

The Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Abstract

The complex and considerable impact of culture has resulted in its incorporation into diverse disciplines such as management, international relations, and others, drawing the attention of scholars in these fields to the aforementioned subject. Essentially, strategic culture seeks to elucidate the matter of why nations with similar material structures choose divergent strategies? Under such circumstances, and considering the increasing influence of culture within the realm of security studies, the discussion of strategic culture was put forth. The central question of this research is: What are the factors and characteristics that constitute the strategic culture of the I.R. of Iran?

The statistical population for this research, given the novelty, complexity, and specialized nature of its subject, was selected through a non-random, purposive sampling method from among the experts in the field of International Relations, specifically from "certain research centers and university professors in the city of Tehran." The sample size for this study, from whom the requisite data were collected and the subsequent results analyzed, comprises 50 individuals. A questionnaire served as the principal instrument for addressing the research inquiries. The options within this questionnaire were structured using a Likert scale and multiple-choice questions. To ascertain the validity in this research, the "Content Validity" method was employed. The findings derived from the descriptive and inferential analyses corroborate the factors and characteristics proposed by the author concerning the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R.I.).

Keywords: Strategic Culture, I.R. of Iran (or The Islamic Republic of Iran), Internal Cohesion (or Domestic Cohesion), Threat, International System, Islam

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Generalities

Statement of the Problem

Culture, as a fundamental component of human collective life, possesses the capacity to be termed an “instrumental toolbox” that can shape and organize actions and behaviors. The complex and significant impact of culture has led to its incorporation into various disciplines such as management, international relations, and others. Given the extensive interplay between cultural issues and international relations, some researchers have been steered towards the idea that the notion of “nation” constitutes a cultural system, and international relations is nothing more than the interaction between cultural systems (Kolodziej, 2005: 259-304). In such circumstances, and considering the growing influence of culture within the domain of security studies, the concept of strategic culture was introduced. Its core subject is the elucidation of the cultural factors that influence the selection of strategies and the examination of how force is utilized. Essentially, this culture seeks to explain why nations with similar material structures choose divergent strategies? Now, the question of this research is: Based on what factors and characteristics does strategic culture exert its influence in the Islamic Republic of Iran?

Significance of the Research Topic

Prior to commencing the discussion on the significance of strategic culture, it must be noted that, in the view of many experts, including Colin Gray, strategic culture constitutes a component of a society’s political culture. Political culture encourages a specific style of thought and action (Gray, Winter 1984: 27-28). Strategic culture, much like political culture, delineates a framework concerning the decision options for a country’s decision-makers. In most instances, these options are fewer than those logically available in the decision choices. Therefore, by analyzing strategic culture, one can comprehend why governments act differently in comparable situations.

Bruce Coen, who addresses the concept of strategic culture within the framework of “National Character”, provides several references to the significance of this subject. In his view, national character refers to the pattern of behaviors and attitudes that dominate a culture, and it is a composite of several personality traits and attributes that are commonly found among the members of a society or culture. National character is defined as the basic personality of the people of a nation. An accurate

recognition of the collective personality of any nation furnishes invaluable information for countering their military stratagems, propaganda, psychological pressures, and even for achieving their defeat (Coen, 1993: 114–124).

Hoffman also refers to this category. He has addressed the subject through the concept of “National Style.” In his view, countries' strategic decisions are profoundly influenced by their national style. For instance, Hoffman contends that American intervention in the affairs of other countries stems from their national style, which possesses a “teacher knows best” attitude view of the world, seeing themselves as the saviors of other nations. They perceive themselves as standing on an island while other nations, who are in the process of drowning, extend their hands towards Americans, soliciting their assistance (NaqibZadeh, 2001: 74). One of the reasons for the necessity of discussing strategic culture is the importance of this concept. According to Ken Booth, this culture is significant for the following reasons:

1. Understanding strategic culture is a fundamental component of recognizing both the enemy and the friend. This subject, considered as one of the primary principles of warfare, assists in estimating the behavior of actors, and it constitutes the initial point for comprehending (the opponent's behavior).
2. Strategic culture sensitizes us to the significance of history. Indeed, attention to history within strategic culture is paramount because, in order to formulate accurate questions concerning motivations, others' perceptions of us, and the comprehension of others' behavioral patterns, we must possess a sound awareness of history and the past.
3. Strategic culture provides a suitable ground through which a distinction can be drawn between the domestic environment in which policies are shaped and the external security environment. Strategic culture reminds us that decision-making structures, military institutions, and decision-making processes operate within the framework of specific political cultures.
4. Strategic culture can be crucial in the conception of scenarios and the assessment of threats. This is because strategic culture provides statesmen with insight regarding how an actor might behave in relation to both minor and major issues (Booth, 2005: 25-26).

Research Background (or Literature Review)

Strategic culture is among the subjects that have garnered increasing attention in recent years. Within this context, several experts have focused their attention on the strategic subject matter concerning our country. In this section, a review of the written materials in this regard will be presented, along with a general assessment of them.

The Quasi-Academic Approach

The Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran

This article was authored by Willis Stanley. The writer commences his piece by offering a definition of strategic culture. Subsequently, a historical background of Iran's strategic culture is elucidated. To this end, the text examines the historical developments of Iran from the advent and emergence of Zoroastrianism and its influence on the beliefs of the Iranian people. The article continues by addressing the epoch of the entry of Islam into Iran and analyzes pivotal moments such as the event of Karbala, the rise of the Shia school of thought, and the concept of Mahdism (belief in the Hidden Imam) and its status within Shia teachings. Attention is also paid to the period of the Mongol invasion of Iran and the condition of the country at that time. In the next section, the author explains the subject of Iran's national identity. In this regard, special emphasis is placed on the role of the Shia religion in the formation of national identity during the Safavid era. Additionally, the identity transformations during the Qajar and Pahlavi periods are also considered. A section of the article is dedicated to the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution and the structural and identity changes that ensued. Another subject addressed by the author is the examination of the roots and contexts of Iran's animosity toward the West. A segment of the article refers to the factors shaping Iran's strategic culture. In the writer's estimation, geography, the centrality of the role of oil, and the influence of Shi'ism constitute the three important components of our country's strategic culture (Stanley, 31 October 2006).

As previously indicated, this article has addressed only certain factors influencing Iran's strategic culture. Consequently, it has been inattentive to the nature, characteristics, and components of the country's strategic culture, and the examination of these issues was not on its agenda.

Analysis of the Iranian Discourse: A Strategic Culture Study

This is the title of a research study conducted at the University of Madison, USA. In this research, the investigators utilized a strategic culture framework to conduct a qualitative assessment of the Iranian public discourse. To familiarize themselves with the viewpoints of Iranian officials concerning the United States, more than 500 quotations from the country's authorities, spanning from March 1, 2003, to March 9, 2008, were examined. In essence, the researchers employed the content analysis method to interpret the norms, values, and their influence on the decision-making processes of our country's officials (DeGroot and others, 12 May 2008).

