


The Role of Qassem Soleimani's School in the National Identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Yaser Soleimani

Ph.D student of Department of political sciences, Baft Branch, Islamic Azad University, Baft, Iran.

n_hamzehnejad@yahoo.com

 0000-0002-8661-354X

Abstract

National identity is the highest level of collective identity in a society, and a sense of adherence, attachment, and commitment to the national community is considered a part of collective identity. Since national identity plays a crucial role in national unity and political legitimacy, it is very important to address this issue. As a prominent resistance figure and symbol of Iranian Islamic identity and counterterrorism, Qassem Soleimani founded a new school of national solidarity, promoted Shiite identity, mobilized resources, and became the basis for the reproduction of national identity in Iran. Therefore, the purpose of the current research was to explain the role of Qassem Soleimani's performance in the reproduction of the national identity of the Islamic Republic and to answer the question of what role Qassem Soleimani's performance had in the reproduction of the national identity in political, religious, and territorial dimensions. The current research method is fundamental in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of data collection. The results of the present study indicated that Qassem Soleimani, by creating a new school of thought, by hegemonizing the discourse of resistance and Shiite religion, activating the protest of Muslims, and creating a cultural heartland among Shiites as a campaign strategy, caused the reproduction of national identity in the Islamic Republic.

Keywords: National Identity, Qassem Soleimani School, Resistance Identity, Shiite's political identity, Cultural Heartland.

E-ISSN: 2717-3542 / Center for Strategic Research / Biannual of Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs

Journal of "Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs" © 11 years by Center for Strategic research is licensed under CC BY 4.0



 10.22034/IRFA.2023.420971.1217

Introduction

The concept of identity is important in two ways. First, identities express the individual's or group's perception of themselves and how they communicate with others. Second, identities are formed due to specific socio-political conditions and have a strong social aspect. National identity is a result of a country's culture, politics, society, economy, and history, and it is important and necessary to address it. It is as if a nation is consciously accountable for the past, present, and future. In national identity studies, two cultural (culture-oriented) and political (government-oriented) attitudes have been used. The first one looks at cultural variables (such as language, religion, literature, beliefs, etc.) that are the product of a long time period (history). However, the second one provides the basis for entering political variables. In the second view that this article follows, national identity is something that is constructed.

Bashirieh (2003), in an article entitled "Evolution of self-awareness and political identities in Iran," proclaims that the ideology of the Islamic revolution presented a set of new identities and self-awareness, which resulted in concepts such as the Islamic Ummah, the unity of the Ummah, and the Islamic world against the west overcoming all political relations. Tajik (2005) also concluded in an article entitled "Modern Man and the Mystery of Identity" that in the process of the Islamic Revolution, a system of knowledge and the organization of religious discourse were formed, which is rooted in the ancient tradition of Islam and is an ideology that guides action and is liberating. Accordingly, the essence of identity in the discourse of the Islamic Republic is basically related to the structure of political power.

If we consider the national identity based on the formation of the political organization or government, then the most important feature of the national identity in the political aspect would be unity in the political organization, trust and loyalty to the political institutions, and the legitimacy of the political system, which will be able to rebuild itself in different situations. The reconstruction of the transcendent self and Iranian-Islamic identity can be clearly seen in Qasim's personality dimensions. Qassem Soleimani was a great military figure in Iran who integrated the Shiite identity and the identity of the resistance into a global brand in such a way that the followers of his school saw their transcendental identity in him.

Afazkanjin (2022), in a book entitled "The Myth of Haj Qasim and the Reconstruction of the National Identity of Iranians," considers Qasim Soleimani as a myth whose efforts have a deep

connection with the identification of people in Iran. Bagheri (2023), in a book titled "The Architect of the Holy Shrine," tried to portray the spiritual lifestyle of Qassem Soleimani. In his book, he has given real stories told by Qassem Soleimani's friends and comrades. The writing of this book can be an onset for the formation of the headquarters for the development and reconstruction of holy shrines, in which the role of Qassem Soleimani is described. Furthermore, Mazdabadi (2013) has compiled firsthand accounts from acquaintances, colleagues, and family members of Qassem Soleimani in a volume entitled "Born in March," utilizing interview-based methodology. These recollections encapsulate significant moments spanning from shifts in Syria and Iraq to the period leading up to Soleimani's martyrdom, shedding light on his demeanor and emotional disposition.

