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BILATERAL RELATIONS OF IRAN & SAUDI ARABIA UNTIL 1979: WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF IDENTITY-INTEREST ANALYSIS*

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ABSTRACT

The presence of diverse trans-state ethnic, geographic, sectarian, cultural and ideological identities not only challenge Middle Eastern regimes but have also militated against regional peace. State identities and regimes in the Middle East challenging in the civil society and state relations in the region. This is because the Middle East constitutes a unique ethnic, religious and sectarian mosaic. But these complex trans-border identical formations, most of the time, are challenging the states to lose control of the country's stability and even encourage other social and political problems in the region. This research will provide an outline about the theoretical approach of constructivism, and state identity components in the Middle East states, especially for Iran and Saudi Arabia, and how these state identities affect foreign affairs. On the other hand, in the Middle East, normative references, in terms of religion, ethnicity and tribal relations, as well as military-state relations and ideology, have significantly affected the state identity building process. These elements played significant roles in the formation of Middle Eastern states, especially Iran and Saudi Arabia. After World War I. the official relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia were established in 1929, but this relation was always ambivalent even in the best of times. There are many important reasons for this, such as mutual distrust, historical misconceptions, and their sectarian and ethnic identities. This study focuses on how Iran and Saudi Arabia's state identities were formed and how these consequently informed their regional politics until the end of the Shah regime in 1979. The study also analyzes the reflections of

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political developments and geopolitical struggles on Iran-Saudi Arabia relations in the region.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

This study will examine the state identity-building processes and regional politics of Iran and Saudi Arabia. They have state construction and multifaceted effective points from the international and local perspective next to normative references. But the motivation of the foreign policy of Iran and Saudi Arabia from the constructivist perspective is very crucial to understand their past relations and current struggles as well. The existent study aimed to answer the question of what the fundamental state identity components of Iran and Saudi Arabia are, and how these factors affected their relations until the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The argument of this article is when the states and regimes share similar identities and maintain bilateral relations that become more stable since the states generally determine their interests, enemies and friends with their dominant state identities.

Identities in the Middle East challenging with the trans-state ethnic, geographic, sectarian, cultural and ideological identities in the civil society and state relations in the region. Especially for Iran and Saudi Arabia identity factor is significant for their relations and interests in the Middle East. Identity has a comprehensive meaning consisting of religion, culture, sect, and customs. Iran and Saudi Arabia have misconceptions and misperceptions regarding each other because of historical, religious, cultural and political reasons. Specifically, religion has always shadowed all relations between both states, since sectarian differences and different interpretations of religion are important factors.

States have different components of the identities from one to others. All states have been affected by various factors when building their state identities. But some regions and nations have some fundamental features that distinguish them from others. As for Middle Eastern states have some common points upon their state identities. In the Middle East, sects, ethnicities, clans and tribal structures and relations with the great powers, economic capacities and finally, military-state relations dominate the structures of the state's identities. These components of state identities have played an important role during the state identity building process and changing of it in the Middle Eastern states especially for Iran and Saudi Arabia. Relationship between state and religion, relations with great powers and the effects of oil resources on economic structures have been played an important role in the construction of both Iran and Saudi Arabia since the 20th century. In Iran, the relationships between religion and the state while breakdown in the Qajar period, as for Saudi Arabia experienced strengthening relationships with Wahhabis against Ottoman authority. In Iran, while losing lands and dissolving the alliance of religion, the state, and the tribes; Saudi Arabia has expanded its territory because of the alliance between the religion and the tribes. After the discovery of oil in Iran and Saudi Arabia, both the Shah and Saud regimes intended to strengthen their regimes by creating loyal elites.

Iran and Saudi Arabia also have not good relations throughout the history, even before the Cold War, because of historical competitions, misconceptions and different ethno-sectarian identities. Nevertheless, the diplomatically relations established in 1929 despite continuing political and sectarian problems. In wake of II. World War, Soviets threat to be more felt in the Middle East especially, after the Free Officers Movement Revolution in 1952 by Nasser in Egypt. As for two monarchic state, Iran and Saudi Arabia, have decided to cooperate against to Soviet backer anti monarchic formations and Arab nationalists in the Middle East, though US's diplomatic, economic and military support. In this period US not only has helped to Iran and Saudi Arabia to act on sharing policy but also eliminating disputes and problems among them.

This article is divided into three parts plus the introduction. It begins the theoretical approach on constructivism and its basic assumptions and the concept of state identity. The second part will discuss those founding elements of early state identities of Iran and Saudi Arabia which is explained under the title of antagonistic identities. The third part will cover the debate of bilateral relations between 1929-1979. This part consists of two subsections which are the first one is dealing with the relations of the two states in the Cold War era and effective factors of regional developments on their relations. The second one is about how their relations continued, changed and which circumstances determined their mutual political views post-British process.