The findings of this research indicate that “Islam,” “Iranian History,” and “National Pride” are among the components of Iran's strategic culture that are utilized by our country's officials. It is noteworthy that, specifically regarding the relations between Iran and the United States, Islam and National Pride exert the greatest influence on the viewpoints of Iranian officials.

A Hostile Approach

Iran's Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction

In this article, Anthony Cain has attempted to address and discuss the impact of the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic culture on the West's claimed issue regarding military armaments. In the author's view, Iran's strategic culture indicates that the Islamic Republic is a rational state; therefore, the application of deterrence policies against Iran can be effective. American leaders are incapable of comprehending the efforts of the statesmen of the Islamic Republic of Iran to differentiate between the ideology of the system and the pragmatic domains (economy, diplomacy, and military power). The author believes that if Americans recognize the Islamic Republic as the regional leader, they can hope for success regarding the limitation of Iran's regional activities (Cain, April 2002).

As its title suggests, this article is framed with a distinct bias against our country's interests and security. Its central premise is that Iran is pursuing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), yet this is merely a baseless claim advanced by Western governments. Their aim is to portray Iran as having unconventional capabilities in the service of the “Iranophobia” project, even though our high-ranking officials have repeatedly and explicitly rejected these allegations. Furthermore, while the author makes mention of “rationality” as a component of Iran's strategic culture, this contributes

little to any genuine understanding of the Islamic Republic's strategic culture .

Understanding Iran's Nuclear Strategy: An Examination of Motivations, Strategic Culture, and Rationality

This article has been prepared and compiled by Fredrick Strain. The author believes that survival, deterrence, and prestige acquisition constitute the three core motivations for any state seeking to utilize nuclear energy. Subsequently, the article points to the influencing factors that contribute to an understanding of Iran's strategic culture. According to the author, the Shah's pro-Western policies (which precipitated the Islamic Republic of Iran's severe reaction against the West), the war with Iraq (which from Iran's viewpoint highlighted the crucial role of technology and weaponry, Iran's relative vulnerability to Iraqi missiles, and other similar observations), the New International Order (which Iran perceives as an overt threat to the country's interests and security), historical traditions (Iran's imperial past and its possession of a glorious civilizational legacy), and Islam (owing to the pervasive presence and profound, comprehensive impact of Islamic tenets and principles) are all considered significant and effective factors in shaping Iran's strategic culture. (Strain, 15 April 1996)

As is evident, this article, too, has been drafted with a political objective and within a framework aimed at instilling the notion that the Islamic Republic is striving to acquire nuclear weapons. The author contends that, considering Iran's security environment—specifically, the nuclear acquisition by some of our neighboring states and the Israeli regime's possession of atomic weaponry—Iran's endeavor to attain nuclear weapons is comprehensible and constitutes a rational effort, motivated by the three core drivers of survival, deterrence, and prestige acquisition.

Nuclear Weapons and Iran's Strategic Culture

This article was authored by Jennifer Knepper. The writer begins her article by discussing the definition of strategic culture. In the subsequent section, the article refers to the key components of Iran's strategic culture. These components, which the author believes constitute the fundamental elements of Iran's strategic culture, include: “the adoption and acceptance of Shia Islam as the cornerstone of the regime's political legitimacy and the country's national identity,” “a dual nationalist belief concerning Iran's position as the leader of the Islamic civilization on one hand, and a regional

hegemon on the other,” “the existence of a pervasive understanding regarding internal and external vulnerabilities,” and “the existence of a deep understanding regarding America’s intent to dominate the Islamic civilization and gradually eliminate it” (Knepper, Oct 2008: 451-468).

In this article, the author demonstrates that an Iran armed with atomic weapons is unlikely to employ these armaments aggressively (preemptively), due to its fear of retaliation. Conversely, the author states, based on the aforementioned components, that Iran's inclination toward possessing nuclear armaments could create a type of deterrence and, in addition to establishing the necessary grounds for Iran's transformation into a regional hegemon, would reduce this country's perception of insecurities.

The material presented clearly indicates that this article, too, has been written within the framework of the West's psychological warfare against the Islamic Republic of Iran. To be more explicit, the author attempts to portray Iran's endeavor to acquire nuclear weapons as rational, even though our country's officials have repeatedly declared that nuclear weaponry holds no place in our nation's defense strategies. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a member state of the United Nations and one of the active and “responsible” members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has consistently opposed the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Since it believes that security and peace are not attained through these armaments, it has consequently expressed its opposition to such weaponry.

Research Question

The question of this research is: What are the factors and characteristics that constitute the strategic culture of the I.R. of Iran?

Research Methodology

In this research, the library method was initially utilized to gather the academic literature for the purpose of reviewing the research background, defining the concept of strategic culture, explaining the theoretical foundations, and recognizing the factors and characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. of Iran. Subsequently, the survey method was employed, including the preparation and distribution of a questionnaire, in order to validate the theoretical findings.

Statistical Population

The statistical population for this research, given the novelty, complexity, and specialized nature of its subject, was selected through a non-random, purposive sampling method from among the experts in the field of International Relations, specifically from “certain research centers and university professors in the city of Tehran.” These selected institutions include: The Center for Strategic Research of the Expediency Discernment Council, The Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), Abrar Moaser Institute of Tehran, The IRIB Research Center, the Supreme National Defense University, the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at the University of Tehran, Imam Hossein University, Malek Ashtar University of Technology, and the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Sample Population and Sample Size

The sample size for this research, from whom the requisite data were collected and the subsequent results analyzed, comprises 50 individuals. Among this total number, 5 individuals are female and 45 individuals are male.

Table 1. Statistical Sample Characteristics by Gender

Gender	Absolute Frequency	Percentage
Female	5	10
Male	45	90
Total	50	100

Furthermore, 26 individuals from the statistical population hold an educational qualification at the Doctorate level, and 24 individuals possess an educational qualification at the Master's level.

Table 2. Statistical Sample Characteristics by Education Level

Education Level	Absolute Frequency	Percentage
Doctorate	26	52
Master's Degree	24	48
Total	50	100

Data Collection Instrument

In order to address the research questions, a questionnaire was utilized as the instrument. The options within this questionnaire were structured using a Likert scale and multiple-choice questions, and the respondent indicates their degree of agreement with each of these statements on a graded scale. The method for data analysis was as follows: initially, the options for each question that were in the form of a Likert scale were scored and numbered within the SPSS environment as Very Low (1), Low (2), Moderate (3), High (4), and Very High (5).

