International Journal of Social Sciences Bulletin
Volume 2, Issue 4, 2024 ISSN: (E) 3007-1917 (P) 3007-1909

PRESERVING THE SELF: ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY-SEEKING IN IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

Raziq Hussain[*1], Dr. Raziq Hussain[2]

*[*1]Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations Muslim Youth (MY) University Islamabad, Pakistan*
[2]Assistant Prof. at Department of International Relation, Muslim Youth (MY) University Islamabad, Pakistan. His primary area of interest concerns theories of IR and politics & foreign policy of Iran.

[*1]raziq.hussain@myu.edu.pk; [*1]msm.raziqhusyn@yahoo.com

Corresponding Author: *

Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
09 September, 2024	09 October, 2024	24 October, 2024	05 November, 2024

ABSTRACT

With the increasing human life expectancy all over the world, elder abuse has become one of the most pressing national and global problems. This paper broadly explores the risk factors for domestic elderly abuse, paying paramount attention to the individual characteristics of the offenders and victims. These risk variables can help reduce elder abuse and improve risk management strategies. The current study employed a quantity research design; therefore, data was collected through the self-developed structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions with the help of a purposive sampling technique respondents of the current study were 150 elderly Males and Females of District Bhakkar Pakistan. Data analysis was done using SPSS. Descriptive statistics and correlation results indicated a gloomy and significant positive relationship between physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, and financial abuse with domestic elderly abuse. The regression analysis R^2=63.0% shows that there is a significant effect of Independent variables (Physical Abuse, Psychological Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Abuse) on the Dependent Variable (domestic elderly abuse). Furthermore, the authors also discovered that integrational relationship quality (IRQ) acts as a partial mediator of the links between such types of abuse and the abuse of domestic elderly. It was also found that cultural perceptions towards aging influenced the connection between IRQ and the contrasts in domestic elderly abuse. The conclusions made in this study stress the need for effective identification of the problem and the establishment of a definite strategy and policy so that authorities can respond to elder abuse appropriately and help those in need.

Keywords: *Domestic, Elderly, Abuse, Silent treatment, Risk factors, Sociocultural Perspective*.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 did not alter in any way the physical structure of Iran; it remained the same as it was before the revolution. Being essentially "an identity revolution,"[i] it radically changed the way Iran used to see the Self, the external world, and its place in it. To use an analogy, the revolution did not target the hardware (territory) of the system (Iran); rather, it developed and installed a new software (identity) in place of the old one. Now, the identity of the Islamic Republic—the political embodiment of the revolution—is considered in Tehran as the essence and the greatest achievement of the Islamic Revolution. Anything perceived to be a threat to the identity of the Islamic Republic or the system/*nizām* (the guardian of that identity) is put on the top of security or securitization agenda.

Quite confident about its ability to safeguard the territorial integrity of the state, Tehran appears, especially in recent years, to put more emphasis on

identity security, manifested in part by growing politicization of the discourse of the "cultural invasion" (*tahajjum-e farhanghi*) and "soft war" (*jangh-e narm*), waged by enemies and "ill-wishers of Islam and Iran" (Khamenei, 2022, official website). It is perceived in Tehran that the enemy, having realised that it cannot undo the revolution and its achievements, is aimed at robbing the Iranian nation of its identity and, thereby, creating an identity void and chaos to be manipulated to overthrow the system. As the identity is anchored in a "sacred" mooring of historical-religious formation, any threat (actual or potential/real or perceived) to it creates anxiety in Tehran, highlighting the need for its security.

It is however not to suggest that Tehran is less apprehensive of its physical security or, in our analogy, the hardware of the system; rather, it is equally concerned with the territorial integrity of the state. More than that, in Iranian conception of national identity the national land (*Iranzamin*) has been a significant element of the Self. It is, therefore, highly difficult, if not impossible, to fully comprehend the conception of ontological security of Iran without taking into account the territory constituting the abode (*vatan*) for the Iranian people for centuries. It is in this way that this article views security of the "body" as a component or extension of the security of the "Self," referring to the place of national territory in Iran's identity.

While highlighting the constituting elements of Iran's autobiographical narrative as the basis of its identity (hence Self), this article then discusses how each element is relevant to its foreign policy, proposing that Iran strives against the occurrence of any major disconnect or decoupling between its idea of Self and its behaviour in the external environment. This article is divided into two main sections. First section begins with providing a tour d'horizon of ontological security as developed by its proponents. It then provides the rationale for incorporating physical security in Iran's idea of ontological security, highlighting how land is perceived as part of the Self in Tehran. Second section deals with the autobiographical narrative of the IRI and its constituting elements as discursive/conceptual building blocks of national identity. The elements identified here as constitutive of Iran's autobiographical narrative include Islamism, exceptionalism, bounded nationalism, and aspirational revisionism. This article concludes with a brief summary of the discussion, coupled with some suggestions for further research. It should be noted at the outset that this article provides a general discussion about the relationship between Iran's foreign policy orientation and its conception of ontological security, without focusing on specific cases and events.

Ontological Security Theory: Going Beyond the Physical

Having its roots in the works of psychiatrist R. D Laing [ii] and sociologist Anthony Giddens,[iii] the concept of ontological security in its genesis is a phenomenon related to individual human beings. It was later introduced into International Relations (IR) as Ontological Security Theory (OST) by different scholars and was applied to a number of (empirical) case studies. OST scholars justify this move by referring to the fact that most IR theoretical models see the needs of the states through one or another human and individual need.[iv] They, however, concede that ontological security need at state level is not the same in importance as it is at individual level.[v] OST now embraces a wide array of social phenomena, ranging from nationalism and conflict to religion and historicity, to explain how states view their "Selves" and how they respond to threats to their ontological security.

What lies at the heart of the ontological security theorization seems to be the idea that "physical security is not the only kind of security that states seek,"[vi] that is, there are other kinds or what Buzan[vii] calls "sectors" of security that states want to ensure. Though not necessarily in the "widener" camp of Copenhagen School of Security Studies, ontological security theorists may feel quite easy with the critical approach to security, differences notwithstanding, as it offers a different way of looking into security than is framed in conventional IR theory, or what Robert Cox[viii] has called "problem-solving" theory. OST parts its way from the conventional IR theory in that it is not much concerned about physical security, and from the critical and widener approaches by excessively focusing on security of the Self. While taking the security of the Self as the "referent object" this article attempts to explore and highlight the physical dimension of the Self in Iran's ontological

security understanding. Before going to that point, it appears important to see what ontological security is as well as how it relates to foreign policy analysis.

