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1. Introduction

Today, the world is experiencing a new era in which two elements play major roles. These two elements are change and crisis that are the main and stable elements of today's world. These upcoming changes and crises make it difficult for the policy makers and strategists to make decisions about how to interact with this changing and unstable world (Abdollahkhani, 2008:2). Since they have changed the governments rapidly and also a real change in human is taking place (Tofler, 2008:4). Needle to say, human changes lead to the development of crises and such crises will lead to the strategic surprise and it will have serious consequences for governments, social systems and geographic regions and will lead to financial, physical, territorial and military loses (Hajiyani, 2011: 94).

In the developments of the contemporary world, there are many different variables that foment these crises and create new policies in dealing with them (crises). Among the variables that underlie the crises in the Middle East are religion and religious ideas.

Essentially from seventeenth century, the international system has had non-religious nature and has given little attention to religion. But regarding the issue of religion in the international relations theory should not be considered just as adding a variable on other variables, but it should be considered that how religion can help the new hypotheses and concepts to explain the peace, conflict, cooperation, competition, alliances, national benefits, etc. However, it should be noted that how the scholars conceptualize the role of religion in the international relations in their writings. To answer this question, we should view the issue of religion with different approaches and consider a variety of approaches (Ghavam, 2014:1-9).

By using the realism approach, this research aims to investigate the role of religion in one of the most tumultuous regions of the world, the Middle East. Movements and events of the past few decades in this region and the rise and fall of Islamic fundamentalist and extremist groups like the Taliban,

al-Qaeda, and recently Daesh affected the arrangement of this region by the behavior of such activists. In fact, in this study, we have tried to answer the question of whether religious ideas and constructing a new identity of it cause the organization of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the region.

2. Theoretical Foundations

A variety of theories have been raised about the influence of religion in international relations. In this regard, the approach of religion and realism as well as the identity and its construction will be mentioned so that by using and incorporating these ideas, analysis and conclusions will be provided at a later stage.

2.1. Religion and Politics

Religion is one of the fundamental forces of the social world that it cannot be simply assumed as "omitted variable". Because the religions go beyond the state borders, they have the special ability to create "systemic change". They affect all society's institutions and ideas and motivate their followers. Religion will have a real impact on the concepts of most areas like who the actors of global politics are and what they want. Religion can reinforce ethno-national identity, remove the gap between national identities or even separate a nation. And finally, religion can affect the policy by shaping the network and organizational structures of policy or influencing the political motives and values. Religious actors can be strategic, yet get inspiration from the essence of the divine. Also, conventional estimates of power and religious purposes can simultaneously play a role in different judgments about the coalition and conflict (Ghavam, 2014: 4-20). According to some realists such as Kenneth Waltz, religion has a feature that distributes the power and organizes its units (Waltz, 1979:82). The categories in which the religion is important are given below:

2.1.1. Systematic Principle of the International System

Waltz begins his discussion with two basic principles that regulates the

political system; first, hierarchical system, a system based on power relationships between units under the authority of law and second is anarchic, it believes that those actors who are trying to remain their survival alone, are looking for their desirable system by their anarchic behavior. In fact, the realists believe that international politics has been anarchic from the past up to now. The realists accept that anarchy can be transformed to hierarchical system (Tin-bor Hui, 2005). It is somehow compatible with realism since different religious cultures can develop different strategic cultures that shape the behavioral options. In this term, Monica Taft, in her paper, states that Islamic strategic culture is incompatible when encountering contemporary procedures such as destining (Toft, 2001:15).

2.1.2. Power Distribution
According to Waltz, religion can be the main factor of power creation. Clearly, religious motivation is an effective factor for armed revolts such as Millenarian Christian Taiping Rebellion in China in 19th century, destructive religious wars of Europe in 16th and 17th centuries and the contemporary Islamic Salafi activities (Hunington, 1991:7).

2.1.3. Benefits
Finally, Waltz writes the benefits of the state as territorial administrative units often have a complicated relationship with the benefits of the nation as a unit of culture (sometimes cultural-religious). When the official borders do not match with ethnic or religious borders that define political identities, chaos will be created, a phenomenon that has been evident during the thirty years war in Europe, Pan-Arabism between 1947 and 1973, and political Islam in recent years (Miller, 2007).

