activities and repeated statements by senior Iranian officials that the nuclear activities are peaceful, steps have been taken to build transparency and trust concerning the nuclear program of the Islamic republic of Iran (Mohammadi, 2012: 14).

Iran also allowed IAEA inspectors to visit Iranian nuclear sites in order to show goodwill dissolving the worries of western countries about Iranian nuclear sites to IAEA inspectors (Tabatabaei & Toupchi, 2015: 126-127). But the collaborations and Iranian interactions aimed at eliminating misunderstandings and establishing trust on the other side did not help resolve the issue and only made it conditioned to the passage of time and did not lead to an appropriate result in practice because of too much demands of America and the European countries (jafari & Janbaz, 2016: 109) in a way that even with trust and cooperation of Iran, Americans and Europeans did not accept to give a right to Iran for limited enrichment (even on the experimental scale) and called for withdrawing all Iranian nuclear activities. The desire of the European countries was that Iran, rather than suspending enrichment, would put it aside for all economic incentives. Considering 'individuality', the United States was not ready to interact with Iran. At that point, Americans did not want to agree with Iran under any circumstances. For them, the nuclear case was the only excuse for dropping its 'other' - Iran - in the same direction as happened to Iraq. In this regard, former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Organization Mohamed ElBaradei, on the first anniversary of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in December 1395, underlined the impossibility of reaching an agreement between Iran and the West concerning nuclear program in Khatami's period: 'If it was not a Western HEMAGHAT, it would be possible to reach a better agreement than 10 years ago' (Al - Barad 'ei said of nuclear talks 27/10/95). the results of the field study regarding the interaction of structure - broker in the Iranian nuclear file in the Khatami period also conforms to qualitative findings. According to the findings, the lack of access to the nuclear agreement between Iran and the international system in Mr. Khatami's presidential period in spite of the Iranian government's interactive approach to the international system was due to the lack of acceptance and

recognition of the Iranian nuclear program from the international system (Table 4).

Table 4: Structure-broker interaction in the Iranian nuclear program in Khatami's government

	No agreement on nuclear program between Iran and The international system in the presidency of Mohammad Khatami	Freidman Test (The average of effectiveness)
1	No interactive approach between Iran and international system	30/26%
2	No acceptance and identification of Iran's nuclear program from the international system	69/74%

Source: Research Findings

4-3. Iran's National Security in Nuclear Program in Ahmadinejad's Government

in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad presidency time, Islamic republic of Iran's nuclear program was expanded in many different fields, and at the same time with these technical advancements, the United States and Western countries imposed the most severe sanctions against Iran while reporting Iran's nuclear document to the UN Security Council. They also issued numerous resolutions against Iran.

in order to explain the policy of Islamic republic of Iran national security in the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the main causes of the initiation and pursuit of the nuclear program was surveyed and determined; the pursuit and development of the nuclear program of Iran in all areas, during Ahmadinejad 's presidency was in line with Iran's access to the knowledge and technology of nuclear energy as a symbol of Iranians' ability and independence to increase prestige and identity status of Iran and its position in the Islamic world and international system (Table 5).

Table 5: Iran's national security policy in initiation and pursuit of nuclear program based on effectiveness in Ahmadinejad's government

	The cause of the pursuit and development of the nuclear program of Islamic republic of Iran in all domains, during the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad	Freidman Test (The average of effectiveness)
1	Iran's access to Nuclear Power and Industrial Development and Economic Benefits	33/55%
2	Iran's access to Atomic Weapons and Defensive prevention	25/43%
3	Iran's access to advanced nuclear science and technology as a symbol of Iranian independence to increase prestige and identity status of Iran in the world of Islam and the international system	41/02%

Source: Research Findings

In this period, 'idealization', 'justice seeking', 'iniquity fight 'and stranger fight', 'confidence and 'Iranian supremacy seeking', 'religious spirit and struggle of the good and the bad,' and 'Stability and resistance' are among the identity factors that have the greatest impact on Ahmadinejad's nuclear policy.

Other identity factors such as 'Iranian compatibility and interaction 'and' Pragmatism' are found to be of less effectiveness on Ahmadinejad's nuclear policy.