At the individual level, ontological security, according to Laing, refers to a person's sense of having his/her "presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person [in time], and, in a spatial sense, as "coextensive with the body."[ix] For Giddens, it refers to having "'answers' to fundamental existential questions,"[x] or "questions about doing, acting, and being,"[xi] that may encounter an individual in any time in his/her life. These definitions show that the locus of ontological security is human subjectivity. This however does not suggest in any way that the external world is irrelevant to an individual's ontological security/insecurity. Rather, what is external to the Self is inextricably linked with its subjective sense of being. Trust, for example, in others, as a child or an adult, provides an early sense of ontological security by providing a "protective cocoon" against existential anxieties.[xii] Likewise, a breakdown in the individual's trust system in any stage of life may imperil his coherent sense of being/self. This correlation between the individual's sense of being and the external milieu shows that applying the concept of ontological security to a collective level, albeit problematic, does not betray in a serious way its essence. The only difference is that when we apply it to state level, we see the Self or being as an enormously extended person or a unified collectivity of thousands or millions of individuals.

At the state level, ontological security is concerned with "security not of the body but of the self"[xiii] or of "being,"[xiv] that is "the subjective sense of who one is."[xv] It highlights the need to "experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time," that is "as being rather than constantly changing"[xvi] or becoming. It shows that ontological security is essentially about the stability and certainty of the Self. An ontologically secure actor does not feel the Self as fragmented, contingent, unstable, disrupted, and inconsistent. The crucial question here is: what is the Self and how it is conceived in the OST? Though some scholars (such as Zarakol,[xvii] and Browning & Joenniemi)[xviii] are not comfortable with the idea that ontological security is intimately linked with state identity[xix] and that it is, in the first place, essentially concerned with articulating the relationship between identity and security,[xx] yet extending the subjective-analytical domain of ontological security beyond identity risks the very utility of the theory by complicating things and, thereby, may defy the essence of theorizing, that is, simplifying complex social phenomena. Even if we take identity as a crucial factor in achieving ontological security, not as its essence, still the Self remains undefined. If the Self is not anchored in a stable identity, its sense of being remains suspended in ambiguity and floating in uncertainty. It is, however, not to deny that the Self may be more than identity, but it is realized and actualized primarily through identity, defined by Alexander Wendt as "relatively stable role-specific understandings and expectations about self." [xxi]

The significance of ontological security for actors lies in that it make them realize their sense of agency[xxii] in part by enabling and motivating action and choice[xxiii] as well as by shaping interests and ambitions. In plain language, states have a "predominant collective sense" of themselves which tells them what kind of behavior conforms to their self-image. This self-image usually finds its way into foreign policy in the form of principles.[xxiv] If shared collectively by the foreign policy-making elite, these principles play a substantial role in shaping preferences and strategies, ultimately strengthening ontological security. Ontological security is achieved through various mechanisms both internal and external. Internally it is achieved primarily by, on the one hand, strengthening autobiographical narrative and promoting an intersubjective understanding of oneness and, on the other, by internal othering of both individuals/groups and rival narratives. Externally, it is achieved principally by "routinizing relationships with significant others"[xxv] or by generating "routine foreign policies"[xxvi] as routines generate trust[xxvii] the lack of which makes the outside world threatening to the Self, and by establishing "routinized and predictable interaction" with (significant) others as it assigns roles, based on identity, not only to the Self but also to the other(s).[xxviii] Here, conflicts[xxix] and acting upon the demands of identity-reproduction are also treated as means to achieve ontological security.

Drawing on the OST literature and taking the aforementioned points together, I define ontological security for the case in hand as: *ontological security,*

at the subjective level, refers to having a stable and consistent sense of being as a particular state, and, at the objective level, to the ability of the state to act upon the normative demands of the identity or to create harmony between autobiographical narrative and actual behaviour. As to the "physically defined geo-body"[xxx] and its security, I take the geo-body as part of identity and physical security as a component of ontological security. In simple words, my preferred Self is an "embodied" Self. It is the point on the basis of which I differ from mainstream OST scholars (such as Jennifer Mitzen, Bahar Rumelili, and Brent J. Steele, to name some) who not only consider ontological security more important than physical security,[xxxi] but also believe in the possibility of having ontological security even when states are in a state of physical in/asecurity.[xxxii] I base my embodied approach to the Self on the following observations:

i. To begin with, geography, including that of "imagination," is "inescapable," that is, "all political life has geographical referents." In other words, all political phenomena occur within a specific geographical setting.[xxxiii] It is, therefore, difficult to escape from the geographical imperative in our analysis of any political matter, including the politics of identity, as geography affects what choices people make.[xxxiv]
ii. Just like ontological security, "physical security is a human need."[xxxv] To prefer one human need to another sounds arbitrary.
iii. Throughout the modern system of states territory has always been considered as part of the state and the respect for and sanctity of territorial integrity of states has been regarded as an established principle by both the UN and the international law. In other words, the possession of a defined territory is a crucial element for the realization of statehood and, in some cases, of the Self. Moreover, sometimes the geographical location and the physical features of a state become its defining marks, adding a corporeal dimension to its identity (such as the possession of oversea territories was central to Britain's identity as an empire "on which the sun never sets").
iv. In some cases, the geo-body is so integral to the identity of a state—such as Israel which considers itself essentially as the "territorial base of world Jewry"—that without it ontological security cannot be conceived or achieved. In such cases drawing a clear line between physical and ontological security becomes problematic. Sometimes even essentially territory-free phenomena (e.g., religion) are expressed through geographical terms (such as Christendom, and *Dar al-Islam*).
v. Just as feeling of being ontologically insecure can add fuel to the flames of existing international conflict,[xxxvi] physical insecurity can also exacerbate conflictual situations by stirring up security dilemmas.
vi. Just as a stable understanding of the Self is necessary for achieving a sense of security of the body, the Self needs the body to exist or realize itself. In other words, an endangered body (the outer protective shell) cannot protect the Self (inner being) and an unstable Self cannot be certain about the security of the body. The geo-body of the state provides its inhabitants a sense of security and protects them from homelessness. While giving them a feeling of belonging to one another and a sense of collective ownership, the shared geo-body also creates emotions of attachment in the nation for the land, sometimes to such an extent that, to quote the British-Indian philosopher-poet Sir Muhammad Iqbal, "every particle of the soil of homeland [*khak-e vatan*] is a god [*devta*] to me." [xxxvii] It is perhaps for this reason that every nation has defended its territory against foreign invasions. People sacrifice their lives and property not only for the defense of an abstract understanding of their collective Self, but also for the land which sustains their lives.
vii. Physical insecurity may intensify ontological insecurity as a result of the fear of (territorial) disintegration and national dislocation and fragmentation. Serious external threats to national territorial integrity may also trigger a violent counter project of "reflexivity," or what Steele has called "interrogative reflexivity,"[xxxviii] especially when the population sees the threats as a result of the rigidity of the identity on the part of state leadership, undermining the very conception of the Self as projected and promoted by the political elite. If the state's inability to secure territorial integrity results in a large scale disintegration or the separation of some parts, it may leave the core or the "heartland" in a perpetual or long-term ontological security dilemma (consider the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the ontological insecurity of its successor, the Russian Federation), not to mention the possible