It is pertinent to mention that, in order to ascertain the validity in this research, the “Content Validity” method was utilized. This means that, initially, the questionnaire, along with the research questions and objectives, was provided to a number of specialized and expert professors in the fields of Political Science, International Relations, and Political Sociology so they could judge and evaluate the content of the questions and their correlation with the aims and questions. Subsequently, their opinions were collected, and the questions upon which all professors were in agreement were retained, and the final questionnaire was prepared based on these.

Theoretical Foundations

Definition of Strategic Culture

Strategic culture is one of the concepts concerning which there is no theoretical consensus among scholars. In the belief of Johnston, strategic culture is a cohesive system of symbols, structures, language, analogies, metaphors, and so forth, that generates long-term and pervasive strategic preferences through the formulation of concepts and roles, and the effectiveness of military forces in political affairs among states. In his view, strategic culture is an ideational milieu that restricts behavioral options (Johnston, 1995: 46).

Theoretical Framework

Various theories and schools of thought have addressed the relationship between culture and politics, security, and strategic issues. The nature of strategic culture aligns and exhibits kinship with Constructivism more than other theories. Constructivists maintain that human relations, including international relations, are constituted more by thoughts and ideas than by material conditions and forces. The social world is composed of physical

objects to a certain extent, but it is the ideas and beliefs underpinning those objects that hold the greatest significance. For instance, the international security-defense system is comprised of terrorists, populations, weapons, and other physical assets; however, the ideas and perceptions based on which those assets (objects) are understood, organized, and utilized are of paramount importance. The central concept emphasized by Constructivists is inter-subjective beliefs (and ideas, concepts, and assumptions). Consequently, culture, identity, norms, and institutions, as concepts focused upon by Constructivists, are examples of an inter-subjective world that have been created, rather than belonging to an objective world that has been discovered. Constructivism posits a type of reciprocal relationship between the elements of national security and the elements of the institutional and cultural environment. In their view, the security environment of states is a cultural and institutional environment (AbdollahKhani, 2007: 65-78).

Scholars such as Alexander Wendt, who have theorized within the framework of the Constructivist school, have pointed out that the behavior of states is an outcome of their interests, and their interests are a function of norms (both domestic and external). Consequently, norms are considered antecedent to behaviors and serve to constrain them (Hadian, Winter 2003: 936-937).

The source of the elites' norms can be fundamental ontological and normative assumptions, political philosophy, beliefs, values, and so forth. In the view of some, the entire society is the bearer of norms, and consequently, they emphasize the role of political culture and national identity. Culture is rooted in national myths, historical experiences, political discourses, and the like. The root of the elites' common norms also lies in the Constitution, the legal order, public and political culture, and so forth (Lriye, Spring 1979: 115). Within Constructivism, in addition to emphasizing the structure/agency interaction, stress is placed on the point that the basis and foundation of structures are shared norms and beliefs. The similarity in their behavior is an outcome of shared norms, rather than being a product of the imperatives stemming from the security dilemma in an anarchic system (Hadian, Winter 2003: 936-937).

Within Constructivist theory, it is posited that most norms confer identity upon a state. Some states, due to major shocks resulting from their defeats, resorted to norms that currently constitute their identity. Examples

include France and Germany, for whom the use of military force has lost its standing in their foreign policy.

A shift in identity can bring about a fundamental change in the interests that shape national security policy. In the current era, as multilateralism has gradually been internalized as a constitutive part of the identity in certain countries, the interest in participating in and promoting multilateralism has intensified in these states. A country such as Germany has solidified its identity by linking its reconstructed identity (pacifist, democratic, and internationalist) to regional and multilateral identities and institutions. Conversely, a country's activity or policy may be a direct reflection of its identity politics. The post-war domestic battles in Germany and Japan concerning the correct security policy were part of a broader political conflict regarding identity. Likewise, a change in identity can lead to a fundamental change in a state's policy. For instance, the continuity of the security policy of Germany and Japan can be attributed more to their domestic politics of identity than to the lack of continuity in the structure of the international system.

Factors Shaping the Strategic Culture of the I.R. of Iran

Strategic culture encompasses a collection of diverse factors and elements. Some scholars who have engaged in theorizing in the field of this culture have also alluded to certain components regarding the factors that constitute this culture.

Carnes Lord also considers strategic culture to be an outcome of six factors: geographical location, military history, international relations, ideology and political culture, the nature of civil-military relations, and military technology (“Strategic Culture: a Reliable Tool...”). These factors are common in the strategic culture of many countries. Consequently, the factors shaping the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran can also be extracted from among these factors and those referred to in the literature written concerning Iran's strategic culture. Therefore, we shall examine them in the two frameworks of general and specific factors.

General Factors

The intention behind General Factors is those elements that can be relevant to many countries. In other words, they are factors that influence

the strategic culture of numerous states. Hereafter, the “International System,” “Geographical Location,” and “Historical Background” will be examined as general factors.

The International System

Undoubtedly, one of the influential components of states' strategic culture is the International System. From a Realist perspective, the international system possesses an anarchic nature, and great powers consistently shape the international structure in such a way that their own interests (the strong) are secured (Buzan, 2000: 34). It is evident that such a structure has the least alignment with the interests of weak states and consequently threatens them. International actors such as international organizations and institutions, alongside international processes, as the primary components of the international structure, have had the greatest influence on the behavior of states, including Iran. Therefore, one of the factors influencing the strategic culture of the I.R. of Iran is the International System (Askari, Winter 2005: 24-25).

In summation, Iran's understanding of the international system is that great powers consistently render the country's strategic security environment insecure through concepts such as the New World Order, the Greater Middle East, the fight against terrorism, and so forth, and that, by re-engineering global-regional structures in favor of themselves or Iran's rivals/enemies, they are, in a manner of speaking, endeavoring to inflict damage and restrict the radius of the Islamic Republic's national interests (Stanley, 31 October 2006).

Geographical Location

The geographical characteristics of societies, such as easy access to open seas as a relative advantage or the absence of natural barriers at borders as a point of weakness, can lead to the formation of their strategic culture (AbdollahKhani, 2007: 143). Furthermore, if a country, influenced by its geographical position, possesses suitable neighbors, this condition can also impact that country's strategic culture (Bloomfield and Nossal, August 2007: 286–307).

Some believe that geography is among the factors shaping the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic (Stanley, 31 October 2006). Iran's geography is such that it has created a strategic position for our country, and consequently, the great powers have constantly sought to somehow dominate our country due to this unique geography.

Historical Background

As previously noted, strategic culture is an outcome of various factors, including historical background. The I.R. of Iran, given its civilizational background, possesses a collection of long-standing historical experiences that have played a determining role in the formation of the Iranian people's strategic culture. Consequently, some believe that Iran's strategic culture is influenced by 3000 years of Persian civilization, which is occasionally amalgamated with feelings of cultural superiority (Lantis, December 2009: 472). This historical characteristic demonstrates the deep roots of the Iranian identity, which is intertwined with a certain degree of self-confidence and national pride.

