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RFC: AT1120618V12

Revista Dilemas Contemporáneos: Educación, Política y Valores.

<http://www.dilemascontemporaneoseduccionpoliticayvalores.com/>

Año: VI

Número: Edición Especial

Artículo no.:19

Período: Julio, 2019.

TÍTULO: El impacto del pragmatismo en la política exterior de Irán y su papel en el Medio Oriente después de la primavera Árabe.

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RESUMEN: Este artículo revisó el papel del pragmatismo y su posición en la política exterior y regional de Irán mediante el análisis de determinantes internos y externos y los cambios que afectan la política exterior de Irán y su papel hacia el Medio Oriente y la región árabe, donde Irán tiene muchas extensiones históricas, sociales, culturales y económicas que la vinculan con la región, así como principios, ideológicas y bases nacionales que rigen las tendencias de la región y el papel externo. Se discute este papel en el período anterior y posterior a la Primavera Árabe. El resultado más importante alcanzado es que el pragmatismo es una parte integral de la política exterior de Irán hasta que surgió en las primeras etapas después de la revolución.

PALABRAS CLAVES: pragmatismo, Irán, política exterior, Medio Oriente, primavera árabe.

TITLE: The impact of Pragmatism in Iran's foreign policy and its role in the Middle East after the Arab spring.

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ABSTRACT: This article reviewed the role of pragmatism and its position in Iran's foreign policy and regional role by analyzing the internal and external determinants and changes affecting Iran's foreign policy and its role towards the Middle East and the Arab region, where Iran has many historical, social, cultural and economic extensions that link it to the region, as well as the principles and ideological and national bases that govern the trends of the regional and external role. It is discussed the role in the period before and after the Arab Spring. The most important result reached is pragmatism is an integral part of Iran's foreign policy until it emerged in the early stages after the revolution.

KEY WORDS: pragmatism, Iran, foreign policy, Middle East, Arab Spring.

INTRODUCTION.

Iran has a deeply rooted history in the Middle East and has multiple social, cultural, demographic and economic extensions with its countries. This has led Iran to play vital regional roles at different historical periods, especially at the beginning of the twentieth century under the Shah's policy, which is based on Iran's ancient right to the region.

With the 1979 Iranian revolution, Iran's regional role reshaped on two dimensions: the first, ideological bases and principles with a religious-Islamic aspect aimed at exporting the revolution and the Iranian model of neighboring countries, and the other: national interests and aspirations aimed at territorial sovereignty and international recognition of Iran as a regional power, which made analyzed Iran's foreign policy and trying to understand and monitor the nature of its external role very complex, especially in light of the overlap and complexity of internal and external determinants of Iran's policy and its role in the Middle East.

DEVELOPMENT.

The internal determinants.

Many determinants affect Iran's politics and its role in the Middle East. Historically, the first Persian Empire dated back to 505 BC by the "Beshdiyia" family, the first of the Persian dynasties ruled in the region of Iran, which preceded The Achaemenid Empire; this ancient history played a significant role in building Persian nationalism and its representation of all forms of government in Iran, from antiquity to post-Islamic times. On the other hand, the external invasion of Iran over various historical periods has led to the development of a sense of rejection of any foreign interference in its internal affairs, as we observe in the Iranian government's handling of the American and international pressure on the file of the nuclear program and Iranian policies in the Middle East [12]. The historical determinant also plays a significant role in guiding Iran's ambitions to play an active regional role recognized by the international community in the Middle East that was part of its Persian empire.

The cultural and national dimension is a prominent and influential dimension of Iran's foreign policy. Where the data of history, language, and national and religious identity overlap to express a tremendous and distinctive role of the cultural and national determinants in shaping Iran's external view towards its Middle Eastern region.

Persian nationalism is represented by history, language and religion (Zoroastrianism) and political experience with its implications of war and peace and the art of state administration and society emerged before the Islamic conquest for many centuries [1], where the Iranians maintained their culture and language and ultimately rejected attempts at Arabization, and adherence to the Persian language was the framework that supported the continuity and continuity of nationalism and Persian culture in the light of Islam.