displacement of some segments of the society which may make the displaced population forget by the time who they once were.

viii. If we do not see physical security on the same footing as ontological security, many aspects of international politics would make no sense. States' drive for, for example, arms build-up at the expense of social welfare and their opposition to irredentist, secessionist, and independence-seeking movements at the expanse of self-determination and rightful ownership would become meaningless and irrelevant to international politics.

ix. Given that every country's story starts with its physical location vis-à-vis its neighbors and other natural/physical qualities and objects,[xxxix] one may not better understand and explain the autobiographical narrative of a state without taking its (national) territory into account. This also highlights the need to take an embodied approach towards ontological security of a state.

Drawing on the above-stated arguments, I now turn to the question of geo-body with respect to Iran's perception of its identity. I begin with the very name of Iran as, paraphrasing Giddens (1999), a state's name is "primary element" in its biography.[xl] In Buzan's (1983) typology of the states with respect to the link between state and nation, Iran falls under the category of the "primal nation-state" in the sense that the Iranian nation has preceded the modern state and has actually created it to protect and embody the nation. Here, the attachment between the two is deep and intimate.[xli] If we reflect on Iranian history as a great civilization, spreading over centuries, we can justifiably call Iran a "civilization-state" (the term is Martin Jacques')[xlii] who used it to make sense of today's China), where the Self is framed as the culmination of a long historical/civilizational journey of becoming what it is now. Being a "primal nation-state" or a "civilization-state," Iran is not an "artificial" state as per the definition of the term by K. J. Holsti,[xliii] that is, it is not a creation of any colonial authority or an international organization. Though not of the same territorial size today as it was during the rule of the Achaemenids or before the Russo-Persian wars of the first half of the 19th century, the idea of Iran as a bounded territory and as a source of national identification has never withered away in any historical stage from the hearts and minds of the Iranian people. It is worthy of note that despite the shrinking and shifting of borders over centuries, Iran's "basic geographic frame"[xliv] has largely remained intact, providing the Iranians an anchor of emotional attachment to their land.

Although the state officially changed the name of the land from Persia to Iran in 1935, it had been called as Iran since ancient times.[xlv] Ferdowsi's 11th century (AD) epic *Shahnameh* refers to the country by the name Iran more than one thousand times.[xlvi] The name Iran, meaning the "Land of Aryans," itself evokes an "embodied' Self, which nonetheless transcends the limits of geographical imperative.

Though not chauvinist as the Pahlavis appeared to be, the leaders in post-revolutionary Iran have never cast off the significance of national land in developing and consolidating their brand of autobiographical narrative. Framing the division of the Islamic world into separate political entities as an imperialist plot, the leaders in post-revolutionary Iran have never questioned the validity of the existing territorial borders nor have they ever aspired to unite two or more Muslim states to form a single political entity, signified by the fact that a non-Iranian person cannot assume the office of the president (IRI. Const. Const. art. CXV) nor can serve in the country's armed forces (art. CXLV). Seemingly drawing on a tradition which counts loving one's country [*vatan*] as part of faith,[xlvii] they have made the defence of the country among obligatory "divine duties"[xlviii] and safeguarding the frontiers of the country "a valuable act in itself"[xlix] It was within this context that defending the country against the Iraqi invasion of 1980s was declared as "sacred defence" or *difa-e muqaddas*, which is now considered as a constituting element of the national identity.[l]

How the defence of the country has acquire such a sacred status in post-revolutionary Iran? It owes primarily to the new autobiographical narrative where the country is defined more as "Islamic Iran" than merely a country of Iranian people. In the Islamic Iran the government as well as every individual citizen is duty-bound to safeguard the country's mutually inseparable freedom, independence, unity, and territorial integrity (IRI. Const. art. IX). Here, *asabiyah*-based nationalism is rejected in favour of patriotism in which, to quote a Tradition, love for one's own people (*qoum*) does not constitute *asabiyah*.[li] In this version of patriotism,

defending the land(s) of Muslims (*hawzah/baydah/dar al-Islam*) becomes an act of jihad and attempts on the part of the enemy to occupy or snatch a part of it as an act of war and aggression. In fact the historical trauma of losing of national territory to external forces as well as the significance of the land in their collective consciousness has resulted, according to Hamid Dabashi, in an "endemic fetishization" as well as consecration of Iranian land among the people of Iran.[lii]

In August 2021, the Russian embassy in Iran posted a picture on Twitter of the Russian and British ambassadors, posing to recreate a 1943 picture of Stalin and Churchill, a time when Iran was occupied by Allied forces. The image not only received thousands of angry replies from the Iranian people, it also angered the foreign ministry which called the act as "extremely inappropriate."[liii] Iran's opposition to renaming the Persian Gulf waterway, which is considered as "part of [Iran's] history, identity and national heritage,"[liv] as "Arabian" and celebration of a number of national days (such as the National Day of the Persian Gulf on April 29/30 and Anniversary of Liberation of Khurranshahr on May 24) associated with its land are also indicative of how Iranians treat the geo-body of the country as the "constant frame of their metaphysical references, the source of their self-definition, of who and what they are."[lv] The Iranian emotional/spiritual attachment to the "*Iranzamin*" predates to the establishment of modern Iranian state. It was revered even in Zoroastrian cosmology as the central point on the earth.[lvi] It is said that when the Pahlavis, both father and son, were fleeing from the country, they took with them a box of Iranian soil,[lvii] an act which points towards the attachment of Iranian to their land.