Keywords: Iran, Saudi Arabia, State Identity, Cold War, Middle East

1979'A KADAR İRAN VE SUUDİ ARABİSTAN İKİLİ İLİŞKİLERİNİN KİMLİK-ÇIKAR BAĞLAMINDA ANALİZİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, konstrüktivizm ve devlet kimliği bileşenlerinin teorik yaklaşımı, devlet kimliğinin Ortadoğu'da dış politikayı nasıl etkilediği hakkında İran ve Suudi Arabistan örneğinde çerçeve bilgi sunmaktadır. Orta Doğu'daki rejim ve devlet kimlikleri bölgede var olan etnik, mezhepsel, ideolojik ve kültürel devlet üstü kimlikler ile sürekli mücadele etmektedir. Ortadoğu farklı etnik, dini ve mezheplerin yaşam alanı olması nedeni ile eşsiz bir mozaik olmaktadır. Fakat bu sınır aşırı unsurlar çoğu zaman bölgedeki devletlerin istikrarlarını kaybetmelerinde ve bölgedeki diğer sosyal ve politik sorunların tırmanmasına sebep olmaktadır. Diğer taraftan, Orta Doğu'da din, etnik köken ve aşiret ilişkileri ile asker-devlet ilişkileri ve ideolojinin inşası açısından normatif unsurlar devlet kimliği inşa etme sürecini güçlü biçimde etkilemiştir. Bu sosyal unsurların Ortadoğu devletlerinin, özellikle İran ve Suudi Arabistan'ın oluşumunda önemli roller oynadığını söyleyebiliriz. I. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonraki süreçte 1929'lu yıllarda İran ve Suudi Arabistan arasında resmi ilişkiler kurulmuş, ancak ikili ilişkiler en iyi zamanlarda bile çatışmalı olmuştur. Karşılıklı güvensizlik, tarihi yanlışlar ve farklı mezhepsel ve etnik kimlikler gibi birçok önemli sebep bu çatışmalı ortama neden olmuştur. Bu çalışma, 1979 yılına kadar İran ve Suudi Arabistan devlet

kimliklerinin inşası ve bu kimliklerin her iki ülkenin bölge politikasındaki etkisini irdelemektedir. Çalışma ayrıca bölgede yaşanan siyasi gelişmelerin ve jeopolitik çıkar mücadelelerinin İran-Suudi Arabistan ilişkilerine yansımalarını analiz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İran, Suudi Arabistan, Devlet Kimliği, Soğuk Savaş, Orta Doğu

Introduction

The Cold War relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been examined in general within the context of approaches of realism and neorealism in the studies of international relations but the studies of identity and the impacts over the relations in academic resources are quite limited. This article will analyze the role of identity factors in bilateral relations, especially state identities and it will contribute also a different approach to understanding relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Identity issues are always an inevitable factor in their relations. According to Ehteshami "identity politics has arguably occupied a great role in the Middle East regional affairs than elsewhere and as elites increased their efforts to deepen territorial nationalism the tensions between the state-sanctioned and community-driven identities became more visible and also more confrontational (Ehteshami, 2012: 269)." As for Mabon, he described that "in the Middle East it is not possible to fully understand the nuances of Middle East politics without understanding the true essence of identity groups and, thus, identity incongruence. Indeed, there are very few states within the Middle East that do not possess a degree of identity incongruence, which challenges the notion of a coherent nation-state that underpins several approaches to international relations. (Mabon, 2013: 9)" Therefore, identity possesses a significant position in understanding of mutual relations of Middle Eastern countries and their domestic and foreign policies.

Many academicians like As Nia and Saifi have argued and explained, the main reason of tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia is that "the root causes for the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East are more on ideational interests than material ones (Nia -Saifi, 2015: 91)." Because these states have deep historical and sectarian identical agents. For example, according to Akbarzadeh and Barry, the Iranian state identity has three key elements that are Iranian, Islam, and Shiism (Akbarzadeh-Barry, 2016: 613). However, Saudi Arabia state identity has three important elements that are Arab, Islam and Wahhabism. At the same time, these are all, the related to, the ideational interests that are used in order to get more influence in the Middle East and Islamic World by both Iran and Saudi Arabia. Especially since the early years of the establishment of both states the normative factors have a great influence and their community has also been designed by the new ideological and religious instruments which are not determined by their bilateral relations but also by their regional relations.