Ahmadinejad's government, influenced by identity-revolutionary outcomes, self-confidence and idealization of Iranian identity, 'justice seeking and stranger fight, 'religious spirit and the fight of good and evil', the norm 'stability and resistance', and the lack of trust to the government of domination, tried to continue country's nuclear program and overcome its upcoming issues. The right-wing government of Ahmadinejad had always tried to act as a revolutionary government in the context of international relations. Concerning nuclear energy, despite being issued by resolutions from the UN, sanctions and even threats to war, he never withdrew from their position toward nuclear program, but by ignoring these resolutions and their consequences, developed the nuclear program in all fields at high speed. In this regard it can be said that, the nuclear advancements could be a symbol of economic development as well as advancement inside the borders and justice seeking and the Infidelity fight outside borders for the political right-wing. Therefore, the nuclear program and took a certain prominence over the period of Ahmadinejad (Dehghani Firouzabadi & Attai 2014: 103) and Ahmadinejad played a pivotal role in the discussion of the nuclear program in both inside and outside borders. In the domestic dimension, given the discussion of all levels of society and the emphasis on the slogan 'Nuclear Power is Our Right,' he was able to introduce the country's nuclear advancements as a symbol of pride for Iranians, and hence the Iranian generation considered having the nuclear energy as their rights. outside the borders, Ahmadinejad and the politicians in line with his policies marked the and emphasized noncooperation of the western countries in regards with Iran's nuclear program and urged the need to gain access to peaceful nuclear technology, as soon as possible and without pressure (Tabatabaei & Toupchi, 2015: 120).

When Obama came in office, he sought to reduce areas of challenge with countries such as Russia, improve US relations with Europe, pursue multilateralism in international relations, and ultimately improve relations with the Muslim world (Mossalanejad, 2014: 86) so that he could use a multilateral approach to contain countries such as Iran and North Korea more effectively.

Iran's reaching to an irreversible point in nuclear knowledge, standing up for nuclear power, predominant US military and security institutions' assessment about the inefficiency of using the military option against Iran, the lack of any credible prospects for a military option against Iran and its aftermath, prioritizing China's threat in US security assessments, and the Middle East instability were all factors that reinforced the pursuit of a diplomatic approach to

resolving the Iranian nuclear program in the Obama government (Karami and Mousavi, 2019: 157).

In line with his 'justice seeking', active, and offensive approach to the nuclear program, Ahmadinejad's government tried make progress and go forward instead of retreating from his stance in the nuclear program. Insisting on their rightful claims regarding the nuclear rights, they highlighted the violations of great powers and characterized them as cruel, intruding countries who are trampling on Iran's nuclear rights (As cited in Mahdian 2017).

The government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came to important understandings about an identity which resulted in creating a special type of identity about the 'individuality' of western countries, especially the USA. According to Molana & Manouchehri (2008), This understanding came from disloyalty of the Western parties in carrying out their promises and commitments, and also the lack of adequate nuclear rights and two years of voluntary suspension of all enrichment - related activities (As cited in Mahdian 2017). This identity arose from the behavior of the western countries, became an attribute of legitimacy for many behaviors of the right-wing government in the nuclear program. Therefore, in Ahmadinejad 's government, with regard to the understanding and mentality of 'self - other' (Iran and Europe) on the international arena, it concluded that Western countries were seeking to have Iran's this type of look and conclusion enabled the right-wing governments to adopt an imitation policy against the west during Ahmadinejad government (Dehghani Firouzabadi, 2012: 521). The stability and resistance output represented boldly in Ahmadinejad 's government not only made them halt nuclear program despite the seriousness of American threats in 2006 to suspend all Iran' s nuclear activities, but also to develop it in all the qualitative and quantitative contexts.

In this way, Ahmadinejad's government, influenced by identity outcomes of justice seeking lack of trust, iniquity fight, an Iranian self-confidence acted against the front side (as other) on the nuclear issue. Ahmadinejad shaped a type of attacking diplomacy in foreign policies by reviewing and refining nuclear diplomacy based on unlimited cooperation with agency, preserving the fuel cycle and not suspending it, and also existing the nuclear program from political streams. The reflection of this action was considered to be as 'preventing opposition' toward the west.

The adoptive approach of Iranian government in the governance of Ahmadinejad changed the situation effecting the interaction between Iran and Europe and resulted in a closer bond and harmony between Europe and America.