Iran's Autobiographical Narrative: What Tehran tells about the Self

States do not cease telling themselves and the external world about what they were/are, what they want, and how they see their place in the world. This "telling" about the Self is called in OST literature "autobiographical narrative" of a state. Looking into a country's autobiographical narrative—the story it tells to and about itself[lviii]—or what Giddens has called "Narrative of the self"[lix] thus provides the ground for analysts to make sense of its (self-)identity from within. As identity provides the base for the processes and structures of interest-formation for "interests presuppose identities,"[lx] the exploration of a country's autobiographical narrative can also serve as a useful analytical tool to understand its strategic preferences and foreign policy orientation as well as behavior. This approach also helps us in identifying the link between a policy and the self-identity (as a whole or a particular facet of it), and in explaining how self-conception constrains and enables states to prefer pursing certain courses of action to others.[lxi] Essentially being social constructs, autobiographical narratives are flexible enough to expand or contract their ideational frontiers as per the requirements of the time. It gives the political leadership of a state to explain any change in policy in the face of an external/internal crisis by activating or deactivating some elements of the narrative without significantly altering the "broader narrative template."[lxii]

The autobiographical narrative or discursive approach to comprehending a state's sense of self-identity is also useful in explaining aspects of ontological insecurity in the domain of foreign policy. Shame, for example, is one of the key factors fueling ontological insecurity. Shame occurs when states feel anxiety (or uncomfortable at the least) for creating too much difference between their biographical narrative and the actual actions they undertake to fulfil the demand of their identity.[lxiii] In simple words, shame occurs when actors feel that their behavior was not in conformity with what is called the "logic of appropriateness." Here, autobiographical narrative not only guides analysts in locating sources of ontological insecurity, it also satisfies the ontological security needs of states by providing them with a ground for reconciling behavior with identity. When, for example, there occurs a rupture between what a state says about the Self and what it actually does, it holds a significant Other responsible for its inconsistent behavior. In this way, the state preserves its "ontological integrity" by shifting the guilt of being dishonest with the Self to the (significant) Other as the Other is intimately linked with the Self. It is worthy to note here that the autobiographical narrative is not formed by a single consistent "story," it is actually a mosaic of different, sometimes contradictory, "stories." These stories are drawn from a number of historical, cultural, religious, and ideational sources and materials and are combined together to form a

dominant "telling" about the Self in a way that internal contradictions or uneasy coupling among the narratives do not create any "identity conflict."

Building on the above discussion the following part of this section deals with four dominant elements of Iran's autobiographical narrative, namely (i) Islamism, (ii) exceptionalism, (iii) bounded nationalism, and (iv) aspirational revisionism. It should be made clear here that this list of the elements is by no means exhaustive. These elements are nonetheless broader enough to accommodate others. It must also be noted here that history of both Iran and Islam/Shi'ism also marks its presence in all these elements. One should therefore be attentive to the relevance of history (a task I left largely unfulfilled owing to the limits of space) to Iran's autobiographical narrative.

Islamism: Making Islam the Nucleus of Autobiographical Narrative

Given that Islamism is a highly disputed concept and lacks any widely accepted definition, I simply define it in the given context as an attitude to see and define things through the lenses of Islam, and a desire to shape them according to the Islamic criteria. In more practical terms, it refers to an active policy of Islamizing—that is, making things Islamic by referring them to one or another aspect of Islam or linking them to any Islamic canonical source—the state-society complex under the banner or service of Islam. Given that Islam does not recognizes any grey zone and its writ can be extended to everything in human individual and social life, even the most materialistic and religion-neutral things can acquire an Islamic character. By creating a "sacred cosmos," as religions do,[lxiv] Islam has the potential to create links between the divine and the material. More precisely, "*Islam adjusts material matters in such a way that they merge with divine affairs*" (emphasis added).[lxv] It is primarily the intention, goal, and the nature of application which categorizes things as sacred and profane. To give an example, consuming alcohol is forbidden in Islamic law. If an individual does so to safeguard the life of an endangered Muslim, it becomes not only permissible but also obligatory to drink wine, as Khomeini once asserted.[lxvi]

In Khomeini's world view, shared overwhelmingly if not entirely by the succeeding political and military leadership, Islam is a flawless complete system of life, which should be implemented in its entirety, protected by every means available, and propagated by highlighting its attraction and charm as well as its capability to salvage humanity from every evil. Viewed in such a way, Islam forms the "nodal point" or center of gravity of all autobiographical discourses of the IRI. In fact, Islam, or more specifically Shi'ism, provides the very base for other narratives. If one excludes or downplays the place of Islam in Iran's story of the Self, he/she may run the risk of, to use an analogy, forgetting the roots for trunk in his/her study of the tree. In short, one cannot overlook the ever-present role or "instrument" of Islam first in directing the revolutionary movement and then shaping the identity as well as structure of the state. Islam, therefore, is the essence of IRI's autobiographical narrative and serves as the mouthpiece of Tehran's self-conception as well as self-assertion. It also provides meaning to Tehran's constitutional principles of foreign policy and shapes, if not determines, its external objectives. To give an example, Iran's resistance against the "global system of domination," headed by the US—the "Great Satan" in Iranian demonology—is framed within the discourse of "*naf-ye sabīl*" (rejection of the domination) and "*taghut*" (definitions include oppressor and transgressor), which has its roots in the Quran (4:41) and Shiite corpus of *hadith*. By positioning itself as resisting the US-led system of domination and supporting the Muslim "oppressed' (e.g., Palestinians) Iran satisfies its ontological security need of being an "Islamic" state.