1. The theoretical approach of the study: Constructivism and state identity

In 1990s constructivist approach gained significance in the field of theories and studies of international relations. Constructivists not only reject the basic discourse and perceptions of neorealism and neoliberalism but also propose new sociological approaches such as not neglecting normative factors as much as material factors like power, and awareness of identities and consistency between agents and structures in international relations (Price - Reus-Smit, 1998:259). Constructivism broadly takes into account some topics such as identity, culture, ideology, norms, social values which were traditionally ignored by writers of the international relations. Therefore, many scholars have been tried to explain international relations and state behaviors through constructivist approaches instead of the realism and the neorealism.

While realists deal with how interests affect the other states interests, neorealists and neoliberals emphasize how these preferences happen. Constructivists prefer to focus on individuals and social identities in order to understand the formation of interests (Ari, 2013: 507-508). Constructivists also argue that the origins of people's interests are shaped by the identities, while the interests of states determine the identities of states. In this respect, identities define the preferences of the states which are the important factors in the determination of their national role and appropriate behavior against other actors (Nia, 2010: 7). Constructivists think that the alteration is possible in international relations because when the circumstances changed the states impressions to each other. New norms may create a new identity of the state and the relations with others (Jackson-Robert, 2006: 162). Because state identities are influenced by not only personal and psychological but also social interaction. State identities like national identities are established with multidimensional and/or intersubjective relations and those can be realized officially recognized identity connected with the state apparatus (Telhami and Barnett, 2002: 8). Finally, constructivists argue that norms can redefine the state's interests and threats which reconstructs the state identity and leading to alter the fundamental policies of the state (Hobson, 2000: 146).

According to Onuf, the first founder of constructivist theory in international relations studies, "constructivism holds that people make/constitute society, and society makes/constitutes people. This is a continuous, two-way process. In order to study it, we must start in the middle, so to speak, because people and society, always having made each other, are already there and just about to change (Onuf, 2013: 4)." Constructivism in International Relations located a strategic place that ideologies not only are social structures which were created by human behaviors (Warnaar, 2013: 12). But also argue that the most fundamental elements of international relations are ideas. The ideas make individuals and groups will be even stronger when they adopt their own ideas to other individuals and groups (Snyder, 2004:60). They thought to deal with the social world that is not given at all and that it is also not free from thought, ideology, concepts, cultures, languages, and other things. In addition, the social world was created by man and its behaviors like how states and nations have come to be the world (Jackson – Robert, 2006: 164-165).

Constructivism suggests alternative explanations of many important topics in international relations such as; anarchy, identity, and interests, the balance of power and world politics, etc. (Hopf, 1998: 172). Wendt described that whether a political system is confrontational or peaceful is an activity not only by anarchy and material power but also the common culture creation by social practices. He claims that the Anarchy does not has logic only different cultural examples. (Copeland, 2006:1) Like, it is also easy to understand which states threaten the security of states, that is the identity rather than anarchism (Barnett, 2014: 446). Because identities and social structures of the states are important to determine the relations and alliances in international relations. Parallel identity structures and sharing long alliance make easy to cooperation but dissimilar identities can cause some problems for sustainable relations (Nugroho, 2008:91).

For example, the United States has different perceptions on Canada and Cuba, and the nuclear weapons of Britain and the Soviet Union have different meanings (Wendt, 1992: 397). This indicates the strategic importance of the state's identities in the perception of friend-enemy choice. Therewithal Wendt emphasized three significant features of constructivism those are; states are the main units of analysis for understanding international relations, states both affect and be affected by social structures such as; states identities and interest factor more than material structures. Lastly, state identities and interests are significant components constructed by social structures more than human nature or domestic politics (Wendt, 1994: 385). Another assumption of the constructivism is that actors and structures are constructing reciprocally and at the same time to each other. However, the increasing importance of non-state actors in international relations, the states are still jealous about their

sovereignty, therefore in constructivist paradigm, states located at the center of international relations more than other actors (Wendt, 1994: 385).

The concept of the state identity was identified by Matsumura that is "state's perception of what role it should play and what status it should enjoy in international relations, such as a Western state or a non-Western state on the one hand; and a superpower, a great power, or a middle power on the other hand (Matsumura, 2008: 3)." State identity alterable with some domestic ways such as; some political developments like revolutions, wars and even, sometimes changes might occur with elections and domestic institutional arrangements (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003:26). At the same time each state has its own internal, external and international systematic structures and relationships with other states. The political leaders also may try to construct a new identity for the state with democratic and non-democratic or authoritarian tools.