Specific Factors

The strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran is influenced by specific and particular factors, in addition to the general factors. Specific factors refer to those elements with less inclusiveness, applying only to a limited number of countries or being unique to a single country. In other words, the strategic culture of only a limited number of countries is influenced by these factors. In the author's view, in the Islamic Republic, "the Shia branch of Islam and the Shia school of thought," "oil revenues," and the "Imposed War" are the specific factors that have influenced our country's strategic culture.

The Religion of Islam and the Shi'a Denomination

Religion and its branches are considered among the most vital foci from which values and beliefs originate. The very nature of religion and its denominations is such that they delineate the principal orientations for rulers in critical matters and serve as the criterion for defining good/friendship and evil/enmity. Some scholars who have conducted research and studies on the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran have also acknowledged this reality (Knepper, Oct 2008, Giles, 2003: 146). The propositions derived from the religion of Islam and the Shi'a denomination, such as fighting and self-sacrifice in the defense of religion up to the point of giving one's life and achieving martyrdom, fighting oppression, supporting the oppressed, patriotism, and others, have played and continue to play a determining role in the formation of the country's strategic culture. (Amid Zanjani, 1375: 39-73)

The Role of Oil Revenues in Strategic Culture

Oil revenues are also among the factors that can influence the strategic culture of certain nations. In some works dedicated to the study of the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it has been noted that oil revenues constitute one of the effective factors in our country's strategic culture. (Stanley, Oct 2006)

The Imposed War

Indubitably, war is one of the factors that shape strategic culture (Sondhous, 2006). Should a nation manage to achieve its objectives and attain victory through recourse to war, that country's strategic culture gradually acquires an aggressive character, and the myth of invincibility is progressively formed within it (Snow, 2011: 79). Conversely, if a government is defeated in war, incurs enormous costs, and is subjected to humiliation through imposed post-war treaties, this event will leave a deleterious effect on that country's strategic culture. In the context of the Islamic Republic, the war imposed by Iraq upon our country has similarly impacted the strategic culture of Islamic Iran. (Strain, 15 April 1996)

Characteristics of the Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Undoubtedly, one of the principal avenues for understanding phenomena is through familiarity with their characteristics. Iran's strategic culture is similarly a highly complex phenomenon, the understanding of which will not be feasible or attainable without grasping its peculiarities. For the purpose of presenting these characteristics within an organized framework, an effort will be made to utilize the levels articulated by Jones to categorize the intended features within his proposed classification. Jones has examined the characteristics of strategic culture across three distinct levels:

1. **Macro-Environmental Level** :Including geographic characteristics , ethno-cultural attributes ,and history;
2. **Societal Level** :Including the characteristics of political ,economic , and social structures of the society;
3. **Micro Level** :Including military institutions and the characteristics of civil-military relations.

The Macro Level

This level encompasses characteristics that possess a high degree of significance and are of a vital and strategic nature. “Inspiration”, “Interoperability without unilateral dependence,” “distrust of foreigners,” “avoidance of bellicosity and emphasis on peace and security,” “self-reliance,” “human capital and morale,” “faith in God, acceptance of *Velayat* (Guardianship) and martyrdom-seeking,” “threat-centricity,” “integrated popular presence in defensive situations,” “internal cohesion in defensive situations,” “popular awareness of the enemy,” “high threshold of public tolerance,” and “self-confidence” are among the most paramount characteristics that can be cited at this strategic level.

Internal Cohesion in Defensive Situations

The strategic culture in the Islamic Republic has been formulated in such a manner that it achieves unity in the face of an external threat or aggression. More explicitly, under the influence of the strategic culture's components, when the nation is exposed to peril from an enemy, all segments of the populace—including social and political groups—attain a state of strategic cohesion, irrespective of divergent viewpoints and differing inclinations.

Distrust of Foreigners

Iran's contemporary history, particularly in the realm of foreign relations, is evocative of distrust and the impairment of the Iranian “national pride.” The Treaties of Turkmenchay and Talbot, the coups of Esfand 3, 1299 and Mordad 28, 1332 (referring to the coup d'état of 1921 and 1953, respectively), and similar events are among the most conspicuous betrayals perpetrated by foreigners, and they clearly articulate the reasons for the lack of confidence exhibited by the nation's populace and elites toward the colonial powers. (Ricks, 1379: 307–332 and Vaezi, 1379: 114–115)

Viewpoint of Graham Fuller

Some experts have also pointed to this reality. Graham Fuller maintains:

“[Among Iranians] a type of suspicion... is coupled with a resolute determination to achieve independence and non-involvement with foreign powers...” (Fuller, 1373: 22)

Human Resources and Morale

Human resources are regarded as the indispensable pillars of any country's power. Many scholars, in elucidating the elements and components of national power, have placed a particular emphasis on the magnitude of the population. However, it must be noted that alongside the quantity of human resources, a nation possessing a high-quality populace (skilled and trained) will achieve an ideal condition. Nevertheless, quantity itself possesses its own distinct quality.

The Decisive Role of Human Capital

It must be conceded that throughout past centuries and eras, and despite technological advancements, it has invariably been the human factor that has played a determining role in the destiny of conflicts and battles (Lewis, 2007). The study of wars, even recent ones, such as the US attack on Iraq in 2003 or the aggression of the Zionist regime against the Gaza Strip in the war with Hamas, also clearly attests to the point that in a war between two actors where one enjoys absolute superiority in terms of technology, armaments, and other factors, it is ultimately the human resources that must intervene to attain the stage of victory and act as a deterrent element.

The Complementary Role of Morale

Moreover, the efficacy of human resources will be rendered more complete when another factor, designated as morale, is present. Morale has the potential to enhance the efficiency of military forces. Furthermore, morale is considered a major determinant in the assessment of power (Ghavam, 1372: 80). Without morale, power is either nothing more than material force or, alternatively, it is a latent capacity that vainly awaits its actualization. (Morgenthau, 1374: 246) The significance of morale has augmented to such an extent today that some researchers refer to it as one of the principles of warfare. (Burwell, Dec 2000)

Morale as a Source of Honor and a Rule-Setting Function

Furthermore, this morale serves as the source for generating a sense of honor within military forces, enabling self-sacrifice in the pursuit of the objective. This same morale possesses a rule-setting function (or normative function) that subjects all strategic equations and calculations to redefinition. (Cassidy, 2002: 51)

Enhancement of the Resistance Threshold

The existence of the characteristic of a tolerance threshold in any strategic culture is an emblem of the material and spiritual conditions and status of a society. (Elyasi, 1387). The spirit is the intermediary link between the conditions of a society and the tolerance threshold. In effect, morale, acting as the outcome of the societal status, determines the resistance threshold. Consequently, high morale, by augmenting the coefficient of national resistance, will be capable of striking at the enemy's vulnerabilities.