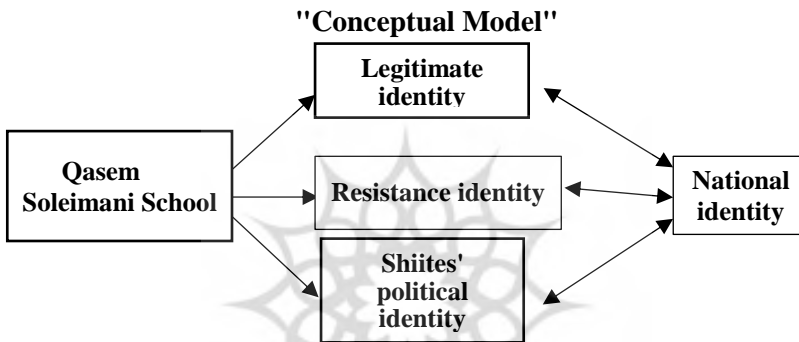
Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the concept of identity, especially in its religious dimension, has been redefined in a trans-territorial way; therefore, any solidarity and unity among Muslims is centered on the term "Islamic Nation." In this regard, the Soleimani School played an important role in reproducing the concept of religious identity and solidarity among Shias in an extraterritorial form due to its spiritualism and centrality.

Qassem Soleimani, by shaping the axis of resistance against western countries and their allies, as well as activating the protest capacities of Muslims and especially Shiites, caused the formation of the Shiite cultural heartland in the world. He challenged the West both spiritually (finding new identity meaning) and materially (the interests of the Middle East region and the world). Based on this, the aim of the article is to explain the role of the Qassem Soleimani School in the reproduction of national identity in Iran. In pursuit of this objective, the descriptive-analytical approach was employed to address the inquiry regarding the role of the Qassem Soleimani School in the perpetuation of the national identity of the Islamic Republic.

1. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a pragmatic methodology to achieve its objectives, employing a descriptive-analytical approach for data gathering. Its primary aim is to illuminate and delineate the role of the Qassem Soleimani School in shaping the national identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Secondary objectives include examining the school's role in legitimizing identity, its contribution to the identity of resistance, and its influence on the identity of Shiite

Islam. The core research hypothesis posits that the Qasem Soleimani School facilitates the reproduction of national identity within the Islamic Republic. The study further posits several sub-hypotheses regarding the school's role. Firstly, it suggests that the school strengthens the legitimizing identity of the Islamic Republic. Secondly, it proposes that the school contributes to the reproduction of the identity of resistance by mobilizing Muslim protests and fostering cultural cohesion among Shiite communities. Lastly, the study suggests that the Qasem Soleimani School strategically revitalizes the identity of Shia Islam, thus playing a crucial role in reproducing Shia political identity within the Islamic Republic. The research conceptual model is outlined as follows:



2. Conceptual Framework

2-1. National Identity

The national identity of people is a combination of their material and spiritual awareness (class, historical, religious, etc.) and their affiliations (class, historical, economic, etc.). According to the content of information and belongings, a person's response to who and what I am and which society belongs to is defined in the framework of the production method and the dominant culture of each period. According to this, by changing the content of awareness or belongings, changing the material conditions of life, changing awareness, or changing the social composition of society, the sense of identity of the individual in relation to the community undergoes transformation (Ameli, 2013: 52).

2-2. Resistance Identity

Activists, stigmatized and deemed worthless by the logic of domination induced by disregarded individuals, created this

identity. This type of identity, founded on two mechanisms, the procedure of "differentiated logic" and "inverted valuation," succeeded in confronting the prevailing values and projecting its own values and norms (Heuge, 2001:33).

2-3. Qassem Soleimani School

A school is said to be a set of worldviews, ideologies, and coherent and aligned theories that clarify the intellectual needs of humans in the course of happiness attainment. The school presents a comprehensible plan for the lifestyle in which the responsibilities and duties to touch perfection are defined with a focus on material and spiritual values. Accordingly, Qassem Soleimani's collection of thoughts and intellectual, ideological, and political systems is called the Soleimani School. This is due to the mainstream and the lessons that can be transferred to the next generation.