Exceptionalism: A Self-Conception Leading to a Sanctified Survivalism

If seeing one's own "values, political system, and history" as "unique and worthy of universal admiration," coupled with a sense of being "both destined and entitled to play a distinct and positive role on the world stage" is what forms the idea of exceptionalism,[lxvii] one can say that Iran also has a sense of it, based primarily on Islamism. Though never proclaimed their nation as "exceptional," the leaders in Tehran, both former and current, have always portrayed the IRI in their discourses as a unique and distinctive country and a source of emulation for the Muslim world. Having its roots in the revolution of 1979 and its achievements, the Iranian version of exceptionalism (a type of transcendental romantic narcissism) is essentially

based on the IRI's (perceived) success in bringing Islam back to its rightful place and making the rules and policies of the state subjected to Islamic criteria. In this way it can be called as Islamic-revolutionary exceptionalism.

In Iran's identity discourse the country has acquired a special as well as unique status by virtue of the Islamic Revolution. After the revolution it became, among other things, the "country of the Imam of the Age,"[lxviii] an "Islamic state," representing the "rule of the religion of God" and "an Islamic nation."[lxix] A simple representation of the sense of being unique and unprecedented held in Tehran is the belief that after the revolution the IRI has become the "*Umm al-Qura-ye Jahan-e Islami/Dar al-Islam*" or the mother-base of the Islamic world/the abode of Islam. A brainchild of Muhammad Jawad Larijani, one of the early ideologues of the IRI, the concept of *Umm al-Qura* in its genesis is a territory-bound ideological construct. According to it, a country (*sarzamin*) qualifies for the designation of the mother-base when (i) an Islamic government is established there (ii) the leadership (even if it is practically confined to the mother-base) of which is capable of leading and governing the whole *ummah* (the global Muslim community). Larrijani claimed that the IRI has fulfilled all the requirements to become the mother-base, and has categorically called it so. Since the IRI has become the mother-base, every member of the *ummah* has the responsibility to come forward for its defense if its security is threated because its defeat or victory accounts for the defeat or victory of the whole *ummah*. The leadership of the mother-base, in return, has responsibility for the whole *ummah* and, hence, its national interests and strategies are different from other states. The concept also stipulates that the IRI should be in a strong and powerful position as its weakness is reflective of the weakness of the *ummah*.[lxx]

The elevation of the status of IRI to that of a "vehicle of divine substance"[lxxi] has made its security and preservation, to quote Khomeini, one of the "most important rational and religious obligation which nothing can hamper."[lxxii] As the issue of the preservation of the IRI has been framed in Islamic precepts and jurisprudential (*fiqhi*) consideration, I prefer to call it "sanctified survivalism." Merriam-Webster has defined survivalism as "an attitude, policy, or practice based on the primacy of survival as a value."[lxxiii] If the adjective "religious" is added to the definition before the noun "value," it would convey the idea I have for the said term. To further illustrate the sanctity of the preservation or the survival of the IRI in its autobiographical narrative, I quote an excerpt from the last will and testament of Qasim Soleimani, the former commander of IRGC's Quds force who was assassinated by an American drone strike on the direct orders of President Donald Trump in January 2020:

> The Islamic Republic is the centre and tent of Islam and Shi'ism. Today, the headquarters of Imam Husyn is Iran. [You should keep this in mind] that the IRI is a sanctuary [*harum*], and if this sanctuary is preserved, other sanctuaries would also be preserved. If the enemy destroys this sanctuary, no sanctuary will exist, neither the sanctuary of Abraham nor that of Muhammad (translated from Urdu).[lxxiv]

It is worthy to note that in Iranian discourses the threat to the survival of the IRI is largely defined in socio-cultural terms. The IRI is seen as a target of a cultural and ideational/ideological "invasion," aimed at distorting the Islamic-revolutionary "essence and identity" of the IRI, and ultimately undoing the achievements (including the Islamic republic itself) of the revolution.[lxxv] This sanctified survivalism, an offshoot of the idea of being special and unique, has made the IRI remarkably flexible in its foreign policy approach by invoking the principle of *maslahat* (expediency), which rejects self-harm in the name of upholding an ideal or a principle. One can find a number of cases in Iran's history of foreign affairs where it acted upon the logic of *maslaha*, apparently disregarding its constitutional principles of foreign policy. While calling for a *maslaha*-driven approach to unfavorable external realities, the sanctified survivalism has paradoxically made Tehran sensitive about the preservation of the Self as the base of Islam. This sensitivity has in large part not only given the discourse of enemy a central place in its biographical narrative, it has also resulted in "othering" a part of Self (*khodi*) as, in Marxist lexicon, "comprador." This "internal other" (*ghair-e khodi*) is viewed as the agent of hostile foreign powers and a threat to the legitimacy of the system, grounded on the doctrine of *wilayat-e faqih* (the rule of jurist) which, in turn, is believed to be an extension

or the continuation of the *wilaya* of the Prophet and the (Shiite) Imams.

Bounded Nationalism: Seeing The Self through Islamic Universalism

According to Khomeini Islam belongs to all human beings, and, hence, is universal[lxxvi] in its nature. Nationalism (*milliyat/qaomiyyat*) in the western sense of the word is an alien concept to the traditional political thought of Islam. According to the Islamic world view there may be many nations, but the Muslims constitute a single nation or "*ummat-e wahida*" (al-Quran 21:92). It is on the basis of the notion of *ummat-e wahida* that article 11 of the constitution of the IRI declares it the duty of its government to strive for and formulate its general policies to realize the ideal of "political, economic, and cultural unity of the Islamic world." That said, the IRI has never denied the sanctity of internationally recognized borders of states. It also espouses, at least in theory, the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of other states (IRI. Const., Art. CLIV).