Avoidance of Isolationism and Belief in Internationalism

In the contemporary world, where it is characterized saliently by “interdependencies”, isolationism is not a suitable strategy or approach. In today's world, interactions are opportunity-generating. Historical realities indicate that Iran has consistently sought to expand its relations and dealings, and has played a pivotal role as a focal point in the proliferation and deepening of connections. Alongside these realities, Iran's geographical location is also such that it may be designated as “interaction-builder.” Some scholars are of the opinion that:

The Islamic Republic of Iran, by virtue of its geopolitical and geo-energy significance, is inherently an international unit. Irrespective of the nature of the prevailing political system in Iran, Tehran must operate at the international level. (SariefolGhلام, 1379: 152–153)

Threat-Centricity

The threat-centric approach is grounded in an inductive mode of reasoning and is pursued by a nation that confronts a principal and major enemy and threat and possesses relatively comprehensive intelligence regarding it. This nation, in most instances, recognizes the strategy and capabilities of the enemy country and formulates its own strategy commensurate with those capabilities. The impact of historical experiences (based on vulnerability to the policies of foreigners), the various conspiracies of global arrogance to undermine the country's stability and security, and the way the enemies plan to deploy around the borders of the Islamic Republic are among the underlying factors that have paved the way for the threat-centric approach within Iran's strategic culture.

Avoidance of Bellicosity and Emphasis on Peace and Security

Avoidance of bellicosity is a value that signifies a nation's attention to interaction, dialogue, and the peaceful resolution of differences. An examination of Iran's history over the past few centuries corroborates the reality that Iran is a nation that, while respecting the territorial integrity of countries and international law, has invariably emphasized avoiding violence and the recourse to force. In this regard, Phyllis Bennis maintains that Iran's contemporary history demonstrates its aversion to bellicosity; this is substantiated by the fact that it has not initiated aggression against any country in recent centuries. (Friedman & Skancke, 2010: Chap 2)

Awareness of the Enemy

Awareness of the enemy is a characteristic, the possession of which can constitute an advantage for the statesmen of any country. Awareness of the enemy, which is a manifestation of a nation's vigilance, necessitates insight and discernment. The great Iranian nation has clearly demonstrated over the course of the past three decades that, notwithstanding difficulties and deficiencies, it has invariably maintained a meaningful presence and extensive participation in the arenas where its existence was essential.

Faith in God, Acceptance of Velayat (Guardianship), and Martyrdom-Seeking

Undoubtedly, faith in the Eternal Source of Divine Power is among the factors that impart a unique characteristic to any society. Faith in God bestows upon humanity a vision and belief that generates a specific energy and motivation, which will unquestionably create a strategic advantage. Acceptance of *Velayat* (Guardianship) is another component that, due to the very nature of our country's Islamic system, is regarded as one of the characteristics of our strategic culture. The functions of the Position of *Velayat* encompass providing vision, determining policies, motivating the populace, mobilizing resources, and other elements, which, given its standing in the socio-political system and the nation's allegiance to it, have transformed it into one of the attributes of the country's strategic culture.

Interactive Capacity Without Unilateral Dependence

As previously indicated, our country's geographic location and historical antecedents present it as an interaction-oriented actor. Nonetheless, at certain junctures, due to internal frailties and vulnerabilities, foreign powers have exploited these conditions for their

own benefit and have striven, to the utmost extent possible, to create dependence in order to perpetuate their self-interest. Given this inclination on the part of foreigners, Iranians are perpetually sensitive toward the nature of their relations and interactions. This sensitivity is so pronounced that it has been reflected in the Constitution as well:

Any treaty that leads to the domination of foreigners over the natural and economic resources, culture, army, and other domains of the country is prohibited.

Source of Inspiration

Undoubtedly, the Islamic Revolution of Iran has been a source of inspiration for other nations. The idea of establishing the Islamic Revolution instigated extensive transformations. This idea led to the maturation of a popular movement across the Islamic world, spanning from Yugoslavia and Morocco in the West to Indonesia and the Philippines in the East. The fact of the matter is that the influence of the Islamic Revolution, as an unprecedented phenomenon (or unique phenomenon), has been largely indirect. Anoushiravan Ehteshami has also referred to this matter and emphasized it:

“The ideological components (sources of soft power) must be considered a source of power that was previously neglected by the monarchical regime. This matter left its impact on Iran's national power in the post-Revolution era”. (Ehteshami, 1378: 127)

The inspirational capacity of the Islamic Revolution of Iran is highly palpable and comprehensible in domains such as “resistance,” “fighting oppression,” “self-confidence and self-awareness,” and the “triumph and superiority of faith and conviction over hardware.”

“In most Islamic countries, the impact of revolutionary Iran has been indirect, with Iran primarily serving an exemplary role. The most significant influence of revolutionary Iran on the Islamic world lies at the level of thought and ideology... The post-Revolution (of Iran) generation of Muslims across the globe has accepted that Islam has a blueprint for political and social reform”. (Esposito, 2003: 331-332)

Integrated Popular Presence in Defensive Situations

The response of a society's populace to a defensive situation is considered one of the characteristics of that society's strategic culture. In the event of such circumstances, the prevalent inclination is either toward

resistance or the populace's tendency is toward submission. Historical experience amply demonstrates that the Iranian nation has, since ancient times, stood firm against the aggressing enemy with a spirit of self-sacrifice. In other words, the defense of the homeland, as a religious and national imperative (or duty), has been invariably imprinted upon the mindset and beliefs of the people of Iran. Indeed, it is through such an attribute that the concept of the "popularization of defense" acquires significance. This matter was articulated given the extensive presence and unparalleled participation of the people on the fronts of the war imposed by Iraq against Iran (Asgari, 1387: 47–48).

Possessing Self-Confidence

Self-Confidence is a concept that holds immense value and significance for every society and for individuals. Self-confidence is a perspective that enables a society and its individuals to maintain a positive and realistic image of themselves. Societies and individuals possessing self-confidence trust in their own capabilities. Self-confidence may be defined thus:

“Self-confidence signifies the conviction and belief that an individual and a society possesses regarding their own capabilities for the attainment of objectives. In other words, self-confidence constitutes the ability to make a correct and precise appraisal of oneself (self-acceptance and self-worth), as well as the capacity to confront emerging challenges. In essence, self-confidence refers to the aptitude and competence to act and execute tasks”.

The moment trust in God (Tawakkul) dominates the spiritual and psychological sphere of an individual, and that person, with full awareness and faith, entrusts the affairs of his life to the Almighty and Benevolent God. In this condition, he will feel a powerful self-confidence within themselves and will, through this medium, traverse the path to success. Therefore, one of the principal roots of self-confidence is reliance on God (Tawakkul). This crucial matter has not been overlooked from the insightful perspective of the Supreme Leader. He has aptly referred to this important point in his statements on January 3, 2008 (13/10/1386):

“National self-confidence is one of the necessities of our nation throughout all periods.”