2-4. Shiite Political Identity

Shiite identity is a mixture of religious beliefs, political experience, extensive cultural heritage, and collective protest. Unlike Sunni Islamism, from the beginning, Shiite Islamism with a Shiite identity enjoyed authentic clerical leadership. It is a natural consequence of the outstanding role that scholars have played in guiding society. In addition to internal features, external pressure from the surrounding environment influences the Shiite identity. Except for short periods, most of the time, Shiites endured various degrees of exclusion, discrimination, or persecution. They criticized the three areas of theology, politics, and (in the new era) loyalty to the government (Fuller et al., 2009: 23).

2-5. Cultural Heartland:

In his theory, Mackinder called all lands of the world, including the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe, global islands and determined a central axis for this island called the Heartland, or the heart of the world. Based on his theory, he emphasized that whoever can control the heartland can control the global island, and whoever controls the global island will certainly control the whole world. The axis that Mackinder defined as the heartland included vast areas of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and parts of Eastern Europe (Dezhpasand et al., 2014).

3. Findings

3-1. The Legitimization of Identity and Qassem Soleimani's School

According to Castells, identity is the source of meaning and experience for people. He considered identity to be a meaning-making process based on a cultural characteristic with an interconnected set of cultural characteristics that have priority over other sources of meaning, introducing three types of identity, including "legitimizing identity," "resistance identity," and "planned identity" (Amir et al., 2015).

Belonging to a political unit as a national element requires belonging to the government, the political system, and the values that give legitimacy to the government in the national identity (Sani Ajlal, 2004:110). It will be a determinant factor in strengthening solidarity and the national bond (Riggins, 2017: 286).

The essence of Iran's Islamic revolution formed based on the Islamic teachings; this issue indicates the Universality of this policy-making in the foreign aspect. Relying on principles such as the rejection of seeking domination and rejecting domination over the country's natural and economic resources, defending the rights of the oppressed, adhering to international obligations and creating a peaceful relationship based on interaction and cooperation are among the principles involved in the constitutional law that govern the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Constitutional Law, Article 11, 152 and 153).

The essence of Iran's Islamic revolution was formed based on Islamic teachings; this issue indicates the universality of this policy-making in the foreign aspect. Relying on principles such as the rejection of seeking domination and rejecting domination over the country's natural and economic resources, defending the rights of the oppressed, adhering to international obligations, and creating a peaceful relationship based on interaction and cooperation are among the principles involved in the constitutional law that govern the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Constitutional Law, Articles 11, 152, and 153)

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the concept of identity in its religious dimension has been redefined in an extra-territorial way, so any solidarity and unity centered on the word "Islamic nation". Based on this, Qasim Soleimani's school played an important role in reproducing the concept of religious identity and solidarity among Shiites in an extra-territorial way by emphasizing

religious values and fighting against the domination system by referring to the text of the people.

In Iran and even other countries, Soleimani believed that referring to the context of the people was the straightest and least expensive way to solve problems; moreover, at the regional level, he saw the solution to complex issues in referring to the people and consulting and helping them. Based on this, in the face of the most challenging security crises, instead of relying only on official institutions, he led the people, changing them into a strong fortress against the enemy's attack.

In negotiations with different authorities in the West Asia region, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan, Soleimani announced cooperation with the resistance forces for their benefit. Also, in negotiations with the Afghan authorities, he succeeds in turning "Fatemiyoun" into a determinant guarantor of Afghanistan's security against terrorism and separatist groups. As a part of the Afghan security system and in negotiations with the Pakistani authorities, he made "Zeinabiyoun" an honorable force for the Pakistani authorities, encouraging the government to help them (Jahanbani & Levy, 2023).

Even through comprehensive negotiations, he convinced the Iraqi authorities to accept "Hashd al-Shaabi" as an important factor of the military-security structure and thus make it permanent. Before this, his efforts improved the political position of Hezbollah in the organization and society of Lebanon. Moreover, with the help of Soleimani, the Palestinian popular groups, including Hamas, Jihad, and the Palestinian Brigades, became the Palestinian security, military, and political power. (Mousavi, 2018:94)

By shaping the axis of resistance against western countries and their allies, as well as activating the protest capacities of Muslims, especially Shiites, Soleimani levered the formation of a cultural heartland among the Shiites of the world, which in terms of identity caused their cultural cohesion to support Islamic movements and the intifada of the Palestinian people. By uniting the resistance forces through his continuous presence and establishing Basiji culture and jihadi management among the commanders, on the one hand, he caused greater unity and cohesion and, on the other hand, strengthened the legitimizing identity among his forces (Rad, 2018).