2.2. Identity and Identity Construction
Manuel Castels believes that the term identity, when speaking of social actors, is the process of meaning-making based on a cultural characteristic or a set of interconnected cultural characteristics that are given priority over

other sources of meaning. Identity is a meaning source for the activists and it is made by themselves through the process of individuation (Castels, 2001: 20). Castels -quoted from Calhoun- argues that identity is the source of meaning and experience for the people (Calhoun, 1994). Since the social construction of identity always takes place in the context of power relations, we must distinguish between three forms and origins of identity construction:

- Legitimizing identity: This type of identity is created by the dominant social institutions to increase their domination over social actors and rationalize it. This is the main core of the Sennett theory of authority and domination, but also is consistent with various theories of nationalism (Anderson& Gellner, 1993).

- Resistance identity: This identity is created by the activists that are in circumstances or situations which might be considered worthless by the logic of domination. So strongholds are built for resistance and survival on the basis of different principles or contrary to the principles advocated by the society (Calhoun, 1994:17).

- Systematic Identity: When social actors build a new identity using any available cultural materials that re-define their position in the society and thus seek to change the entire social structure, this kind of identity is realized. It is clear that the identities which are originally formed as a resistance identity may advertise some programs or may become the dominant institution among the other social institutions and thus in order to rationalize their domination, they may change into legitimizing identities(Buci-Glucksman, 1978). It seems that the second type of identity, the identity of resistance, lead to congregations, or as Etzioni says, the communities (Etzioni, 1993). Perhaps, this is the most important form of constructing identity in our society. This identity creates forms of collective resistance against the oppression, otherwise, was unbearable and generally is constructed on the basis of the identities that are defined clearly by

history, geography or biology. For example, ethnic-based nationalism, as Schef says, often arises out of the feelings of alienation and anger against unjust political, economic or social discrimination (Schef, 1994: 281).

2.3. Islamic Fundamentalism

Religious fundamentalism, particularly Islamic fundamentalism, is one of the concepts that has been widely spread around the world in recent centuries. The term fundamentalism is derived from the word "fundamentum" meaning cornerstone and foundation. The equivalent of this term in Arabic is "al- usuliye" that means a return to the principles and fundamentals (Hiwood & Andro, 2000: 495). Historically, this term was first used in the early twentieth century and has been used for a group of evangelical Christians that since they believed in the inspiring nature of words and phrases of Christian Bible, they emphasized to do according to its themes. Also, they rejected the attitude of Western modernism toward religion (Babisaeid, 2008: 20). This procedure considers itself the custodian of religious foundations. Its social statement states that it wants to confront a world that destroys his religious foundations. Its problem is that the religious foundations are disappearing (Ferasatkhah, 2015: 1). Islamic fundamentalism also means adherence to the fundamental principles of Islam. History of Islamic fundamentalism goes back to Seyyed Jamal-edin Asad Abbadi and Moslim-Brotherhood movement in Egypt by Hassan Albena and Seyyed Qotb and Mohamed Qotb and the others who at that time were severely repressed by the rulers of Egypt that mostly had the form of fight against colonialism (Lafraie, 2007). This is also evident with more examples in the Muslim world; in Egypt and other Arabic countries, especially after the Arab defeat in the war with Israel in the form of Baath or Brotherhood (Ikhwan), the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Daesh in Syria and Iraq (http://fa.wikipedia).

3. Research Methodology

This is a cross-sectional study that aims to describe the characteristics of the Middle East region by using relevant sources for providing an analysis that is consistent with the received information. By using and combining the relevant theories including the realism approach and identity approach and its construction, it seeks to build a theoretical framework to achieve the result. It should be mentioned that in descriptive research, as the title suggests, the researcher seeks to explore the relationship between phenomena and the variables, also the researcher deals with the reception of events, real and systematic description of events and different subjects and then concluding and providing an analysis consistent with the reality(Akhbari; 2007:16).