2. Founding Elements of Early State Identities of Iran and Saudi Arabia: Constructing of Antagonistic Identities

Since ancient times religion and state have had a strong bond with each other in Iran and the state was acknowledged as the protector of the religion and possessing legitimacy to perform this task. This reality even continued after Iran converted to Islam and they protected their national identity with their new religious identity. But the traditional Persian identity of Iran and the new identity of Islamic state created fragile points always in society for long years, even until now (Alexandros, 2015). Contrary to what is known, most of the Iranians accepted Shiism after many years of the appearance of Islam in the period of Shah Ismail. But converting to Shiism from Sunnism was not difficult for Iranians because of historical hostility to Sunni Arabs who conquered Sasanian Empire and erased it from history (Farndon, 2006: 43). Safavids (mostly Shiite Turks) opposition with recent rivalry with the Ottoman Sunni Turks also had a significant role in changing Iranian state religious identity in the 16th century. Since then Shiism has been located into the heart of the Iranian state's identity with the Persian culture and it has survived until today, would survive and play important roles even in the future.

In the 20th century, there was no well-functioning state mechanism in Iran. The Shah of Qajar ruled Iran by his close relatives, ministers, selected family members, tribal leaders, landlords and religious priests (Abrahamian, 2008: 3-4). Authority of Qajars also didn't control Iran strongly, on the contrary, they surrendered by Russia and Britain which divided specifically Iran between themselves. This tragedy created anxiety for many Iranians who, regardless of whether they were conservative, nationalist or secular, increased anti-Westernism in the society (Abrahamian, 2008: 194). Both foreign intervention and anti-Westernism increased after the oil discovery in Iran and in return nationalist and leftist movements risen in Iran, too. These developments led to coup of Reza Khan in April 1921 who was the Minister of War. Reza Shah ruled the country until 1941 when Britain and the Soviets deposed and abdicated him (Zirinsky, 1992: 639). The post-Qajars Dynasty process in Iran contains some components dominated in the identity of state such as; monarchism, secularism, nationalism, and relationships with western great powers.

On the other hand, the establishment of Saudi Arabia strongly connected with the 1744 Pact between Muhammad bin Saud and Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab. The pact depended on an understanding of religious coherence between both sides. In Najd, where contemporary central Saudi Arabia is located, an alliance of politics and religion was founded. When Saud family controlled the state apparatus, Wahhabis controlled religious issues (Lacroix, 2011: 8). In the mid-18th century, Wahhabi tribes began to control Najd while being controlled formally by al Rashid family until the end of the 19th century. At that time Hejaz was controlled by Ottoman Caliphate until the end of the First World War (Rizwan, 2014: 93). Wahhabism is also the natural opposition of Shi'ism and Sufi movements, and Wahhabis argued that these movements were not placed in the religion and that these practices would lead the Muslims to perversity, and they recognized the Shia as an unbeliever (Al-

Rasheed, 2007: 5). How radical Shiites recognized Wahhabism is the radical and uncivilized form of the pre-Islamic culture of Arabs.

In 1912 Abdulaziz ibn Saud (he is known as Ibn Saud) created an army group named "Ikhwan" from Najd Bedouins who radically embraced the Wahhabi ideology and left their nomadic lives tradition to be settled in a modern conservative community. Ibn Saud supported them by land, weapons, and money such that their numbers reached 60.000 by 1915 (Wynbrandt, 2004: 172). Ikhwan had the most important role during the expansion of state and consolidation of tribes. The Ikhwan also was the most zealous military group to protect values of Wahhabism (Kostiner, 1993: 75). As for Shiites who were living in al Hasa and Al Sharqiyya asked for protection from the British in 1913. In 1927 Wahhabis attacked the Shiites, renewed by Ikhwan's soldiers, and they started to destabilize the state as well. But their discriminations and dissatisfactions continued for many years to others who were not well agreed with Wahhabi ideas in Islam (Abir, 1988:153). In the wake of the capture of Ha'il, Ibn Saud transformed an Emirate to a Sultanate and also used the title of Sultan of Najd. In 1926 he conquered Hijaz and the Red Sea Coast, the holy cities of Islam Makkah and Madinah. Saudi Arabia got its full independence like other Arab lands and announced the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 by Ibn Saud (Lacroix, 2017: 162; Badeeb, 1993: 19).

It showed that nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes in the modern territory of Saudi Arabia played a significant role during the spread of Saudi control in the region. Tribal leaders facilitated the job of Ibn-i Saud getting them to obey him during his reign (Niblock, 2006: 12). Wahhabi influence in Saudi Arabia so strongly remained especially structural of dress, public deportment and mosques as well. The Wahhabi school was also manifested in social life, government and individuals' behaviors (Nia-Seifi, 2015: 97). At the same time, Saudi Arabia's major population were Sunni, there was also a Shia Arab population in Saudi Arabia's eastern provinces. Since the foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, fundamental identical disagreements emerged between Shia Arab and some tribes who did not recognize the legitimacy of Al Saud (Mabon, 2013: 6). Many years Saudi authority and Wahhabi religious scholars also treated Shiites like a second-class citizen in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to Bradley even the during Faisal rein who was the best tolerant king in Saudi Arabia, the Shiites were not allowed to receive an education and they had also been insulted by some fatwas or religious edicts (Bradley, 2005: 81; Lacey, 1981: 358-372). This shows that during the state formation processes religious, nationalist, cultural and ideological nonmaterial elements played an important role and still have been playing to keep state identities.