Qassem Soleimani's Personality, Ideological, and Managerial	Social Relations	Serving the people, taking care of orphans, respecting parents, appreciating family and friends, emphasizing the foundation of the
--	------------------	--

Characteristics		family, helping cultural affairs, seeking justice, seeking to respect and restore the rights of the people, seeking justice.
	Personal Characteristics	Seeking assistance from Imam al-Mahdi (A.S.), turning to the Qur'an for guidance, exhibiting love for Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) and martyrdom, maintaining a steadfast focus on the anticipation of Imam al-Mahdi's emergence, acknowledging spiritual blessings, particularly through love for Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) and expressions of gratitude, contemplating death and the afterlife, recognizing God as an ever-present observer in all circumstances, demonstrating devotion to religious principles, nurturing affection and commitment to spouse and children, displaying perseverance and tolerance, balancing worldly pursuits with spiritual aspirations, acting with wisdom, fostering moral development, entrusting oneself to God's will and finding contentment in His command, embodying a spirit of service and readiness for jihad, and showing profound concern for the welfare of the underprivileged.
	Management Style	Strategic leadership, efficient governance, cooperative administration, behavioral discipline and time management, authoritative guidance, and influencing hearts and minds.

3-2. Reproducing Resistance Identity: The Role of the Qassem Soleimani School

Each nation, besides giving depth and meaning to the history and culture of the people of their country, is known as a symbol of national unity, stability, and resistance against threats and facing adversity and can help the country's unity and integration (Jaafari, 2019). Qassem Soleimani is one of the historical legends of Iran who adopted the strategy of resistance to ensure security in West Asia and to deal with terrorism. He ensured the national security of the region by uniting the countries of the region in the form of an

"axis of resistance."

The theory of resistance was developed within the framework of a monotheistic worldview and conception as a liberating approach in the form of the anti-dominion paradigm. This theory relies on the power of the Islamic Revolution and aims to de-Westernize power relations and international politics. Belief in resistance has led to the formation of resistance clusters and liberation movements. This issue has become more topical in the region of Southwest Asia because, for many years, due to the presence of Zionists and Americans, the geopolitics of the region changed to the geopolitics of resistance (Mousavi, 2018:94).

Qassem Soleimani formed the Resistance Front with forces from Lebanon's Hezbollah and Iraq's Hashd al-Shaabi, mobilizing the people of Syria and uniting them with the defenders of the Iranian shrine against the arrogant offensive measures that created insecurity in the West Asian region by using their infantry, the Takfiri forces of ISIS. He boosted resistance and opposition and prevented the further spread and emergence of ISIS in this region (Jaafari, 2019).

In summary, the objectives of the Qassem Soleimani School, aligned with the discourse of resistance, encompass a range of aims including the liberation of Quds, bolstering the axis of resistance particularly with Syria's involvement, combating Takfiri terrorism, enhancing deterrence capabilities, ensuring national security, boosting diplomatic leverage, and fostering sustainable development (Mousavi, 2018).

Qassem Soleimani, by shaping the axis of resistance against western countries and their allies, as well as activating the protest capacities of Muslims and especially Shiites, caused the formation of the Shiite cultural heartland of the world. This issue has challenged the West both spiritually (finding new identity meaning) and materially (the interests of the Middle East region and the world).

He introduced and represented the discourse of resistance in the world of Islam; therefore, a wider circle of Iranian people could take part in this discourse. Shahreshtani (2021) stated that the discourse of resistance in Iran has various representatives. Unlike the discourse introduced by Qassem Soleimani, the other represented ones attracted and included a minimum number of people. Qassem Soleimani succeeds in presenting the discourse of resistance in such a way that a broader circle of people comes into contact with the resistance.

Qassem Soleimani was involved in the Islamic Republic's most dangerous project, the project of inter-regional and cross-border

military manifestation, and he managed to expose the discourse of resistance identity at the internal and external boundaries. He was able to represent the resistance identity discourse across internal and external borders.