In total, in the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, we witnessed the lowest level of interaction between the structure (international system) and the

broker (Iran) because of the negative attitude of the parties in spite of numerous negotiations. During this period, adopting offensive diplomacy on nuclear issue by the right-wing government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and an all - out pressure imposed by the US and Europe escalated the confrontation between Iran and the West on the nuclear issue. The pursuit of this kind of diplomacy led to an increase in tensions between Iran and the West on the nuclear issue and the imposition of political and economic pressures on the west against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Dehghani firouzabadi & Attai, 2014: 103). This led to a sharp decline in oil revenues and a significant reduction in the value of the Islamic Republic of Iran' s currency against the dollar (As cited in Mahdian, 2017) and therefore Iran thereby putting Iran in an intense economic situation.

Field findings also show that the lack of a nuclear agreement between Iran and the international system in the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was combined with the international system as well as the non - adoption and recognition of Iran's nuclear program by the international system (see Table 6). This well implies that the lack of a nuclear agreement between Iran and the international system in the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was because of two main factors: First, a lack of interaction (lack of interactive approach) between Iran and international system, and second, the lack of adoption and recognition of Iran's nuclear program by the international system repeatedly (Table 6)

Table 6: Broker-Structure Interaction in Iran's Nuclear Program in Ahmadinejad's government

	Reason for failure of reaching nuclear agreement between Iran and international system during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency	Freidman's Test (The average of effectiveness)
1	Inaction (lack of interactive approach) of the Iranian government with the international system	52/52%
2	The international system's refusal and lack of recognition of Iran's nuclear program	47/48%

Source: Research Findings

4-4. Iran's National Security Policy in Nuclear Program in Rouhani's Government

At the beginning of the Hasan Rouhani's presidency the situation in the nuclear program had changed considerably. In the technical dimension, Iran had achieved considerable progress in its nuclear program, and except the Arak reactor - which had not yet reached its operational stage in spite of the dramatic developments – developed almost the rest of the areas at the top level of its nuclear program in small and qualitative dimensions. At the same time with technological advancements in Iran, the political, economic and security space in the international arena was getting worse for Iran. As far as one can say, all

the situations in which Iran has attempted to develop its nuclear program were met MOTEGHABEL answers by Western nations under the UN Security Council (Nourbakhsh et al., 2015: 112). Hence, the kind of 'look' and 'understanding' of the Rouhani's government to the 'individuality' of Islamic republic of Iran and its atomic program's 'essence' and also the 'environment of the international system' are very important as well.

In this regard, to explain national security policy of Islamic republic of Iran regarding nuclear program under the presidency of Hassan Rouhani, it was first important to investigate the answers to the question: which of the identity, security, or economic factors affected the pursuit and continuation of Islamic republic of Iran's nuclear program in Hasan Rouhani's government? In this regard, the main factor in the pursuit of nuclear program of Islamic republic of Iran in the course of the presidency of Hasan Rouhani was also studied. The result of the study showed that the pursuit and continuation of Islamic republic of Iran nuclear program in the Hasan Rouhani's government was in line with preserving Iran's capabilities in different domains of nuclear knowledge and technology as a symbol of Iranians abilities and independence for maintaining national pride and dignity in both domestic and international contexts, and thereby making economic and security factors as secondary priorities.

Table 7: Iran's national security policy in initiation and pursuit of nuclear program based on effectiveness in Rouhani's government

	Reason for pursuing Iran's nuclear program under Presidency of Hassan Rouhani	Freidman Test (The average of effectiveness)
1	Iran's access to nuclear power and industrial development and economic gain	39/51%
2	Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons and achieving defense deterrence	19/32%
3	Preserving Iran's capabilities in advanced nuclear science and technology as a symbol of Iranians' ability and independence to maintain Iran's prestige and identity in the Islamic world and in the international system	41/17%

Source: Research Findings

The reason that all Iranian governments during Khatami, Ahmadinejad and Rouhani's office insisted on preserving the country's nuclear program under any circumstances is that the Iranians, looking at their own 'individuality,' have introduced this way without any return. From the perspective of ontological security, affected by their own identity, Iranians consider possessing and preserving the nuclear fuel cycle as a source of honor, for them, putting it aside is an impression of disgrace and humiliation. Therefore, despite the many sanctions, there has been no change of attitude in the Iranian governments and their leadership. Even in Sadabad applications, Iran's supreme leader has always considered these pullbacks as an experience and does not recognize these

pullbacks as Iran's permanent policy (Nourbakhsh, et al., 2015: 114).