The Intermediate Level

This level incorporates the characteristics that are situated at a lower stratum in terms of significance. Although these characteristics are likewise critical, they do not possess a determining role. Attributes such as “level of access to technology,” “maximum utilization of resources,” and “robust national identity” are classified within this category.

Level of Access to Technology

As mentioned, some researchers, including Lord, hold the conviction that military technology is one of the factors shaping the strategic culture of nations. It is manifest that a nation possessing a high level of military technology can, by relying upon it, be hopeful of achieving victory in wars. These technologies give rise to the manufacture of advanced equipment and generate a type of self-confidence among the populace stemming from reliance on these technologies and armaments. Overall, the impact of access to military technologies on strategic culture can be elucidated thus: Public awareness of the government’s capability to access and utilize military technologies can instill in their strategic culture the belief that national objectives can be achieved through reliance on military technologies and equipment (Decker, 1994: 14). In the Islamic Republic as well, access to military technology is considered one of the effective factors in the country’s strategic culture. Islamic Iran has achieved stunning advancements in the domain of military technologies over the past two decades. The awareness of the nation and the country’s political society regarding this reality has fostered the belief that these technologies and armaments can be employed in defense of the homeland, territorial integrity, and the nation.

Robust National Identity

If one is to concede that the existence of a national culture and its historical underpinnings, the awareness of this culture, and the sense of belonging to it constitute the pillars of national identity, then in Iran, this identity is deep-rooted and robust.

The concept of Iranian identity, in its integrated political, ethnic, religious, linguistic, temporal, and spatial meaning—which bears similarities to the concept of national identity in the modern era—was introduced into the history of Iran by the Sasanian monarchs in the third century AD. (Ashraf, 1373: 541)

The Resilience of National Identity

The oral transmission of myths, perspectives, and philosophies through poetry, satire, proverbs, and the like has ensured that, despite the invasion of various ethnic groups, not only did no rupture occur in the Iranian culture, but all invaders were either dissolved into this cultural sphere or were converted to its servants, like Mahmoud of Ghazni. The devising of innovative methods such as *Shahnameh-khani*¹ (*Shahnameh* recitation), *Pardeh-khani*², popular theatre, local songs, and others are among the methods that the Iranian mindset has invented for the continuity of its cultural life. The firmness and persistence of identity-shaping elements such as the Persian language and script serve as further testaments in this regard. The Persian language, having relied upon a two-thousand-year history, has continuously served for over a millennium as the vehicle for myths, heroic literature, and cultural intricacies. The sense of belonging of individuals to the country and the attachment of ethnic groups to Iran—in a word, the existence of national loyalty—as an expression of a strong national identity, has placed this factor among the characteristics of the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Maximum Utilization of Resources

As is known, the nature of the Islamic Revolution has generated numerous hostilities against our country, and the result has been the creation of constraints and limitations. This condition, on the one hand, and the intense inclination toward severing dependence and achieving self-sufficiency on the other, have caused “maximum utilization of resources” to be included among the characteristics of our country's strategic culture. The Imposed War and the experiences accrued from that era were also highly influential in reinforcing this characteristic. This attribute, in effect, indicates that in the Islamic Republic of Iran, planning was not conducted based on existing capacities and capabilities. Rather, the artistry of the statesmen, particularly during the Holy Defense period (which serves as a

1 *Shahnameh-Khani* (literally “reciting the *Shahnameh*”) is a traditional Iranian performance art that consists of reading Ferdowsi’s verses aloud in a special melodic style. Unlike *Naqqali*, which is a more dramatic and theatrical form, *Shahnameh-Khani* emphasizes vocal recitation, sometimes accompanied by music, and has historically played major social, moral, and cultural roles, especially among nomadic tribes where it fostered solidarity and preserved Persian cultural identity.

2 *Pardeh-Khani* (literally “curtain reading”) is a traditional Iranian religious storytelling performance in which the narrator (*pardeh-khan*) recounts the sufferings of Shi’a saints, especially the tragedy of Karbala, by pointing to painted scenes on a large curtain.

highly suitable paradigm for all domains and performances), was that capacity-building was carried out based on objectives and programs.

The Micro Level

The Micro Level also encompasses characteristics that are crucial for the analysis and comprehension of our country's strategic culture. "Separation of the armed forces from politics," "protecting security-defense information and documents," "avoidance of contradiction in defense postures," "emphasis on maintaining preparedness," "the nature of civil-military relations," and "emphasis on deterrence" are among the instances that can be cited at this level.

Emphasis on Maintaining Preparedness

Upon deliberation on the country's historical antecedents, particularly in recent centuries, one can ascertain the point that the country's being subjected to aggression was fundamentally due to a lack of preparedness. The occurrence of the two Iran-Russia wars in the Qajar era (Shamim, 1371: 83–104) and other wars, especially the Imposed War of Iraq against Iran, amply corroborates this assertion. This reality has influenced the country's strategic culture. In other words, the reflection of this issue in the strategic culture has been manifested in the form of a special emphasis on preparedness. Iran, in the Imposed War—which was undeniably a key factor in the re-formulation of the country's strategic culture (Strain, 15 April 1996: 19)—became acutely aware of the necessity to elevate the level of capability and achieve deterrence; this is because preparedness, while sustaining the balance of power (as one of the deterrent mechanisms), leads to an increase in the costs of (potential) aggression. Deterrence is, in fact, derived from the calculation of costs versus benefits. (Strain, 15 April 1996: 10–12)

The Nature of Civil-Military Relations

This refers to the nature of the relationship existing between the military and civilian sectors within a country's structure and political dealings. This relationship can exert an influence on the nation's strategic culture. For instance, if the military dominates in a country, the military personnel will then exercise control over the country's destiny, and decision-making will be a function of their inclinations, interests, and policies. Should this condition persist, the populace will gradually perceive the strategic culture from the military's perspective. The dominance of the military over the decision-making process affects the type of doctrine selected and their

method of interaction and conflict resolution with other nations (Kier, Spring 1995).

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on Article 143 of the Constitution, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is tasked with safeguarding the country's independence, territorial integrity, and the system of the Islamic Republic. Additionally, based on Article 150 of the Constitution, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is responsible for the guardianship of the Islamic Revolution and its achievements. These two articles of the Constitution (as the charter of national unity and the manifestation of the nation's ideals and will) delineate the limits of authority and duties of the country's armed forces. The emphasis of Article 79 of the Constitution, which prohibits the establishment of martial law except in emergency conditions, and then only for a maximum duration of 30 days and with the approval of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis), is a further testament to the fact that Iran's armed forces must pursue their activities within the framework of the country's general statutes.