This discourse, known as the centrality of Qassem Soleimani, was a product of cultural, historical, and national identity. At this time, Soleimani communicated with different aspects of Iranian identity. On the one hand, many Iranians saw him as a continuation of the ideals of the Iranian empires, from the Sassanid era to Al-Buya and the Safavids (Ghasemi & Ebrahimabadi, 2011). Soleimani was the one who changed the axis of resistance from a passive stance to an active approach in the region. Also, the discourse of resistance articulated around Soleimani's axis in traditions such as generosity and chivalry, courageousness, astuteness, and kindness is considered the borrower and heir of the cultural and historical descent of Shiism and Islamic tradition (Robati & Bazmandangan, 2022).

These aspects establish a deep connection and unity between different layers of national identity, Shiite identity, Islamic identity, and global identity. The discourse phenomenon created with the centrality of Qassem Soleimani's personality was a sign that ancient, authentic historical and cultural identities can be reproduced in contemporary and later times and maintain their coherence to a large extent against other identities. These features cause this discourse to earn significant potential and actual ability to mobilize the masses and social bonds, and Iran's relationship with its opponents would come out of passivity.

With Western policies aiming to change the geography of the region while ensuring Israel's security, Soleimani's performance in the axis of resistance caused this program to face many problems and obstacles. He stood against Israel in the 51-day war alongside the Sunni Palestinians and in the 33-day war with the Shiite forces of Hezbollah as a representative figure of resistance and a symbol of the contest against terrorism. Also, at the height of the Syrian crisis and on the verge of the fall of Baghdad, he reached this city by passing over ISIS forces and led the anti-terrorist operation until a satisfying result was achieved (Rashidi, 2011:96).

By creating a new school, Soleimani declared the defense of the oppressed beyond territorial concern and purpose. For this purpose, the defense of the oppressed by his school was not limited to supporting the people of Iran; it also developed from Syria to Iraq and Yemen, and even Palestine was also involved in his field of activity. Since Soleimani had a unique genius in military operations,

strategic management, and high organizational ability in many operations in the fight against ISIS, there have been some outstanding successes attained under his leadership. And it was by using this genius that he successfully led strategic and critical battles, so that the last and greatest achievement of General Soleimani in this field was the defeat of the dangerous Takfiri-terrorist project of ISIS. In addition to Iraq and Syria, ISIS planned to capture the entire Shamat region and then other regions of the Middle East and North Africa. By mobilizing the resistance forces in the region, including Hezbollah, Hashd al-Shaabi, local Syrian forces, Fatemiyoun, Heydaryoun, Zainbiyoun, etc., Soleimani was able to create a powerful front against ISIS and finally overthrow the base of this group's vicariate in Raqqa and Mosul (Turabi Qatazi Kalate, 2019: 52).

In this regard, Imam Khamenei, in describing Qassem Soleimani, calls him the martyr of the Islamic nation and acknowledges, "Martyr Soleimani is the international face of the resistance, and all the families of the resistance are seeking retaliation from his enemies" (Khamenei, 2019). However, he also cared about the republican aspects of the Islamic Republic system that make it different from others. In a speech, he stated that the democracy in the country and the all-round independence of the country have made us different from other countries.

Soleimani's performance increased the strategic depth and spiritual influence of Islam across the region. So today we see the cores of resistance spread from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to the Mediterranean coast and the Great Wall of China. The description of the "international face of resistance" by the leader of the revolution refers to Soleimani's management and successful performance not only at the regional level but also at the global level (Torabi Kalateh Ghazi, 2019).

One point that we should consider is that the resistance forces originated in various perceptions, cultures, and beliefs; even Sunnis and Christians were also present among them. He organized and managed all of them in one format to achieve a common goal. Soleimani managed them by commanding their hearts. This made him an international figure and an effective leader, to the point that Imam Khamenei believed we should know his performance as a school and an educational source. The Qassem Soleimani school had specific features such as jihadist training and internalization of Islamic values, Islamic civilization, the spirit of resistance, the spread of Shia culture and Basiji culture, populism, and tolerance.

4. Qasem Soleimani School and the Revelation of Shiite Political Identity

If we consider the concept of identity in Iran as a cluster, two types of vertical and horizontal cuts can be made. Vertical cuts include subcultures and small social identities, but horizontal cuts are cultural and identity layers placed on people's identities at every point. In pre-Islamic Iran, the main and outstanding characteristic of people's identity was ancient history and the characteristics of that period (Ahmadi, 2004:197).

At another point, due to the confrontation of Iranian civilization with Muslim Arabs, a new layer with an Islamic and religious approach was added to Iran's identity. Even in the contemporary period, it encountered another layer, which was a western approach. With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic layer of identity became more prominent, while religion formed the essential element of the national identity of Iranians.