The religious ideology emerged in Iranian political life, both internally and externally, with the adoption of the Shi'i sect as official doctrine in Iran in 1501 by the Shah (Ismail I) [15]. The religious ideology based on Shi'ism emerged as an incubator of Persian culture and nationalism. This transformation aimed to confront the Sunni Ottoman Empire, to preserve Iran's independence with its national and political borders and to present it as a force capable of leading and leading the Islamic world.

Although Persian nationalism was at the expense of religious ideology during the Pahlavi Dynasty (1925-1979), the Supreme Leader of the Iranian Revolution (Khomeini) revived Shiite political thought and linked it to internal and external political life and worked to assert its principles within the Iranian constitution while preserving the privacy of Iranian society and Persian nationalism; and thus, he returned religious ideology incubator of Persian nationalism. This was reflected in Iran's foreign policy after the revolution by relying on ideology to achieve national interest, exporting the Iranian revolution abroad, linking Shiite political thought to confront the external tyranny of exaggeration, which includes the political discourse, ambitious goals, and the means of implementation.

The cultural, national and ideological aspects play a significant role in Iranian foreign policy [13]. The leader of the revolution (Khomeini) was recruited and relied heavily on Persian culture and nationalism in his speeches addressed to the Iranian people during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. During the period (2005-2013), as the national aspect of his adventure in Iran's foreign policy, especially during his leadership of the crisis of the Iranian nuclear program with the United States and its allies.

The social variable plays a role in guiding Iran's policy and its external role. Iranian society represents a mixture of nationalities and ethnicities. The native nationalists (61%), while non-Persian nationalities, accounted for 39%, among the non-Persian nationalities are the Azeris (16%), the Kurds

(10%), the Lur (6%), the Arabs (2%), the Turkmen (2%), the Baluchs (2%). From a religious point of view, approximately 84% of the population condemns Shi'a, 15% Sunnis, and the remaining 1% is Armenian, Jewish, Zoroastrian and others [5], where this diversity linked Iran to its external environment – particularly Arab countries and Turkey – Iran has always tried to exploit this multiplicity in its favor.

During the Iran-Iraq war, Iran supported the Kurds of Iraq to destabilize the Iraqi regime, and it is then pushed by the Kurdish problem at home, which threatens its national security to rearrange its external priorities and improve relations with countries that suffer the same problem, especially Turkey and Syria.

Politically, the external role of Iran was associated with the nature and form of the system of government which is characterized by the multiplicity of political institutions and their division between elected institutions and Non-elected institutions. Although it appears to be a formality in which the people choose the Council of Experts responsible for the selection appointment and removal of the Supreme Leader, who has broad powers – by Article 110 of the Constitution - has paved the way for it to intervene in all political institutions in the State, especially external decision-making institutions, where all institutions revolve around the institution of the supreme leader who has the right to appoint the general policy of the state both internally and externally [8]. However, we can't talk about centrality or totalitarianism in the Iranian regime for two reasons: the first is that all these institutions exercise their powers and roles relatively independently while being subject to monitoring through adherence to the general policy of the state, which the Supreme Leader sets in coordination with these institutions; the second reason is the balance policy of the Supreme Leader to regulate the work of these institutions.

There are many controversial issues between these two political currents: the relationship with the United States and the Western countries is a major complication of the conflict between the two extremes. Reformists tend to open up to the outside and maintain good relations with the West, while conservatives maintain an anti-openness model, especially in Iran's relations with the West and its positions on regional and international issues [4]. This is illustrated by the comparison of Iran's relations with Western countries, especially the European countries, between the periods of former president Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) and current president of the reformist movement Hassan Rowhani (2013-present). It should be noted that the difference between the two currents in the tools of implementation interests of Iran Foreign Affairs which selected by the Supreme leader.

The geographical location plays an essential role in determining the Iranian's foreign policy. Iran's located in south-west Asia. Its borders extend over the Arabian Gulf by more than 756 miles, bordered by eight countries across its land borders and 15 countries with water borders on all sides (1,648,000) Km.

Iran has access to the three most important water bodies – the Arabian Gulf in the southwest, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean in the south and the Caspian Sea in the north and Iran's total coastline is 2524 km [6]. This neighborhood has made Iran move within four geostrategic regions: the Fertile Crescent, the Caucasus, the Central Asian Region, and the Southern Region. This vast regional environment has placed Iran in an unstable political and security environment, and at the same time in a fertile economic environment.