The most other things in the state identity of Saudi Arabia is that economical structure. Saudi Arabia has been as a rentier state which is very connected and effects the state identity of Saudi Arabia. According to Mabon "Rentier state, understood as a state that derives a large percentage of their GDP from the sale of indigenous natural resources. Rentier states receive income from external sources and, as a consequence, do not require taxation of their citizens (Mabon, 2013: 83)." The citizens of these states do not wish to be involved in the political process of their country, either. Since the state financially provides the people, who should be obeyed to the regimes, other political demands become unacceptable. Ibn Saud between the two World Wars wanted to be too close to the British and got an agreement with Standard of California American oil company in return for a 60 years franchise. In 1941 the U.S. turned into a net importer of oil, and America supported Ibn Saud in order to receive Saudi oil. But this alliance did not please the Wahhabis which criticized Ibn Saud and his policies to Western countries (Hawa, 2017: 166).

3. Iran and Saudi Arabia's Bilateral Relations: 1929-1979

In the first years of Reza, he used Islam well for his political interests. Iranian clerics were afraid that if the new state system in Iran would be built on secular republican, then conservatives groups and clerics could be liquidated completely. Therefore, many Iranian Shiite clerics preferred to be close to

Reza and his politics (Arjomand, 1988:81) in order to protect their spiritual position and their conservative followers. After Reza came to power, centralist policies broke the relationships between Shah and clerics, and religious scholars started to keep away from every place and their living places became limited in Iran society and state. As he was called Shah of Iran, abolished the religious schools and took them under the control of the government that resulted in huge protests against Shah Reza (Rubin, 2012: 357). He also changed the name of Persia, like Iran in 1935, as a kind of nationalism connected with the brilliance of pre-Islamic Persian civilization. The lion and sun, the symbol of the Sassanid and Ahamenid empires, were drawn on the Iranian flag, and the new dynasty, inspired by the Sassanids, was named as "Paplavies" (Sander, 2009: 87). The Shah Reza after strengthening his position and power attempted to eradicate the identity of the state which was adopted for centuries in Iran.

Saudi Arabia witnessed the process of integration of tribes to the newly founded state Saudi Arabia and melting of radical Wahhabism in social and political life. Ibn Saud paid attention to appoint governors and political officials loyal to him. Especially people who came from his tribe, relatives or loyal allies, that was very important for maintaining the continuity of newly established system. Other than that, the most important reason for Abdul-Aziz's policy was to protect the throne from Wahhabi forces' possible coup attempts against him. Since the geography is very huge, controlling of the borders is significantly difficult and the tribes in Saudi Arabia have the characteristic features to be transborder, which created some problems to unity. Many tribes especially the neighbors feel themselves closer to Iraq, Yemen, Jordan and Bahrain rather than Saudi Arabia (Salameh - Steir, 1980: 14). Especially Army Ikhwan through their transborder attacks on Iraq and Bahrain were not welcomed by Britain and Ibn Saud, they then decided to fight with them in 1929, abolished them and the Ikhwan become not recognized legally any longer. While the tribes which supported the Ibn Saud against the Ikhwan to get an advantage and were acknowledged Royal Guards by the regime (Goldberg, 1986: 176-177). After this process al Saud family dominance is prominently in Saudi Arabia, state structure and the security of the monarchy was the most important priority.

Saudi Arabia found the Directorate of Foreign Affairs in 1926 which was changed as Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1930 during the leadership of Faisal, who was the oldest son of Ibn Saud. In 1929, Iran started negotiations to acknowledge Saudi, despite some important problems remaining like destructions of tombs of saints by Wahhabis (Wynbrandt, 2004: 187) and ill-treatment against Iranian pilgrims. According to Iranian and many Shiites, Wahhabism is a superstitious belief and a tribal lifestyle that does not conform to Islam. For Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism is also to be the most damaging and prejudicial factor in the conduct of relations not only with Iran but also the rest of the Islamic world. This understanding among Iran and Saudi Arabia was the barrier to set up official relations for a while.