While rejecting nationalism as a tool in the hands of imperialists to divide and create discord between Muslim countries, the IRI is not averse to prioritizing the needs and interests of its people. The leaders in Tehran never hesitate to call the people of Iran as, for example, "*millat-e buzurgh-e Iran*" (the great nation of Iran) and "*millat-e sharif-e Iran*" (the honourable nation of Iran). Khomeini even considered the people of Iran (of his time) nobler than the people of Hejaz and Iraq during the times of the Prophet of Islam, Imam Ali, and Imam Husyn.[lxxvii] Praising the Iranian people in such a boastful manner is not because of their nationality, but because they are the "bright face of the great Islam."[lxxviii]

The type of nationalism which Islam rejects is based on a sense of distinct (often with a self-perceived superiority) race, ethnicity, colour, tribe, or language, which creates bias and prejudice against other people. I prefer to call it negative *asabiyyah* (unjustified partisanship or in-group bias), which has vehemently been condemned by Islam. As against nationalism, patriotism has not been treated as a term of opprobrium in the *hadith* corpus; rather, it is taken as a virtue, signified by the hadith "love for homeland is part of faith."[lxxix] Imam al-Bukhari[lxxx] and al-Tirmizi[lxxxi] have also reported traditions in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sunan al-Tirmizi*, respectively, that clearly show the love and emotional attachment of Prophet Muhammad for Mecca (his place of birth) and Medina (a pace where he lived till his demise). If patriotism is defined as a "feeling of attachment" to the "land of our birth or patria"[lxxxii] and to the people residing there, it constitutes what I call positive *asabiyyah*, signified by the *hadith* that "it is not part of *asabiyyah* that a person loves his people [*qoum*]."[lxxxiii] It was perhaps within this context that Khomeini (2008) once said, "the fact that love of country and its people and safeguarding it and its laws are matters that are beyond question."[lxxxiv]

In the autobiographical narrative of the IRI, the Iranian nation (*millat*) is an independent and key political unit of *dar al-Islam*, connected through faith with the larger *ummah*. Given that the division of the Muslim world is a political reality, it would remain effective until the coming of the Imam of the Age, who (according to Shia theology) would unite all the nations of the world into a single *ummah*. As long as the Imam remains in occultation, the IRI has to look after the needs of the Muslim world within the precincts of its capabilities, while protecting the "base of the Imam" as the topmost priority. It is in this sense that I call this nationalism "bounded." It is nationalism as the IRI represents and embodies the Iranian people—the referent object of the state-society complex. It is "bounded" as it does not prevent Tehran from identifying the Self with *ummah* and from paying attention to the problems of Muslims. Another aspect of the bounded nationalism is Tehran's framing of its achievements as those of the *ummah* as well as of the grandeur of Islam. From the prism of OST, the "*ummah*-regarding" discourse and behaviour of the IRI does not defy the logic of *raison d'état/de la nation*; rather it can be understood as a strategy of "self-help," provided that it satisfies its ontological security needs.[lxxxv]

Aspirational Revisionism: The Desire to Change the Status Quo Order

Drawing on Maysam Behravesh's idea of "thin revisionism"—that is, seeking to overcome the sense of dissatisfaction and insecurity through policies of resistance and defiance[lxxxvi]—I define aspirational revisionism as the desire of the IRI to change the international status quo, especially at the regional level, by utilizing to the possible extent the means and resources at its disposal. Since the IRI lacks resources and power projection capabilities required

for contributing substantially to the processes of change at the systemic level, its approach to revisionism is more aspirational. It is however not to suggest that the IRI's approach is just wishing the existing western-led order away. Rather, it plays its part as per its capability in the revisionist project by, for example, "destabilizing export of ideology and spread of soft power, cultivation and use of proxies, or [and] defiant power maximizing action within the territorial bound[ary] of the state itself."[lxxxvii] Externally, its close partnership with non-western anti-hegemonic major powers (such as China and Russia), coupled with its discursive disapproval of what it calls the "system of domination," is indicative of its desire to "revise" the current international order. According to Khamenei, the "global system of domination" divides the "world into the oppressor and the oppressed without any middle ground."[lxxxviii] He sees the "essence" of enmity of western powers towards Iran in its refusal to be a "partner" to the system and its courage to stand up against "oppression and hegemony."[lxxxix]

Does Iran want to replace the American-led "system of domination" with a (hypothetical) Chinese- or Russian-led one? Is it willing to be part of a pole (*qutb*) in a future multi-polar system in a way that it identifies itself with the leader of that pole? Theoretically speaking, the IRI does not subscribe to any pole or bloc; rather, it sees a kind of "pole" in itself. It is exactly what the slogan "neither eastern nor western, [only] the Islamic Republic" is meant to represent. According to Article 152 of the constitution of the IRI, the foreign policy of the IRI is based on the "rejection of all forms of domination" and "non-alignment with hegemonic superpowers." The constitution has also made provisions to ensure the independence of the country. The principle and discourse of independence are actually directed at non-submission to any domineering power or pole. Submitting to arrogant powers and showing weakness in the face of pressures would result in humiliation[xc] of a country, which is fighting, as comprising one side "in a vast and great battle existing at an international level," against "the front of *kufr* [disbelief], oppression and arrogance."[xci]

It must be noted here that the Persian Gulf region (PGR) is the gravity center of Iran's aspirational revisionism which aims to push extra-regional forces out of the region, to "localize" regional security by forming a region-based collective security mechanism, and to play a key role in the region[xcii] primarily by expanding the, to quote Khamenei, "geography of resistance"[xciii] through enlisting like-minded non-state actors and states both in the PGR and in its "extended neighborhood." With the exception of considerable success in becoming a major power in the region, the IRI has failed in its first two aims thanks primarily to American presence in the region and its active leadership of the regional anti-Iran axis, aimed at the containment of Tehran's regional influence. It, in turn, has pushed the IRI to "trickle up" its aspiration for revisionism into systemic level mainly by seeking and strengthening close ties with anti-American states and non-state actors. Iran's opposition to the US-led western international order, coupled with the discourse of the declining west, strengthens its self-adopted image of an independent, anti-imperialist state, satisfying in a large part a crucial dimension of its ontological security need in its foreign policy. It shows that the discourse of non-submission to domineering powers and resistance against their desire to turn Iran back to the pre-revolutionary status of a satellite state is an important factor in shaping its foreign policy towards western powers.

Conclusion

Slightly moving away from the standpoint of mainstream OST scholarship, I have proposed in this article an "embodied" Self as the reference point for ontological security. The embodied Self accommodates the geo-body as a component of the identity or the subjective sense of being of the modern states whose sense of statehood—not necessarily self-hood—is inextricably linked with the possession of a defined territory. This variant of the Self is also helpful in mitigating the (apparent) tension between ontological and physical security in cases where the "patria" is embedded in the definition of "'who' the collective 'we' are."[xciv] If the Self is defined essentially in territory-free terms (even when it is currently associated with and confined to a particular area of land) in a way that land makes no sense to the intersubjective understanding of "we," then it becomes the uncontested candidate for a purely subjective or "disembodied" notion of ontological security.