Notwithstanding their glorious accomplishments during the Holy Defense period, the military personnel never sought to dominate the country's governmental structures. Furthermore, given the “popular nature of defense” in our country, the populace also participated alongside the military in fulfilling their roles. Consequently, our country's strategic culture is influenced by such a perspective.

Emphasis on Deterrence

Strategic culture also exerts influences on deterrence (Zhang, 1992: 1-12). The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces has repeatedly underscored the point that the strategy of the Islamic Republic is “Deterrent Defense” or “Deterrence.” For instance, during his visit to Hamadan Province (on 18/4/83 - July 8, 2004), His Eminence declared to a gathering of military forces:

“The Army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Sepah Pasdaran), within the framework of the authoritative and deterrent defense strategy, possess full preparedness”

Separation of the Armed Forces from Politics

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the relations of the armed forces with the political domain are subservient to the nature of the system and the

existential philosophy of each military branch. In most countries, we observe an Army that is generally focused on safeguarding the nation against external threats. However, in the Islamic system, and based on the strategic wisdom of the Founder of the Islamic Republic, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed were formed in line with the “popularization of defense”. The mandate of these two revolutionary forces is the guardianship of the Revolution and its achievements; consequently, confronting external threats is within the purview of their core duties. This is despite the assertion of the Founder of the Islamic Revolution that the armed forces must not join political groups and factions. This prudent measure should not lead to the conclusion that the armed forces must be segregated from politics. The IRGC consistently regards itself as “commissioned and fully accountable, rather than merely commissioned and excused”. Confronting internal crises—which commenced in the initial days following the victory of the Islamic Revolution and continue to this day—is a clear indication of the interconnectedness of the armed forces (at least the IRGC and Basij) with political matters. However, maintaining equilibrium between these two concepts (non-involvement in political factions and functional role in political matters) is highly critical, a point that the Leader of the Revolution has repeatedly emphasized and articulated recommendations regarding to it. Therefore, it must be stated that the functional role of the armed forces in the political domain is one of the characteristics of our country's strategic culture.

Emphasis on Protecting of Security-Defense Information and Documents

The reality is that our country is perennially exposed to conspiracies and threats. One of the enemies' objectives is to gain awareness of the extent of capabilities and to access classified documents and information. The acquisition of these documents constitutes a vulnerability and activates external threats. In recent centuries and decades, our country has suffered extensive damage in this regard. This issue has led to a special emphasis on the protection of security-defense information and documents being advanced as one of the characteristics of our strategic culture at the Micro Level (particularly among the armed forces).

Avoidance of Contradiction in Defense Postures

One of the characteristics of our country's armed forces is unity and coherence in the declaration of defense postures. This matter, which

signifies the unanimity and cohesion of the military personnel, contributes to public awareness and prevents the fragmentation of public opinion. Undoubtedly, the performance of military personnel based on factional inclinations and personal interpretations will lead to disruption. The insightful and courageous measures of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces have played and continue to play a determining role in preventing contradiction in defense postures.

Analysis of Findings

This section of the research is dedicated to the collection and analysis of data and findings that were gathered via a questionnaire from the sample volume of the research's statistical population. Typically, the findings of any research are analyzed at two levels: descriptive and inferential:

Descriptive Analysis of Findings

In the descriptive analysis, the data of the statistical population were, after coding, categorization, and classification, presented in the format of a table accompanied by the mean index.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Findings

Questions	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Average
Question 1. The extent of Islam's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	3	1	7	15	24	4.12
Question 2. The extent of history's influence, particularly contemporary history, on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	3	4	11	16	16	3.76
Question 3. The extent of geographical location's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	1	10	21	16	4.08
Question 4. The extent of the Imposed War's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	2	11	21	16	4.02
Question 5. The extent of economic factors' influence (oil revenues) on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	1	1	13	21	14	3.92
Question 6. The extent of the international system's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	5	14	20	11	3.74
Question 7. The influence of access to military or dual-use technology on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	1	5	16	22	6	3.54

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Findings

Questions	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Average
Question 8. Civil-military relations as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	5	19	21	4	3.49
Question 9. Inspirational influence or software-based power projection as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	1	11	21	16	4.06
Question 10. Interoperability contingent upon non-dependence as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	5	6	10	23	6	3.38
Question 11. Distrust of foreigners (or aliens) as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	7	0	25	18	4.08
Question 12. Avoiding isolationism and believing in internationalism as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	9	22	14	5	3.30
Question 13. Avoiding bellicism (or warlikeness) and emphasizing regional and international peace and security as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	4	5	11	21	9	3.52
Question 14. Self-reliance as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	2	14	21	13	3.9
Question 15. The role and status of "human resources, faith, morale, and..." as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	0	5	11	20	14	3.86
Question 16. "Faith in God, following the Supreme Leader (Velayat-paziri), and martyrdom-seeking" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	1	3	0	28	17	4.16
Question 17. "Threat-centricity" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	0	4	0	32	14	4.12
Question 18. "Emphasis on deterrence" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	0	3	14	22	11	3/82
Question 19. "Optimal utilization of domestic assets and maximum efficiency of resources" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	5	6	15	15	9	3.34
Question 20. "Strong national identity" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	3	4	14	15	14	3.66
Question 21. "Separation of the armed forces from politics" as one of the characteristics of	1	5	0	14	30	3.34

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Findings

Questions	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Average
the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).						
Question 22. "Integrated public presence in defensive conditions" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	2	0	22	26	4.44
Question 23. "Internal cohesion in defensive conditions" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	0	0	14	36	4.72
Question 24. "Public awareness of the enemy" (or public enemy studies) as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	11	0	25	14	3.84
Question 25. "Having self-confidence" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	2	0	22	26	4.44
Question 26. "High threshold for tolerance and willingness to pay the cost by the people in defensive conditions" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	1	7	0	30	12	3.9
Question 27. "Emphasis on safeguarding security and defense information and documents by military personnel and politicians" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	1	8	23	18	4.16
Question 28. "Emphasis on maintaining readiness" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	1	5	24	20	4.26
Question 29. "Singular voice and avoidance of contradiction in the defensive stances of military personnel" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	0	6	11	15	18	3.9

5-2. Inferential Analysis of Questions (Hypotheses)

To test the hypotheses between the observed values and the expected values, a one-sample t-test will be employed. The two options for the observed and expected values are dichotomous at the nominal level; however, the values themselves are at the ordinal level of measurement,

which, in this research, have been artificially assumed to be in the interval state (or interval scale).