The Saudi Arabian monarchical system is a consensual one wherein the legitimacy of the monarch is based on general unanimity. The ruler is not above the rules and Ibn Saud expressed that the Saudi Arabian political system was coherent with Islamic Law and Hanbali school of Jurisprudence (Fıqh). Shah of Iran was secular but Iranian society acted with Twelver Shi'a style and according to Shiism, only the hidden Imam has the legitimacy to govern people, not any Shah or rulers (Badeeb, 1993: 41) which was one of the biggest problems of the Shah Reza. King of Saud, Ibn Saud had more opportunity to govern his country easier than Shah Reza because he had religious and political legitimacy to govern people even by force. But Shah Reza lacked this opportunity because of traditional Shiite understanding of legitimacy which means that only the hidden Imam's authority should be statutory to govern Muslims not another authority. During the rule of Reza, he had many oppositions such as ethnic groups, rebel tribes, ideological groups, and religious scholars as well.

However, Iran initiated to contact with Saudi Arabia and started official interviews in 1929 but the demolishing of Shi'a holy places and some tombs by Wahhabis did not easily allow it, some problems even continued between them (Wynbrandt, 2004:187). Between Iran and Saudi Arabia, The Treaty of Friendship was signed in 1929. This treaty contested the basic political, economic and diplomatic

matters between the two states. In 1930 Shah appointed Habibollah Khan as his delegate in Jeddah (Badeeb, 1993: 35). In the following years, both countries realized that they had to be close to each other in order to balance Soviets and Communist groups in the region. In the wake of established diplomatic relations, Ibn Saud allowed Iranian pilgrims to visit Mecca and Madina, the pilgrim's security was ensured by Saudi guarantee (Keynoush, 2016: 54-55). But during this time Saudi Arabia and Imam Yahya's Yemen started to fight to set the northern border and Saudi Arabia annexed Asir, Najran, and Jizan with 1934 Taif Treaty which is the most important document about current Yemen and Saudi Arabia border demarcation. While Saudi Arabia solved the border problems quickly, Iran was still struggling with its problems such as; Iran-Iraq Boundaries, Kurdish Problem, Iran-Soviet Borders, Iran-Afghan Borders and the Bahrain Issue (Badeeb, 1993: 30). Reza welcomed the German support for the technology to succeed the development of Iran but Britain and Soviets feared that Shah could be an ally of the German and, soon after in August 1941 Britain and Soviets invaded Iran and Shah Reza were sent to exile and they put his son Mohammad Reza on the throne. In the wake of foreign troops withdrew from Iran, new Shah Mohammad Reza immediately increased the number of army officers and strengthened the monarchical system by the support of America (Owen, 2004: 80). In the following subsections, it will be explained first years of the Cold War era in Iran and Saudi Arabia relations and, how relations and mutual perceptions are changed to each other after the post-British era.

The most important political factor in the relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia was the degree of similarity of the state of the nation-building process and political consolidation. The main features of the Abdul-Aziz policy were the connection of tribal customs, sharia (Islamic Law) and unlettered desert tribal rules. In Iran, Reza Khan was admiring of a secular system like in Turkey, but the Shi'a clerics of Iran were not welcomed and didn't support to establish a new monarchy in Iran in the leadership of Reza Khan. But in the succeeding process after gaining legitimacy and advantage he conquered Arab-speaking Khuzestan. Abdul-Aziz didn't care much about Arabian Khuzestan because of the unifying process in his land but also not happy with the ambitions of Iran to sovereignty over Bahrain. As Saudi Arabia was also maintaining relations with the super-Powers, Iran tried to manipulate the struggles among them for its interest (Badeeb, 1993:20-22).

a. The Effects of Regional Developments on Iran-Saudi Arabia Relations

In the Middle East, a new problem was the Partition Plan of Palestine in 1947 and then in 1948 the First Arab -Israel War. During 1947 the issues between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine created problems between Saudi Arabia and the US. While the US's support of the Jews to settle to Palestine, Ibn Saud did not agree with Truman's policy. The King used the Aramco oil concessions to Truman if the U.S. continued to support the Jews. But it did not solve the problems because of the political, economic weakness of Saudi Arabia (Pollack, 2002: 81). Obviously Saudi Arabia not willing to see Jews people come from all over the world to Palestine and threatening Arab presence there. But relations of the US and Saudi Arabia was more important than the current Palestine issue. Saudi Arabia also feared the Hashemite threat from Jordan and Iraq which were willing to have a Greater Syria map which would not be out of the Saudi Arabian current borders (Labelle, 2011:257-258). Saudi Arabia was always wary of dealing with America for the Palestinian issue, but Riyadh afraid of the Jordanian Hashemites who wanted to expand Jordan territorially and claimed authority and land over Saudi Arabia. As for Iran, it didn't recognize Israel but maintained unofficially clandestine relations. Israel as a secular non-Arab state probably was sought a significant potential ally by the Iranian Shah.