In the case of Iran, dislodging national territory (*Iranzamin*) from national identity could turn out to be highly problematic as the soil is deeply ingrained in the constitution of the Iranian national Self. Throughout the history of Iran, land has occupied a central place in defining the Iranian collective Self. Even those early revolutionary leaders, such as Khomeini, who held an Islamic-universalist outlook could not disregard the factor of *sarzamin* in their identity discourse and foreign policy approach. While Islamizing almost everything, including the names of streets and roads, within the territorial space of the country, they could not dare to Islamize the very name of it: Iran—the land of Aryans. They ended up only in adding an adjective (Islamic republic) before it. It is however not to suggest that the territorial imperative consumed the spirit of Islamism altogether of the post-revolutionary Tehran. Rather, it remained effectively the dominated theme in the country's autobiographical narrative, moulding and shaping as well as giving meaning to other aspects of the narrative.

It is the autobiographical narrative through which the IRI express its sense of the Self the understanding of which gives analysts a better analytical ground to know both the identity and interests of Tehran. Against this backdrop, OST can be seen as an inside-out approach in the sense that the identification of the IRI's ontological security interests presuppose the understanding of its identity. It is this point (the identity-interest nexus) where OST and constructivism can form a union with each other for mutual benefit. More than that, OST can also find common grounds with realism if it sees ensuring physical security as satisfying (some) needs of ontological security. In short, OST has the potential to forge alliances with other theoretical approaches by opening up its conceptual frontiers to them so that they invest part of their conceptual capital on it, and vice versa, for mutual benefit.

Finally, one can hardly find any work on Iran's foreign policy that does not refer to a (supposed) tension or dilemma in Iran's foreign policy between its ideology and national interest. OST can be an alternative conceptual framework for the study of Iran's foreign policy outside of the ideology-national interest dichotomy, even if the Self is seen as "unembodied." Such an approach can facilitate analysts to understand Iran's foreign policy from an inside-out position, providing them with an in-depth understanding of both the Iranian Self and its interests.

References

[i]. Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *What is Iran? Domestic Politics and International Relations in Five Musical Pieces* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 27.
[ii]. R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (Penguin Books 1990).
[iii]. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).
[iv]. Brent J. Steele, "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-identity British Neutrality and the American Civil War," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 3 (Jul., 2005): 529.
[v]. Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, "Russia's Relations with the West: Ontological Security through Conflict, *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 361.
[vi]. Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations*, 12, no. 3 (2006): 342.
[vii]. Barry Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War," *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no.1 (March 1997): 17.
[viii]. Robert W. Cox, "Social Facts, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 10, no. 2 (1981).
[ix]. Laing, The Divided Self, 39-42.
[x]. Giddens, *Modernity*, 47.
[xi]. Bahar Rumelili, "Identity and Desecuritisation: The Pitfalls of Conflating Ontological and Physical Security," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 18, no. 1 (Sep. 2013): 58.
[xii]. Giddens, *Modernity*.
[xiii]. Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 344.
[xiv]. Catarina Kinnvall and Jennifer Mitzen, "An introduction to the Special Issue: Ontological Securities in World Politics," *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52, no. 1 (Jul. 2016): 2.

[xv]. Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 344.
[xvi]. Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 342.
[xvii]. Ayşe Zarakol, "States and Ontological Security: A Historical Rethinking," *Cooperation and Conflict* 52, no. 1 (2017): 48–68.
[xviii]. Christopher S Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, "Ontological security, self-articulation and the securitization of identity," *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52, no. 1 (2016): 31-47.
[xix]. Rumelili, "Identity and Desecuritisation," 54.
[xx]. Kinnvall and Mitzen, "An introduction to the Special Issue," 3.
[xxi]. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 397.
[xxii]. Kinnvall and Mitzen, "Anxiety, Fear, and Ontological Security in World Politics: Thinking with and beyond Giddens," *International Theory*, 12, no. 2 (July 2020): 244.
[xxiii]. Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 344.
[xxiv]. George F. Kennan, "On American Principles," *Foreign Affairs* (March-April 1995): 120.
[xxv]. Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 341.
[xxvi]. Will K. Delehanty & Brent J. Steele, "Engaging the narrative in ontological (in)security theory: Insights from feminist IR" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 22, no. 3 (2009): 525.
[xxvii]. Brent J. Steele, "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-identity," 526.
[xxviii]. Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, "Russia's Relations with the West: Ontological Security through Conflict, *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 361.
[xxix]. See, Bahar Rumelili, "Introduction," in Rumelili (Ed.), *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*, ed., Rumelili (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[xxx]. Afsaneh Najmabadi, "The Erotic Vatan [homeland] as Beloved and Mother: To Love, to Possess, and to Protect," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 3 (Jul., 1997): 449.
[xxxi]. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR State* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.
[xxxii]. Rumelili, "Identity and Desecuritisation, 59.
[xxxiii]. Colin S. Gray, "Inescapable geography" in *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy*, eds. Colin S. Gray & Geoffrey Sloan (New York: Routledge, 2013), 164-65.
[xxxiv]. Tim Marshall, *The Power of Geography: Ten Maps that Reveal the Future of Our World* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2021).
[xxxv]. Steele, "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-identity," 259.
[xxxvi]. Kinnvall and Mitzen, "An introduction to the Special Issue," 3.
[xxxvii]. Muhammad Iqbal, *Kulliyat-e IqbalUurdu: Bhang-e Dara* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1990), 115.
[xxxviii]. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 151.
[xxxix]. Marshall, *The Power of Geography*.
[xl]. Giddens, *Modernity*, 55.
[xli]. Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 48.
[xlii]. Martin Jacques, "Civilization state versus nation-state," *martinjacques.com*, January 15, 2011. Retrieved September 2, 2022 from http://www.martinjacques.com/articles/civilization-state-versus-nation-state-2/
[xliii]. K. J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79.
[xliv]. Marshall, *The Power of Geography*, 41.
[xlv]. Adib-Moghaddam, *What is Iran?* 129.
[xlvi]. Ervand Abrahamian, *A history of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 2008), 2.
[xlvii]. Muhammadi Rayshehri, *Mizān al-Hik'ma*, trans. H. R. Shaikhi, vol. 3 (Qom: Dar al-Hadith, 1427/2006), 137.
[xlviii]. Ayatollah Khomeini, *Pithy Aphorisms: Wise Sayings and Counsels of Imam Khomeini* (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 1994), 140.
[xlix]. Ayatollah Khamenei, "Besides Defending Geographical Borders, Martyrs Defend Religious, Spiritual and Cultural Borders," *khamenei.org*, November 21, 2021, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/8773/Besides-defending-geographical-borders-martyrs-defend-religious.
[l]. Khamenei, "Seven Realities of the 8-year Imposed War the Enemy Seeks to Distort," *khamenei.org*, October 5, 2020, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/8001/Seven-realities-of-the-8-year-Imposed-War-the-enemy-seeks-to