4. The Middle East and the Reasons of Fundamentalism

The increasing speed of developments in the Middle East and transferring this area to the central focus of the international system is one of the important phenomena of twenty-first century which is affected all political actors, especially the countries in the region (Buzan & other, 2009: 5). Historically, the Middle East has been the crossroad of empires, dynasties, cultures and values in periods of peace and war of those who owned access to the vital land and water trade routes and used that powerful force and seized significant opportunities (Kemp, 1997:11). According to Herodotus, the Middle East is a geographical zone of the African-Asian lands that stretched from North Africa to the western borders of China and it is the ring land that Hodgson calls it from the Nile to the Oxus (Hodgson, 1947:50-60). Hodgson's idea involves few key and conflicting facts. The great Middle East is shaped with the legacy of three religions and struggle of war and politics (Kaplan, 2015: 175). This area is always to the invaders and trans-regional powers in the past centuries. From the hundred or so years ago, the economic attractiveness of the region's natural resources increased the intervention and influence of trans-regional powers in the

affairs of the people of this region. This factor has made the Middle East and much of the Islamic world the scene of colonial struggle and competition. On the other hand, dependence to the political, social and economic schools and theories alien to the region had devastating impact on the elites and masses. The legacy of the ancient people of this region in the past, a civilization that was developed in the Islamic context, in these conditions was subjected to looting and neglect. The industrial revolution and then the communication revolution in the means of communication in recent decades have increased the inherent complexity of the situation in the region. Whatever these indices took power, the socio-cultural stability and security of the population affected. So, this territory fell into the vertex of the hard crisis (Moujani, 2015: k). World War I, regardless of the materials of socio-cultural integration in the Islamic world and by drawing on disparate geographic borders on the one hand, and occupation of Palestinian Islamic land and creation of ideological structures based on the idea of Zionism called Israel after World War II on the other hand, creates an unbalanced geopolitical structure in the region. These conditions resulted in fundamental changes in the attitudes of Baathist, nationalistic, and Islamic movements (Ibid). Now, there is an array of governments in the Middle East in which people do not always coincide with the boundaries of the states. There are minorities that do not have governments (Kurdish and Palastinian) and there are pervasive identities (Islamic and Arabic) that play multiple and sometimes conflicting roles. Therefore, different types of identities (Sunni and Shia), (Arabic, Persian, Turkish), (fundamentalist and moderate) and others like these are against each other (Ebrahimi, 2013:15). These issues, along with extra-regional actors' behavior led to the construction of the identity from the religion thoughts by some fundamentalist groups.

5. Findings
In a final analysis, it can be said that after the Peace of Westphalia and the formation of secular governments it seemed that religion has been separated

from politics, but the failure of secular governments in some undeveloped societies and the willingness to political participation among people of these communities and inefficiency of some political structures was the resurgence of religion in international politics.

International system experience, especially in the last two centuries, showed that despite the political boundaries between countries, religions transcend state borders and have the ability to motivate his followers to create systemic change (Ghavam, 2014: 7). This can be seen in Huntington's hypothesis where he emphasizes on the central role of religion in international relations and points out that religions play a major role in the future challenges in faults of civilization. Religions are the determinants of the civilization gaps. Obviously, he considers the religious motivations as an effective factor for riots in activities of contemporary Islamic Salafi(Huntington, 1991). In fact, when the official borders do not match with ethnic or religious borders that define political identity, there will be chaos, a phenomenon that has been evident during Pan-Arabism in 1947 and 1973 and political Islam in recent years (Miller, 2007).

This will be displayed as the construction of identity for those activists who are not identified by the international community. Because having identity causes identification and also religious identity has more cohesion power and suitable ability of identification.

According to Castels, this identity is created by the activists in the circumstances or situations that might be considered worthless by the logic of domination. Religious fundamentalism is an example of those that seek to construct a defensive identity within the framework of the dominant ideologies and institutions (Castels, 2001: 24). This attitude has changed the religious ideas of the actors in the Middle East to the ideology. In other words, ideology has become somehow security religion and the use of religion for the political purposes has become one of the techniques of religious groups (Carsten & Waver, 2000: 226). Islamic fundamentalism

approach that considers itself the custodian of religious foundations is trying to use its ideology to confront a world that wants to destroy the foundations of his religions. These issues appeared in the late nineteenth century and by the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. Those days, due to the change in the political map of the region, political, social, military and cultural crises created and led to the emergence of nationalist current, the Baathis current and Islamic movements. Each of these currents was growing due to the crisis in a particular region. For example, Muslims-Brotherhood (Ikhwan) in Egypt and following the nationalist discussions and Arabism and communist influence in North Africa, the Taliban during the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan to combat it, al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and more recently in Iraq and in the fight against domination and Daesh, in Syria and Iraq to revive the religious identity and Islamic Caliphate of its creators.