To put it another way, before the revolution, particularly during the Pahlavi era, a picture of national identity that was essentially the opposite of religious identity and Shiite religion was presented, so that the duality of the West and Iran was actually defined under a type of archaic nationalism in which religious identity was weak. The discourse confrontation that arose between these two domains was established. However, over time, following the success of the Islamic revolution, we achieved a synthesis of the combination between national identity and religious identity, with Qassem Soleimani serving as the symbol of this synthesis (Javadzadeh, 2019).

In fact, his activism and political spirit served to strengthen this synthesis. In other words, Soleimani is the perfect synthesis of these layers of identity, i.e., the national, the Islamic, and even more so, the global. He stood for human activism to realize the purest expression of humanity.

For this reason, in the case of ISIS, he defended and protected other religions, such as Yazidis, Christians, and even seculars. He dealt with a problem that affected all people and preserved layers of national, Islamic, and international identity. Even in the smaller layers of national identity, i.e., at the local level and in his hometown, he maintained constant social influence and activism (Shahreshtani, 2021).

According to Qassem Soleimani, the recognition and revival of the identity of Shia Islam are prerequisites for independence and national power. It is also an obstacle to the expansion and reinforcement of the world's dominance. He felt that Iranian Islamic

identity was threatened by the perversion and transformation induced by some representations of Western modernism. According to him, it is the prominent cause of Western colonial rule over Iran and the Islamic world in general. The issue of reviving the identity of Shia Islam was presented as a kind of campaign strategy to prevent such domination. He believed the unfeigned identity was structured based on Islamic culture and belief, including all Iranian layers.

5. The Qassem Soleimani School and the Preservation of Shiite Islam Identity Centered on Guardianship

National identity is the outcome of a country's culture, politics, society, economy, and history. Regarding national identity studies, two cultural (culture-oriented) and political (state-oriented) attitudes are screened and focused. The first one deals with cultural variables (such as language, religion, literature, beliefs, etc.) that are the product of a long time (history), while the latter provides the basis for entering into political variables (Zahiri, 2014). In the second attitude that the present article follows, national identity is something that is constructed.

Qassem Soleimani, who called himself the Troop Zero of guardianship, revealed in words and deeds that he is wholeheartedly subordinate to the authority of the Islamic Republic (Salajegheh & Afshin, 2022). By hegemonizing the discourse of resistance, he produced and reproduced the political dimension of national identity and presented new and different interpretations of that concept. He played an important role among his supporters, especially the Shiites of the world. He defined a new interpretation of the political Islam identity, which led to the legitimacy and political trust of many towards the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and religious authority.

Guardianship is one of the basic characteristics of Soleimani School. During many years of impeccable service and struggle, his thought and manner point to his obedience to the authority of the Velayat-e-Faqih. His will, which some people interpreted as a "guardianship will," is full of long descriptions of the guardianship and advice to follow him. (Mousavi, 2018)

According to Soleimani, the need for guardianship, the creation of social solidarity and convergence of the masses, and the mobilization of resources are actualized through God's guardianship and protection. Hence, the sense of convergence among people in Islamic society originates from "religious culture" and "divine values." On the other hand, the lack of divine guidance will result in social divergence, a lack of unity, and a waste of social forces and

talents that can be employed in realizing sacred issues. Soleimani was an impeccable and genuine example of the Supreme Leader's description of jihadist military power. He had left his earthly being and surrendered his being to the boundless divine ocean.

Governorship	Adherence to Guardianship	Viewing himself as a member of the Supreme Leader's family, he harbors deep affection for guardianship, maintains unwavering focus on the Twelfth Imam (A.S.), demonstrates wisdom regarding the Wali Faqih, and exhibits kindness towards the populace.
	Governor's Manner	Listening to and executing the directives of the leadership, serving as a soldier of the Twelfth Imam (A.S.), obeying the religious leader, continuing the legacy of guardianship, laying the groundwork for the advent of emergence, supporting and aiding the religious leader who champions the rights of the oppressed, the leadership of Islamic struggle, and fostering Islamic unity and solidarity among Muslims.