The vision of the future of Iran's regional role is to transform Iran into a major regional force in the South-West Asia region, which includes 25 countries (Central Asia, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Arab States): Yemen, Iraq, Oman, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Kuwait, Qatar, Lebanon, Bahrain, Egypt). This document believes that Iran should be in the year 2025 the first power between these countries [1].

Economically, Iran has benefited from its natural resources to reform its foreign policy. It is always keen to press negatively or positively on the oil weapon to break its international isolation, break the economic blockade and achieve political gains, such as its oil agreements with China and Russia. Furthermore, Iran is heavily dependent on its economy and natural resources – especially its oil and gas reserves – in the face of international pressure, economic sanctions and attempts by the United States and its allies to change their foreign policies and limit their regional and international roles.

The external determinants.

With regard to external variables, Iran's foreign policy is influenced by the nature of regional interactions and its balances. As the researcher pointed out previously, Iran's regional environment is intertwined and overlapping in four regions [9]:

- Fertile Crescent Region (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan).
- Caucasus region (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia can be added parts of Anatolia).
- Central Asia (from the eastern Caspian Sea to the North China border plus Afghanistan).
- Southern Region (South Pakistan and South East Arabia).

This regional interlacement has put Iran in a complex and unstable regional environment. This was reflected in Iran's foreign policy options and trends. Iran's regional surroundings include weak states and Affiliates countries, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The Arab Spring 2010 and its results in the Middle East– like failed States – have put high pressure on Iran's foreign policy.

It's noted that there are many ideological principles and objectives set forth by the Iranian Constitution to the nature of foreign policy and trends of the Iranian role at the regional level, as [8]:

- Foreign policy compliance with Islamic standards.
- Fighting all kinds of injustice and refusing to submit to the oppressors.
- Focus on the coalition of Islamic nations and the Union.

- Support the struggle of vulnerable and disadvantaged peoples.

On the level of ideological objectives, it was the export of the Iranian revolution through the establishment of a global Islamic revolutionary movement and the re-formation of the Islamic Ummah by dividing the world into Dar al-Islam, Dar al-Harb, and making Iran a point of contact between all Muslim peoples and the leader of the Islamic world.

Pragmatism in Iran's policy before the Arab spring.

Despite this ideological framework of Iran's foreign policy, pragmatism in its foreign policy and role emerged in a quintessential manner during the early years of the revolution. During the period from 1979 to 1988, we observe many pragmatic aspects of Iran's external behavior [16]:

- Calling on Iran during the US-Iran negotiations on the hostage issue to obtain military spare parts for equipment exported by the United States to its ally the Shah.
- Iranian's Negotiations with the United States and Israel for the purchase of arms in 1986.

This has led Iran to deal with the Middle East based on the desire to rebuild what was destroyed by the war. Hence, the transformation of Iran's role towards the Middle East was based on pragmatism that transcended ideology and focused on Iran's national interests and goals. Pragmatism was not an emergency event, but its basis was the cease-fire and the death of Khomeini. This contributed to the birth of a pragmatic movement within the revolutionary elite led by former president Hashemi Rafsanjani, who managed to reach power and the presidency for two consecutive terms (1989-1997). During which he worked to transform the foreign policy to serve the Iranian national goals within three primary considerations [10]:

- Iran is unable to change the political map in the region.
- Adapting to the new geostrategic construction of Iran after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- The quest to consolidate Iran's regional security.

From these considerations and the circumstances surrounding Iran, the pragmatism of Iran's policy and regional role in the Middle East between 1989 and 1997 can be defined as follows:

- Seeking to restore international legitimacy, break the barrier of isolation and normalize relations with the international community by focusing on developing ties with the Gulf states, Central Asian countries, the Caucasus, Russia and European countries.
- Economic openness to the outside and cooperation with international institutions and industrialized countries with the aim of commercial and military reconstruction affected.
- Re-launch the role of Iran as a regional power, through the resumption of relations with the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia.
- Re-launch the Iranian nuclear program in a civilian or peaceful manner.

During the period (1997-2005), the reformist movement came to power with former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami. The only pragmatic shift during the reformist era was to incorporate a democratic character in Iran's foreign policy based on the call for dialogue among civilizations and the approach of the international community and the regional environment. This is due considering that Khatami focused mainly on internal reforms, both economic and political [3].