In Rouhani's government, the identity implications of 'Iranian interaction and adaptation' and 'pragmatism' are among the cultural-identity factors that have had the greatest impact on Iranian nuclear policy. It can be said that, during the Rouhani period, the foreign political elites and thinkers of the eleventh government, with a gentle explanation of Islamic republic of Iran's Revolutionary-Islamic identity, have defined identity roles of this system a little more different.

From their point of view, the Islamic republic of Iran as a glory seeking, anti-dominant, and anti-oppression government cannot afford to accept the nuclear inequality in the international system, but they can still have interaction with the outside world in the way of achieving their nuclear rights with the help of trust factor (Rasooli Sani Abadi & Mir Hosseini, 2015: 246). In the Eleventh Government, the Moderation approach (which was the result of expediency and constructive interaction identities) adjusted its arguments based on the people's desire to maintain nuclear gains [as a national honorable achievement] and reduce economic problems and pressures. Hence, Rouhani's emphasis on the centrifugal rotation and people's lives, interacting with the world, lifting sanctions, abiding by red lines and heroic mediation in the nuclear issue, were in more harmony and conformity to people's desire and mentality than other approaches (Dehghani Firouzabadi & Attai, 2014: 117).

In line with this public outlook, the development of a modest and interactive approach to the nuclear issue in Rouhani's government led to its simultaneous attention to realism and idealism in the nuclear issue. The Eleventh Government (with its perception of Iran's 'individuality' and 'Essence' its nuclear program was) sought to strike a balance between ideals such as preserving national pride and dignity, and realities such as the need to dismantle and reduce international pressure. This approach stemmed from the meaning-identity system of Rouhani. He defines 'moderation' as 'Realistic Idealism' (Dehghani Firouzabadi, 2014: 9) and considers the use of it in foreign policy as an effective policy of interaction with the world rather than being a sign of surrender and opposition. Rouhani emphasized his view of the Iranian 'individuality' and the other side in the international system, believed that Islamic republic of Iran with special conditions, is passing and facing the international system and a period in which new international system has not yet been established. Therefore, it would be dangerous if Islamic republic of Iran's power is not estimated and measured meticulously (Golbaf, 2013: 36).

On the other hand, the formation of a global consensus against Iran's nuclear program and the issuance of numerous Security Council resolutions against it, as well as the political isolation, intensification of sanctions together with Islamic

republic of Iran's current economic situation, led to a more harmonic view among different opposing groups to think of putting forward resolutions for nuclear program as their first priorities. For this reason, some foreign politics theorists consider these situations as desirable conditions in advancing foreign policies in Rouhani's government (As cited in Mahdian, 2017).

In fact, it can be argued that the high environmental pressure exerted on the Islamic Republic coincided with the rise of a person who regarded foreign policy as an interaction and compromise and had the experience of had experience of compromise with the West on the nuclear issue in recent years (Niakoui & Zamani, 2016: 208). Together, these factors have provided a favorable context for change in Iran's foreign policy for interaction with the other side (Niakoui & Zamani, 2016: 206).

Therefore, after Rouhani was appointed as the president of Islamic republic of Iran in August 2013, with an understanding of the conditions of the international environment and being affected by identity outcomes of expediency, compatibility, and Iranian interaction, he prioritized effective interaction with the international society based on his foreign policy as well as resolving the nuclear issue through negotiation. Rouhani's policy on the Iranian nuclear issue was an attempt to exit Iran's case from the Security Council along with completing its nuclear technology in the country and identifying it in the international arena (Niakoui & Zamani, 2016: 206). To this end, the Rouhani government has declared its commitment to a 'win-win' nuclear program to reform Iran's image and promote its position in the international arena and increase its credibility internationally (Iran: New President, New Sanctions, 15/8/2013).

In this period, significant quantitative and qualitative improvements in Iran's nuclear program have had a significant impact on the views of Iranian officials and the other political sides. Rouhani, who, at the start of Iran's 2003 nuclear case had accepted to suspend all nuclear activities for a period of trust, in 2013 - given his view of Iran's political, security and technical (nuclear qualitative and quantitative abilities), 'The enrichment halt period has passed,' he said with confidence and confidence. We are in a special situation now. There are many ways to build trust.' 'The nuclear issue has a negotiated solution only and nothing else,' he said. Neither the threat is effective nor the sanctions. 'He added, 'The rights of the Iranian nation are the most important of all rights' (Speech, 14/03/1392).