Table 4. Inferential Analysis of Questions

Questions	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Number of Observations	Variable Values
Question 1. The extent of Islam's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	7.802	0.000	1.120	50	Expected Values
					50	Observed Values
Question 2. The extent of history's influence, particularly contemporary history, on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	4.595	0.000	0.760	//	//
Question 3. The extent of geographical location's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	47	9.447	0.000	1.083	//	//
Question 4. The extent of the Imposed War's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	8.536	0.000	1.020	//	//
Question 5. The extent of economic factors' influence (oil revenues) on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	7.529	0.000	0.920	//	//
Question 6. The extent of the international system's influence on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	5.678	0.000	0.740	//	//
Question 7. The influence of access to military or dual-use technology on the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	4.204	0.000	0.540	//	//

Table 4. Inferential Analysis of Questions

Questions	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Number of Observations	Variable Values
Question 8. Civil-military relations as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	48	4.319	0.000	0.490	//	//
Question 9. Inspirational influence or software-based power projection as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	48	9.271	0.000	1.061	//	//
Question 10. Interoperability contingent upon non-dependence as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	2.319	0.000	0.380	//	//
Question 11. Distrust of foreigners (or aliens) as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	7.909	0.000	1.080	//	//
Question 12. Avoiding isolationism and believing in internationalism as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	2.393	0.000	0.300	//	//
Question 13. Avoiding bellicism (or warlikeness) and emphasizing regional and international peace and security as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	49	3.205	0.000	0.520	//	//

Table 4. Inferential Analysis of Questions

Questions	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Number of Observations	Variable Values
Question 14. Self-reliance as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	7.584	0.000	0.900	//	//
Question 15. The role and status of "human resources, faith, morale, and..." as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	49	6/416	0.000	0.860	//	//
Question 16. "Faith in God, following the Supreme Leader (Velayat-paziri), and martyrdom-seeking" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	48	9.313	0.000	1.163	//	//
Question 17. "Threat-centricity" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	49	10.245	0.000	1/120	//	//
Question 18. "Emphasis on deterrence" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	49	6.824	0.000	0.820	//	//
Question 19. "Optimal utilization of domestic assets and maximum efficiency of resources" as one of the characteristics of Iran's strategic culture.	49	1.994	0.052	0/340	//	//
Question 20. "Strong national identity" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	4.045	0.000	0/660	//	//
Question 21. "Separation of the armed forces from politics" as one of the	49	9/092	0.000	1.340	//	//

Table 4. Inferential Analysis of Questions

Questions	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Number of Observations	Variable Values
characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).						
Question 22. "Integrated public presence in defensive conditions" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	14.453	0.000	1.440	//	//
Question 23. "Internal cohesion in defensive conditions" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	26/815	0.000	1.720	//	//
Question 24. "Public awareness of the enemy" (or public enemy studies) as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	5.521	0.000	0.840	//	//
Question 25. "Having self-confidence" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	26/815	0.000	1.720	//	//
Question 26. "High threshold for tolerance and willingness to pay the cost by the people in defensive conditions" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	6/397	0.000	0.900	//	//
Question 27. "Emphasis on safeguarding security and defense	49	10.714	0.000	1/160	//	//

Table 4. Inferential Analysis of Questions

Questions	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Number of Observations	Variable Values
information and documents by military personnel and politicians" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).						
Question 28. "Emphasis on maintaining readiness" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	12.322	0.000	1.260	//	//
Question 29. "Singular voice and avoidance of contradiction in the defensive stances of military personnel" as one of the characteristics of the strategic culture of the I.R. Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran).	49	6.148	0.000	0.900	//	//

Test Results and Key Factors in Strategic Culture

The findings of this test indicate that, considering the t-value and the degrees of freedom, these questions are significant at the 99 percent level; furthermore, the researcher's finding is corroborated by the respondents, except in the case of Question 19. In other words, in the view of the statistical sample, the following factors are among the effective determinants in the formation of the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic: the Religion of Islam and the Shi'a Denomination; the country's contemporary history; the country's geographical location; the Eight-Year Imposed War; economic factors (economic revenues) of the country; the international system; access to military or dual-use technologies; civil-military relations (civilian dominance); inspiration or soft power projection; interoperability conditioned upon non-dependency; distrust of foreigners; avoidance of isolationism and belief in internationalism;

avoidance of bellicosity and emphasis on peace and regional security; self-reliance; the role and position of human resources, faith, morale, and related elements; faith in God, acceptance of *Velayat* (Guardianship), and martyrdom-seeking; threat-centricity; emphasis on deterrence; robust national identity; separation of the armed forces from politics; integrated popular presence in defensive situations; internal cohesion in defensive situations; achieving awareness of the enemy; possessing self-confidence; high threshold of public tolerance; emphasis on the protection of security-defense information and documents by military personnel and politicians; emphasis on maintaining preparedness; and unanimity (single-voice) and avoidance of contradiction in the defense postures of the military.

Conclusion

As was indicated in the introduction, in the pursuit of comprehending the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this chapter endeavored to address the effective factors in the formation of our country's strategic culture and the characteristics of this culture. The author's findings indicate that, similar to the role and standing of culture in the social, political, and economic affairs of society, strategic culture likewise possesses a valuable significance and standing; such that it can be regarded as the foundation and basis of deterrence for any society. In other words, strategic culture, as an environment that is likely to directly or indirectly influence the preference or selection of a policy or the formulation of a society's strategy, can play a determining role in the choice of behavior across a spectrum of actions within the framework of strategic conduct. It was based on such a perspective that the importance and necessity of discussing this subject were elucidated.

Review and Summary of Findings

By reviewing the existing literature concerning our country's strategic culture, it was ascertained that this culture is influenced by certain factors. "The international system," "geographical location," and "historical antecedents" were examined as general factors, and "the religion of Islam and the Shi'a Denomination," "oil revenues," and "the imposed war" as specific factors. The results of the survey conducted indicated that the influence of the specific factors on our country's strategic culture was, to some extent, greater than that of the general factors. Regarding the characteristics of the strategic culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the author categorized their study findings into three levels: Macro, Societal,

and Micro. At the Macro Level, the characteristics examined were: “Inspirational capacity,” “interoperability without unilateral dependence,” “distrust of foreigners,” “avoidance of bellicosity and emphasis on peace and security,” “self-reliance,” “human resources and morale,” “faith in God, acceptance of *Velayat*, and martyrdom-seeking,” “threat-centricity,” “integrated popular presence in defensive situations,” “internal cohesion in defensive situations,” “popular awareness of the enemy,” “high threshold of public tolerance,” and “possessing self-confidence.” At the Societal Level, the characteristics were: “extent of access to technology,” “maximum utilization of resources,” and “robust national identity.” At the Micro Level, the characteristics were: “separation of the armed forces from politics,” “protection of security-defense information and documents,” “avoidance of contradiction in defense postures,” “emphasis on maintaining preparedness,” “the nature of civil-military relations,” and “emphasis on deterrence.” Based on the results obtained from the survey conducted, although the vast majority of the characteristics stated (except for one instance: “maximum utilization of resources”) were corroborated by the respondents, the analysis of the statistical results demonstrates that the mean of the responses provided regarding the characteristics at the Macro Level possessed a higher average.

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