Between the years 2005 and 2010, with the rise of neo-conservatives led by former president Ahmadinejad, Iran's foreign policy became a radical nationalist character of revolutionary and ideological proportions, but less sharply than in the Khomeini era [2].

Iran has suffered from international isolation and economic sanctions from the Security Council, but regional conditions witnessed the rise of the Iranian role as a result of the US occupation of Iraq and the vacuum that the region has seen after the fall of the regime of President Saddam Hussein, where Iran was able to form a strong alliance with the Syrian government and Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Palestinian Hamas movement.

Pragmatism in Iran's policy after the Arab spring.

With the beginning of the events of the Arab Spring in Tunisia at the end of 2010 in the form of demonstrations overthrew the regime of former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and then moved to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria, Iran's policy and its role have been characterized by significant pragmatic transformations, which have been in contradiction to the attitudes towards each of the countries of the Arab Spring according to their interests and political, economic and sectarian relations [7], where Iran considered the revolution in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain as an Islamic awakening inspired by the Iranian revolution, and emerged pragmatism in its position on the events of the Arab Spring in Syria.

Iran has sided with the Syrian regime since 2011, adopting the view of the Syrian government that the demonstrations and the revolution are an external plot to break the axis of resistance in the Middle East. At the same time, Iran encouraged the Syrian regime to carry out reforms that would calm the Syrian people and put an end to the demonstrations that spread in most Syrian cities [14]. Iran has promoted the regime internationally and the ability and seriousness to carry out political and economic reforms that would calm the situation inside Syria. It can be said that Iran's political and military support for the Syrian regime and its direct intervention after the emergence and spread of terrorist movements in various Syrian cities has dramatically affected its policy and its external role, especially with the rise of the reformist trend to power led by Iranian President Hassan Rowhani in 2013.

The reformist president came in a critical period in which Iran suffered from regional and international isolation as a result of its position on the Syrian conflict, as well as the economic pressures and sanctions related to its nuclear program, in addition to the great economic problems suffered by the Iranian society. On the other hand, Iran has achieved significant gains in the Middle East, due to its active role in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, and its ability to fight terrorist groups that have

taken control of large areas in both Iraq and Syria. Iran has used its influence and regional role in the Middle East during the nuclear negotiations with the 5 + 1 group (USA, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany) that led to the signing of the nuclear agreement in July 2015[11].

Between the years 2013 and 2016, Iran's foreign policy characterized by pragmatic changes in the acceptance of negotiations with the United States on its nuclear program, recognition of the effects of economic sanctions on the Iranian interior. This pragmatism succeeded in exploiting Iran's role and influence in the Middle East and all its gains after the Arab Spring in achieving its objectives in solving the problem of the nuclear program, overcoming economic sanctions, and more importantly, recognition by the international community of the importance of the Iranian role in the Middle East. This pragmatism helped Iran succeed in isolating the United States from its European allies after the US withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in May 2018. Iran, European countries, Russia and China maintained the nuclear agreement despite all the efforts made by the Trump administration to completely cancel the agreement and reach to new understandings.

CONCLUSIONS.

Iran's foreign policy and its role in the Middle East were based on a set of ideological principles. Khomeini and the religious elite, which took control of the post-revolution rule, were keen to include the ideological principles for foreign policy in the Iranian constitution. Yet pragmatism found its place in Iran's politics and its regional roles in the early years after the revolution. This is due to the complex mix of internal and external variables that govern the trends of the external role of Iran, both in its regional and international environment. It didn't eliminate the ideological framework on which the regime Iran's national interests. Instead, ideology represented a cover for its interests.

Pragmatism emerged as an integral part of Iran's policy and regional role. In the 1980s Iran's interest was to preserve the gains of the revolution and its new political system. In the 1990s, Iran was in the

importance of rebuilding the economy, improving Iran's relations with its regional environment, and between the years 2002- 2010 was the Iranian interest in building its regional role in the Middle East. After 2010 was the Iranian interest in the exercise of the regional character and benefit from its influence in the Middle East, at each of these stages emerged pragmatism to perform a specific function is the Iranian interest and regardless of whether the means of achieving these interests are contrary to their ideological principles.

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RECIBIDO: 3 de junio del 2019.

APROBADO: 17 de junio del 2019.