5-1. The Approach and Conduct of Qassem Soleimani in Relation to Guardianship

Rituals are considered an inseparable part of the culture of any society, contribute to different views on the universe and way of life, and have a religious origin in religious societies (Mirzadeh, 2017:51). The Ashura movement was a Shia uprising against oppression and injustice, and the basis of the Hosseini movement was Islam and its pure values. What immortalized these rituals in the hearts of the people for years was the blood of the martyrs Ashura and Qassem Soleimani, which is added in continuation of the red blood of the martyrs of Karbala. The Arbaeen procession has become a trans-religious and trans-Islamic gathering, so the number of people participating in this procession from other Islamic religions is increasing every year.

Today, the Arbaeen procession has become a symbol of the power of the Shia religion. It is an event that changes a political context, regardless of the intention of its contributors—a context that allows for multiple interpretations. While the Islamic Republic views this ritual as a symbol of Shia power and identity, Western media and Shia opponents interpret it as a purely religious act apart from socio-political factors, while Takfiri groups see it as a symbol of Shia unity and their attempt to attack it (Mirzadeh, 2018). For

example, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph of IS, threatened to kill all pilgrims in 2013. In an audio file, he said, "The Arba'in pilgrimage has become a symbol of unity among Shiites, and we must inflict great damage on this unity and sympathy" (Shia News 2014, 1–15).

Qassem Soleimani was an international, cultural, and efficient figure of the Resistance Front, whose school is derived from the School of Ashura. In other words, the Soleimani School's approach to Arbaeen was a form of civilization. Since Arbaeen, in his opinion, was a civilization-building movement between Iran and Iraq, for this purpose he tried to create a sense of brotherhood and unity between the people and officials of Iran and Iraq, so that it was not political and geographical issues but a religious and spiritual brotherhood that would lead them to a global Islamic civilization.

On this basis, one of the important actions of Qassem Soleimani in the process of reproducing Shia identity was the emphasis on the Arbaeen procession, an important part of which was due to the security belt that emerged from Soleimani's activities in collaboration with people like Abu Mahdi. The Arbaeen procession became a symbol of security in West Asia.

This shows that the Arbaeen procession has evolved from a pure mourning version into a socio-political phenomenon. Both the Arbaeen processional tradition and today's believers not only look forward to the Karbala event but also have a political view of it. The Pilgrim of Arbaeen, within the framework of the story, mixes his intellectual horizons with the tradition and values inherent in this ritual, offering a political interpretation according to the current situation. Therefore, 75 percent of Arbaeen pilgrims in 2015 (along with the same currently known believer) defended supportive actions for the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hashd al-Shaabi in Iraq (Mirzadeh, 2017).

Conclusion

Qassem Soleimani was a key military figure in Iran who turned the Shiite identity and resistance into a global brand. So that the followers of his school saw their transcendental identity in him. By emphasizing religious values and fighting the ruling system by relying on the popular community, the Qassem Soleimani School was able to play an important role in the extraterritorial reproduction of the concept of Shiite religious identity and solidarity. Both in Iran and in other countries, Soleimani believed that contact with the national community was the shortest and most

promising way to solve problems. Therefore, at the regional level, he saw the solution to important problems in reaching out to the people, advising them, and helping them.

By shaping the axis of resistance against Western countries and their allies, as well as by activating the protest capacities of Muslims, especially Shiites, Soleimani ensured the formation of a cultural heartland among the Shiites of the world, which gave identity to their cultural cohesion in support of Islamic movements and the Intifada of the Palestinian People. By uniting the resistance forces through his continuous presence and establishing Basij culture and jihadi management among the commanders, he ensured greater unity and cohesion on the one hand and strengthened the legitimizing identity of his forces on the other. On this basis, one of the important actions of Qassem Soleimani in the process of reproducing Shia identity was the emphasis on the Arbaeen procession.

Qassem Soleimani viewed the recognition and revival of the identity of Shia Islam as a secret of independence and national power and an obstacle to the expansion of the rule of world powers. He felt threatened by the perversion and transformation of native culture by a particular interpretation of Western modernism and viewed it as the main cause of Western colonial rule over Iran and the Islamic world in general. For this reason, he viewed the issue of reviving the identity of Shia Islam as a kind of campaign strategy to prevent this type of rule. He considered the main identity as the basis of Islamic culture and faith, which includes Iranian layers.