[li]. Yaqub al-Kulayni, *Usūl al-Kafi*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Manshūrat al-Fajr, 1428/2007).
[lii]. Hamid Dabashi, *Iran: A People Interrupted* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 48.
[liii]. "UK and Russia Ambassadors Anger Iran by Restaging WWII Image," *BBC*, August 28, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-58186006
[liv]. Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, "Persian Gulf: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *Daily Times*, April 29, 2020, https://dailytimes.com.pk/604198/persian-gulf-yesterday-today-and-tomorrow/amp/
[lv]. Dabashi, *Iran*, 48.
[lvi]. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier fictions: Shaping the Iranian nation, 1804-1946* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 15.
[lvii]. Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier fictions*, 3.
[lviii]. Jelena Subotic, "Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12, no. 4 (October 2016): 612.
[lix]. Giddens, *Modernity*, 243.
[lx]. Alexander Wendt, *Social theory of international politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 118.
[lxi]. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 10.
[lxii]. Subotic, "Narrative," 615.
[lxiii]. Steele, "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-identity," 527.
[lxiv]. Peter L. Berger, *Social Reality of Religion* (England: Penguin University Books, 1973), 34.
[lxv]. Khomeini, *Pithy Aphorisms*, 99
[lxvi]. Khomeini, *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, trans. M. Limba, vols. 15 (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 2008), 99.
[lxvii]. Stephen M. Walt, "The Myth of American Exceptionalism, *Foreign Policy* (November, 2011): 72.
[lxviii]. Khomeini, *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 15, 331.
[lxix]. Khamenei, "The Defective US System of Calculation regarding Iran Continues," *khamenei.org*, January 9, 2022, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/8818/The-defective-US-system-of-calculation-regarding-Iran-continues
[lxx]. Muhammad Jawad Larijani, Hokumat-e Islami wa Marzha-ye Siyasi [Islamic Government and the Political Borders]. *Ensani.ir*. retrieved from http://ensani.ir/fa/article/83683/حکومت-اسلامی-و-مرزهای-سیاسی. See also Larijani, *Darshā-ye Siyāsat-e Khariji* [Lectures on foreign policy] (Tehran: Intisharat-e Mishkat, 1998).
[lxxi]. Adib-Moghaddam, *What is Iran?* 93.
[lxxii]. Khomeini, *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 19, 138.
[lxxiii]. "Survivalism," *Merriam-Webster.com* dictionary. Retrieved September 6, 2022, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/survivalism. Accessed 6 Sep. 2022.
[lxxiv]. Sardar Shaheed Qasim Soleimani ka Wasiyat-namah, *Mu'assasa-ye Imam*. February 14, 2020, https://ur.imam-khomeini.ir/ur/n35228/سردار-شہید-قاسم-سلیمانی-کا-وصیت-نامہ
[lxxv]. Khamenei, "The Logic behind Iran's Way of Confronting the US Govt," *khamenei.org*, December 30, 2019, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/7226/The-logic-behind-Iran-s-way-of-confronting-the-US-govt
[lxxvi]. Khomeini, *Pithy Aphorisms*, 11-12.
[lxxvii]. Khomeini, *Pithy Aphorisms*, 106.
[lxxviii]. Khomeini, *Pithy Aphorisms*, 106.
[lxxix]. Rayshehri, *Mizān al-Hik'ma*, 137.
[lxxx]. Al-Bukahri Muhammad b. Ismael Al-Bukahri, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1st ed. (Riyadh: Dar al-Salām, 1418/1997).
[lxxxi]. Muhammad b. Isa al-Tirmizi, *Sunan al-Tirmizi*, vol. 4, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Tasīl 1437/20167).
[lxxxii]. Ernest Barker, *Principles of Social and Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 161.
[lxxxiii]. al-Kulayni, *Usūl al-Kafi*, vol. 2, 179.
[lxxxiv]. Khomeini, *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, vol. 13, 181.
[lxxxv]. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 35.
[lxxxvi]. Maysam Behravesh, "State Revisionism and ontological (in)security in international politics: The complicated case of Iran and its nuclear behavior," *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 21, no. 4 (2018): 840.
[lxxxvii]. Behravesh, "State Revisionism," 840.
[lxxxviii]. Khamenei, "Islamic Democracy in Iran has been able to Disrupt the Domineering Powers' Agenda," *khamenei.org*, May 25, 2022, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/9012/Islamic-democracy-in-Iran-has-been-able-to-disrupt-the-Domineering
[lxxxix]. Khamenei, "Concerning the JCPOA, Only Actions Matter not Empty Words and Promises,"

khamenei.org, February 17, 2021, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/8372/Concerning-the-JCPOA-only-actions-matter-not-empty-words-and

[xc]. Khamenei, "Islamic Nation must Resist the Interference and Evil of Western Powers," *khamenei.org*, July 19, 2021, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/8594/Islamic-nation-must-resist-the-interference-and-evil-of-western

[xci]. Khamenei, "The most Important and Ultimate Ideal is the Establishment of Islamic Civilization," *khamenei.org*, May 17, 2020, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/7568/The-most-important-and-ultimate-ideal-is-the-establishment-of

[xcii]. Raziq Hussain and Dr. Syed Qandil Abbas, "Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: Localization of Regional Security," *Journal of Historical Studies* 7, no. 2 (Jul.-Dec., 2021): 130-145.

[xciii]. Khamenei, "The Iranian Nation will be the Final Victor," *khamenei.org*, October 2, 2019, http://english.khamenei.ir/news/7081/The-Iranian-nation-will-be-the-final-victor.

[xciv]. Kinnvall and Jennifer Mitzen, "Anxiety, Fear, and Ontological Security," 244.