Therefore, during the presidency of Rouhani, Iran, taking a look at itself and its counterpart, took an interactive approach to resolving the nuclear issue and, in the light of such approach to reach an agreement, he changed the negotiation team, and as a result some of his preferences. In contrast, Western countries, and

especially the United States, too – after observing of Iranian resistance to their nuclear rights and the widespread quantitative and qualitative developments of Iran's nuclear program moderated their ideas.

Therefore, their view of Iran's nuclear program over time changed from demanding a complete suspension of Iran's nuclear program with extreme sanctions and threats to war, toward moderating Iran's nuclear program with lifting the sanctions on this country. Iran has also finally come to an understanding of the complex conditions has changed its priority and postponed the activities resulting in extreme sanctions or worse than that, a full war (Nourbakhsh, et al., 2015: 117).

Hence, after several lengthy and intensive negotiations (from October 2013 to July 2015), with moderating both sides' approach, comprehensive nuclear agreement was reached in Vienna among Iran, European Union and the P5 + 1 (including China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Germany). This agreement is called 'joint action plan' or 'JCPOA'. Although JCPOA restricted Iran's enrichment until 2025, it led to an international recognition and security council and international powers' respect (Resolution 2231) for Iran about Iran's peaceful nuclear program (Beheshtipour, 2016: 3).

The survey findings also indicate that the interaction of the structure (the international system, and in particular the members of the 5 + 1) - the broker (IR) in the Iranian nuclear case is in the Rouhani period, and based on these findings, reaching a nuclear agreement between Iran and The international system during Hassan Rouhani's presidency has been, on the one hand, because of the Iranian government's interaction with the international system and on the other hand because of the acceptance and recognition of the Iranian nuclear program by the international system. Table (8).

Table 8: Broker-Structure Interaction in Iran's Nuclear Program in Rouhani's government

	Reason for Nuclear Agreement Between Iran and International System During Hassan Rouhani's Presidency	Freidman Test (The average of effectiveness)
1	Interaction of the Iranian Government with the International System	51/51%
2	Acceptance and recognition of the Iranian nuclear program by the international system	48/49%

Source: Research Findings

5. Conclusion

This research is aimed at analyzing Iran's national security policy in the nuclear program. In this regard, the national security policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the nuclear program has been evaluated and analyzed in the framework of constructivist theory in terms of 'identity', 'identification' and 'structure-

broker'. Hence, it is important to ask which of the following is the key factor in initiating and pursuing the Iranian nuclear program to achieving and completing the technology of nuclear fuel cycle at all levels by the Iranian system: 1- Identity, 2- security and 3- economic? It was revealed that the main factor in initiating and pursuing Islamic republic of Iran's nuclear program until reaching and completing its fullest technology of nuclear energy cycle at all levels, is this country's dignified identity based on which the country's access to knowledge of advanced nuclear technology is regarded as a symbol of abilities and independence of Islamic republic of Iran system in acquiring sciences and superior technology and results in increasing Iran's prestige and identity rank in the world of Islam and international system. According to this approach, abandoning the nuclear program under international pressure is damaging to national pride and a form of jealousy that does not conform to the dignified Iranian identity.

On the external side, Iran's identity has substantial conflicts with major powers, especially Western countries, and its scientific and technological backwardness and dependence on countries that Iran considers itself to be superior to in case of value and identity, is in contrast to some extent, with identity, idealistic patriotism, and independence to foreign powers. In view of this, Iran has begun following its activities in pursuit of the civilian nuclear program in various fields of conversion, reprocessing and enrichment of nuclear fuel in accordance with its legal rights under the NPT.

Meanwhile, the US and other Western countries, which backed Iran's nuclear program prior to the Islamic Revolution, had a 'negative mentality' to Iran as its ideological 'other' and changed their position and used any way possible to prevent Iran's nuclear enrichment.