Larens, Castels, Hofer, Esposito, Rice, Emerson and Hartman and the others have studied in the field of the performance and behavior of these groups and determined their seventeen characteristics as below:

1. Radicalism, 2. Religious extremity, 3. Authoritarianism or totalitarianism or religion as a matter of fact for the whole community, 4. Absolutism, 5. Anger, 6. Salafi element, 7. Returning identity, 8. Patriarchy that is one of their dominant characteristics, 9. Charismatic leadership, 10. Populism in policies and strategies, 11. Monopolists and having problems with pluralism and inclusive, 12. Integration of religion and government and having problems with the separation of the territory of the institutions and specialization and differentiation, 13. Revolutionary versus reforms, 14. Messianism, 15. Organizing, 16. Excommunication, 17. Arhab.

It seems that the general term for these currents is the religious fundamentalism and these seventeen characteristics mentioned above show different tendencies and their functions (Ferasatkhah, 2005: 7). In recent years, Islamic fundamentalism, relying on the religious ideas of the

members and the construction of religious ideology, has been able to attract disaffected Sunni, region tribes, elements remained from the previous policies such as the Baath party and so on, people from different social classes, and also by using the holy word of jihad, and by taking these actions has organized itself.

Geography also come to help these movements and all of these groups with geopolitical and geostrategic abilities come together in geographic areas. The notable feature of these groups is that their managers have the great ability and skill in doing this project well due to the complete knowledge of the regions geography, culture, history and language(Moujani, 2015: 173).

With these descriptions, in response to the first question" Do the religious ideas and constructing a new identity based on its lead to the organization of the Islamic fundamentalist groups in the region?", it can be said that religious ideas with the construction of resistance and systematic identities, by using the depth of strategic, culture, history and socio-cultural conditions of the region could practically organize the concept of religious ideology or as this research suggests," Islamic fundamentalist", in the Middle East region.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Middle East region is generating a new historical and geopolitical generation which is originated from sectarian, social, ethnic, cultural and religious crises. Those regional actors who seek to maintain their survival with their anarchic behavior want to get their favorite regulation and make their own territory. No actor can act or play without the territory and one of the prerequisites for having the realm is organizing human structures in a region. In the meantime, ideological activists, more than the others, are trying to control the Middle East region in order to provide their benefits and achieve their goals. Middle East is now in fluidity of three types of the geopolitics, each of these types has the

ideological feature including Shia geopolitics (in the writer's view, moderate ideology), Brotherhood geopolitics (fundamentalist ideology) Salafi geopolitical (extremist ideology). Meanwhile, Salafi ideology by using the principles of the Caliphate and factors mentioned in this research and taking advantage of the power gap in the region has been able to organize itself. If we want to discuss about the organization of these groups, we can mention the following effective factors on the emergence and organization of fundamentalist groups.
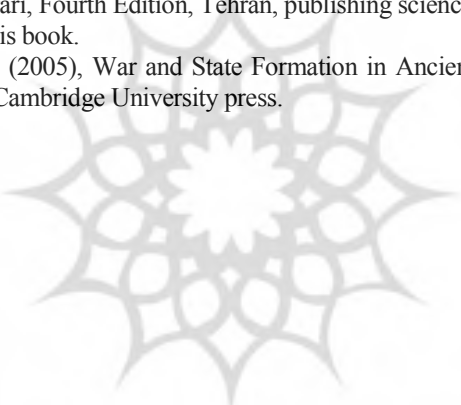
1. Region actors
2. Trans-regional actors
3. Effective factors of ethnic, social, political, cultural and religious
4. Inherent power to regulate the forces

These factors along with the reasons and discussions raised in the research provide fields of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. In a final conclusion, it can be predicted that the Middle East will remain in war in 2016 and conflicts on religion and ideology will continue. This conflict will lead to the emergence of new groups and if the regional countries cannot modify their ideological attitudes and do not move towards unity in religion and commonalities in this field, there will be a change in the political geography of the region and in the ethnic and religious borders in the future. Therefore, a new political geography will appear in the region and its consequences will transmit not only to the region but also to the entire world.

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