Saudi Arabian and Iranian relations developed in mid-1960 as two states struggling with antimonarchic revolutionary movements in the Middle East. The two states also had common interests over the stopping of Egypt president Nasser and his Arab nationalist ideology (Vassiliev, 1998: 83). Many illegal opposition groups appeared in the Kingdom and they were also against both Western ideas and Wahhabis, taking a stance that was close to socialism. Some of them like The Front of National Reform went to the street to strike in 1953. They demanded full liberation of the country and its energy

resources, elected parliament and a new constitution, abolition of slavery, etc (Vassiliev, 1998: 339). In Saudi Arabia, many people received the idea of Naser especially from minority Shiites, but some members of the Royal family were also influenced. Iran, however, supported Saudi Arabia against Naser because of his own minority Arab populations in Hozestan/Iran. Naser's ideas were perceived as a threat to Iran's territorial integrity since the Arabs already had some problems with Shah.

Mohammad Mossadeq denounced both 1919 Anglo-Iranian and 1945 American & Soviets – Iranian Agreements, he also struggled with the cause of oil nationalization and insisted that the Iranian government had to re-hold Anglo-Iranian Oil Company rights (Abrahamian, 2008: 114). Britain and the US supported a covert operation which was called Ajax Operation against Mossadeq and finally steps down him with a military coup. Oil importer countries preferred to buy oil from Saudi and Kuwait rather than Iran because of pressure from the US to create economic problems for Mosaddeq during the crisis (Ari, 2014: 433). In this situation, while Iran was getting economically weaker, the Gulf countries increased their incomes. Another problem in the region was the increase of Soviet influence and threatening Iran and as well as Arabs, since 1952.

In May 1955, the Baghdad Pact was established firstly between Turkey and Iraq as a defense agreement with the indirect support of the USA but Pakistan, British, and Iran joined the pact later. While Shah preferred to bring Iran into the Western-supported alliances, King Saud stated that the pact would bring problems into the Arab world and Israel would get more power in the region. King Saud also had fears about Hashemite Jordan as a rival which would be closer and more powerful than Saudi Arabia. The Pact not only increased the influence of Nasser but also affected the relations between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries as well (Al Tahhavi, 2004: 68). Both Iran and Saudi Arabia felt threatened by communist Soviets and Arab nationalists who were especially against the monarchical structures in the Middle East. In Iraq, General Qasim ordered his soldiers, who were supporter of Nasserism and Arab Nationalism, to move to Baghdad instead of Lebanon and coup d' état to Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq and removed royal monarchy family from Iraq (Barrett, 2008:1-12). From this process, while the Soviets grew their influence, the Baghdad Pact was weakened and even changed the name to CENTO. The experience of the United Arab Republic (1958-1971) created many domestic problems in Arab countries and King Saud only changed to be close Iran and the USA, while needing to improve relations with Jordan, since he was also under the same revolutionary threat. Iraq also became a more visible threat for Iran and the potential problem for the region as Iran started to use Iraqi Kurds against the Baghdad regime. General Qasim's attempt to invade Kuwait and Naser's followers' coups in Yemen increased all common threats against Iran and Saudi Arabia, which shaped their bilateral relations for long years.

Shah Mohammad Reza Khan decided to make reform in Iran with six new related decisions, such as; (1) the land reform, (2) sale of some state-owned factories to finance the land reform, (3) the enfranchisement of women, (4) nationalization of forests and pastures, (5) formation of a literacy corps, and (6) institution of profit-sharing schemes for workers in industry. This reform program was called the "White Revolution" in 1963" (Arjomand, 1988: 72-73). Mohammad Rıza aimed to take powers in the hands of clerics and landlords through land reforms. In this process Khomeini's Pioneer Ayatollah Borocerdi passed away and Khomeini was accepted as a charismatic leader with Iranian conservatives and his reputation grew quickly, and he was soon after also sent to exile because of the claim of the violation against Shah. He returned to Iran just after the early days of the Islamic Revolution (Dabashi, 2008: 146). These events and socio-economic changes in Iran accelerated the Iranian Revolution process and the social location of conservatives became more visible in the anti-Shah opposition.

In the wake of the accession of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz to the Saudi Arabian throne, the relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia underwent increasing pragmatists. The Shah was focused more on the relations between Iran and Western Powers and being close to Israel, King Faisal, on the other hand, was focusing on the pan-Islamic politics in Islamic World. Two leaders realized that they need to

cautiously improve their relations because of the Iran-Israel relations were a real obstacle in front of them. The two leaders also trusted each other to stand against the Soviets and Nasser's influence (Badeeb, 1993: 57). Meanwhile brother of King Faisal, Prince Tallal, supported socialist movements in the Kingdom and criticized the lack of a constitutional system in the country and set up the free prince movement against the monarchic system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and was sent to exile in Cairo as a result (Menoret, 2005: 98).