Iran's security policy in the governments of Khatami, Ahmadinejad and Rouhani can also be analyzed and investigated within the framework of constructivist theory by looking at Iranian cultural-identity outcomes and the international normative-cultural environment. Research findings show that in Khatami period, considering Iranian officials' 'look and mentality' towards 'their' 'individuality' and 'the other side', identity output of (pragmatism) has had a greater impact on Iranian national security policy. At that time, despite the interactive approach of the broker (Iran), the structure (the international system) refused to identify Iran's nuclear identity. In Ahmadinejad's period, given the 'look' and 'mentality' as well as the previous experience of Iranian officials to 'self' and 'the other side', the identity outcomes of 'justice seeking' and 'anti-dominationism' has been of a greater importance and had a greater impact on Iranian national security policy. At that time, the structure-broker interaction did not take place because of the distrust of the West and the competitive approach

of the broker (the Iranian government) as well as the lack of interaction by the structure (the international system). But in the Rouhani's period, given the 'look and mentality' of the eleventh government officials on the 'self' and 'the other side,' the consequent identity of 'interactionism' has had a greater impact on Iran's national security policy. During this period, due to the interactive approach of the broker (the Iranian government) and changing the viewpoint and consequently modifying the demands of the structure (the international system), the interaction between the broker-structure was formed, and by applying restrictions on the nuclear program, the Iranian nuclear identity was identified and recognized by international system in a nuclear agreement called JCPOA.

But the emergence of a new government in the United States, and the difference in the attitude and approach of the new president to various global and regional issues, including Iran and its nuclear program, have challenged and sustained the nuclear deal in a new way. Current US officials, according to their negative 'look' and 'understanding' of Iran and its nuclear program (especially concerns about the future after the deadline and lifting sanctions), have called for a one-sided withdrawal from the nuclear deal and imposed the sanctions again. They have also made efforts to provide obstacles for the execution of JCPOA by increasing the all-out pressure against Iran.

One of the factors influencing the new approach of the US government is the difference in the way the new US government views the previous administration (the Obama government) of international rules and regulations. The current US government is strongly anti-Iranian in their mind and does not hesitate to try to create a global consensus against Iran's security, and has raised various issues including regional policies and missile program against Iran. The attitude and policy of Trump and his co-thinkers on Iran has been as 'other' and an enemy of American security and interests and therefore, their approach to JCPOA has been the same.

Therefore, current US government officials are easily speaking what they have in mind against Iran. So Americans are seeking to rebuild fear of Iran and its nuclear program make damages to the execution of JCPOA. Trump and many of his teammates believe that a nuclear deal with Iran under Obama's administration has only delayed Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons because of his (trump) negative attitude toward Iran. In their view, the end of the nuclear program would allow Iran to enrich uranium on a large scale, thereby reducing Iran's nuclear deterrence time. Therefore, the current US government seeks to make excuses and documents against Iran in International system. In his way doing so, Trump has provocative allies such as Arabs (specially the Saudi Arabia), and Israel. The Trump government has departed from its previous

demands (including abolishing the expiry date, including the long-range missile issue in the nuclear deal, allowing immediate inspection of all sites requested by international inspectors, as well as ensuring that Iran never goes into nuclear weapons) and requested a call for a 'cessation of uranium enrichment by Iran forever,' a condition of a new agreement with Iran.

Of course, the success of the US government in striking a nuclear deal depends to a large extent on the 'look', 'understanding' and 'approach' of the international system, and in particular the European P5 + 1 members to Iran and its nuclear program. Because America's past success in pushing for and imposing sanctions on Iran has been achieved with international cooperation and the presence of many US allies, the situation is different now. Although Trump has called for allied cooperation, it has become more difficult to establish a cohesive front against Iran.

The way Iran responds to the US effort to harm JCPOA is also highly important. According to the findings of this study, 'identity' in the Islamic Republic of Iran's national security policy has played a role as a fundamental (not the only actor) in the nuclear program, and the category of 'identification' instead of the two concepts of systemic classic power and security seeking (realism) and wealth seeking (liberalism) has had more originality and effectiveness. Therefore, it can be argued that the Iranians will execute JCPOA as long as their national pride and dignity are not questioned. Economic and military security is of secondary importance despite their high significance to the national interest and security. Therefore, damaging any part of Iran's achievements to JCPOA (on the front side) that the Iranians consider to be the result of their resistance to world powers would be such that Iran's continued loss of national pride and dignity would be harmed, will face Iran's reaction. Therefore, the step by step (gradual) reduction of Iran's JCPOA obligations can also be assessed in this regard.

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