The Soleimani School is a comprehensive moral, intellectual, cognitive, and spiritual model for all free people in the world. Soleimani has undoubtedly entered the Iranian national identity network as a legend. What was buried with him at the farewell ceremony was not a body, but the components of a nation's identity. Many reflected their transcendental identity in the presence of Qassem Soleimani and sought to bow to their collective selves by honoring him. In Soleimani's school, waiting is a strategy of action and jihad; therefore, in the way of waiting reform programs, he fought against oppression, established justice, and spread religious values.

References

- Ahmadi, H. (2004). *Speeches about national identity in Iran: compilation of Davoud Mir Mohammadi*, Tehran, National Studies.
- Ameli, S. (2013). two globalizations and the future of contemporary identities, collection of essays on national identity and globalization, Tehran, *Humanities Research and Development Institute*
- Amir, A., Irvani, Z., & Hajiani, E. (2015). A contrastive analysis of ethnic identity in Iran and Lebanon. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 26(2), 1-15.
- Ashrafi, A. (2002) *Isms: schools of thought and politics for the field of human sciences*, Tabriz, Altin.
- Bagheri, D. (2023) Islamic revolution and school building: a case study of Shahid Soleimani school, *Islamic Revolution Researches*, 12(2), Serial Number 54.
- Bashirieh, H. (2004) *Reason in politics*, Tehran, contemporary view.
- Dezhpehsen, Farhad and Ataati, Farhad (2012). *Fundamentals of Sustainable Development in Iran*. Tehran: Scientific
- Fuller, Graham E. and Rand Rahim F. (2009). Shia Identity, translated by Khadijah Tabrizi. *Shia Studies*, (3 and 4).
- Ghasemi, A. & Ebrahimabadi, G. (2011). The ratio of national identity and national unity in Iran. *Strategy*, 59(20), 107-138.
- H., Maples, W., & Reynolds, P. (2013). *Investigating information society*. Routledge.
- Jaafari, A. (2019). Bioterrorism, policy of death and national security. *Political and International Research*, 12(43), 39-60.
- Jahanbani, N. & Levy, S. (2023). STRATEGY, I. S. P. W... *Routledge Handbook of Proxy Wars*.
- Javadzadeh A. (2019). National identity and currents of the Islamic revolution (the role of the national identity of Iranians in the ups and downs of the intellectual-political currents of the first decade of the Islamic Republic) *Political knowledge*, second year, second issue, autumn and winter 2019, 161-183.
- Millar, R. M. (2010). An historical national identity? The case of Scots. *Language and Identities*, 247-256.
- Mirzadeh, F. (2017). political consequences of Arbaeen walking ritual, *Shia Studies*, 16th year, (62).
- Mousavi, M. (2018). School of Hajj Qassem Soleimani in defense of the sanctity of Ahl al-Bayt. *Islamic Awakening Studies*, (8).
- Rad, A. (2018). The State of Resistance: National Identity

- Formation in Modern Iran,*Ph.D. Thesis*.
- Rashidi, Mustafa and Motaghi, Afshin (2012). Geopolitical explanation of the patterns of Islamism in the Islamic world from the perspective of constructivism, *Islamic Revolution Studies*, (34).
- Riggins, F. J. & Weber, D. M. (2017). Information asymmetries and identification bias in P2P social microlending. *Information Technology for Development*, 23(1), 107-126.
- Robati, F. & Bazmandangan, F. (2022, March 8-11). *The effect of the national concept of Martyr Soleimani's school on the motivation of the defenders of the shrine* [Paper presentation]. National Conference of Management and Entrepreneurship at the Martyr Haj Qasim Soleimani School.
- Salajegheh, S. & Afshin, Z. (2022, March 8-11). *Evaluation of the provincial administration of the Martyr Haj Qassem Soleimani school* [Paper presentation]. National Conference of Management and Entrepreneurship at the Martyr Haj Qasim Soleimani School.
- Sani Ajlal, M. (2004). *On Culture and National Identity*. Tehran: National Studies.
- Shahreshtani, H. (2021). Martyr Soleimani, an authentic connector of national and ethnic layers, *Farhikhtegan newspaper*.
- Tajik, M. (2004). Modern Man and the Mystery of Identity. *National Studies*, Year 6, (1).
- Turabi Kalate Ghazi, A. (2019). The components of governance ethics in Shahid Soleimani School. *Shahid Beheshti School of Governance*, first year, (1).
- Zahiri, A. (2014). What is National Identity, *Political Science*, Year 8, (29).