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia and Egypt decided to finish the competition over Yemen where the two sides spent their energy. The two sides signed the Jeddah Agreement in 1965 and agreed to struggle with Zionism when Israeli pressure began rising on Egypt and a probable war became closer. Nasser did not wish to compete with Riyadh while fighting with Israel (Mann, 2012: 749-751). However, Iran did not see Israel as a primary threat to its interests and tried to conduct relations with Israel discreetly not to provoke Arab neighbors. Iran did not feel anxiety regarding Israel because of territorial distances and mutual interests, either. Since Israel was alone in the Arab Muslim Middle East, Iran became a good partner for Tel Aviv (Parsi, 2007: 30). The duration of the war and the oil crisis made the Arab states lose many incomes, but Iran increased revenues drastically. However, Iran did not accept the occupation of the lands as part of Israel's sovereignty and Saudi Arabia financially supported the rebuilding of Egypt, after the war.

Though Soviets grew their influence in the Middle East they lost the strategic advantage to the US which affected the foreign policy of the US towards the Middle East countries. Nixon pledged that the US would continue to fulfill all its security responsibilities not only convenient but also nuclear protection. But Nixon described that the defense of the region should have been firstly based on allying local countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia (Girling, 1975: 327-328). The United States facilitated the cooperation between these two states, which often had problems with each other. This policy of empowering Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf is defined as the "twin pillar strategy". In the wake of British army withdrawal from the Gulf, Iran quickly became the policeman of the Gulf with the support of the US. which announced the twin pillar strategy which was accompanied by Iran and Saudi Arabia in the region. Iran captured three islands of the UAE. and got the conventional weapons from the US governments (Ward, 2009:194).

b. Competition Between Iran and Saudi Arabia during the Post British Era in the Middle East and the Gulf region:

As for Shah also willing to have as a figure of Iran's past glory and independent regional power. He wanted to be only hegemonic power of the Persian Gulf for superiority and security reasons. In the wake of the British government announcement in 1969 to withdraw from Suez and Persian Gulf, Shah thought to have appropriate time and condition to control the strategic location of the region. The USA could likely work with Shah because of the Vietnam War and expansionist aims of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. Since Iran was the most powerful state in this sub-region, very willing to be an important actor for the "two pillar policy" of the United States (Parsi: 2007: 35-36). Iran thought to use this opportunity to improve its influence in the Gulf but it was not welcomed by the small states of the Gulf.

Iran's strategic moves and growing influence in the Arabian Gulf have naturally disturbed Saudi Arabia, as the other pillar of the twin pillars strategy. The withdrawal of Britain from the Gulf and the power vacuum that was filled by Iran to have more opportunity to control the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as well as other countries of the Gulf, were skeptical about Iran's emerging power in the region (Goode, 2014: 445-449). Iran occupied three islands, Abu Mosa and Tunbs in 1971 in order to avert main concern of Iran to control the Gulf region where the outlet of Iranian oil to the world market (Marschall, 2003: 8). Personal relationships between King Faisal and Shah Muhammed Reza did not work well after the Iranian invasion of Abu Musa and two Tunbs (Kasım, 1993: 133-138). Even

though Iran did not utilize sectarian discourse before the revolution, the Arab Gulf states felt threatened by Iran's revisionist policies and the possibility of the sedition of Arab Shiites.

In 1971 Shah celebrated 2500 years anniversary of the founding of the Achaemenian Empire at Persepolis and linked himself as Shahanshan (Shah of Shahs) and initiated to show deep Iranian identity. Shah also signed a friendship agreement with Soviets in order to focus more on the Gulf (Maloney, 2002: 95-96). However, Iran's threat continued to increase in the Gulf, but the cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia also improved through their relations and cooperation against the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf in Oman. This revolutionary group was not only close to the Soviets, but they were also against all Monarchical political structures (Skket, 1992: 36-37). Iran as a non-Arab state in the Gulf helped and supported military equipment and fighters for Oman's regime in Dhofar uprising. Saudi Arabia as another monarchic state financially supported both Oman's regime and proxy groups fighting against Marxists in Oman and Yemen (Skket, 1992: 49). It was showed that the monarchic state identity of both states caused the stability of the relations and with growing common interests in the Middle East, that process would continue until the Iran Revolution. These state identities also provided the growing relations with US support against Soviet threats and Arab nationalism.

In wake of the Ramadan War in October 1973, the oil prices increased and became a very vital issue between Middle Eastern oil producers and the West (the USA, EU, and allies). OAPEC increased the oil prices and boycotted the states which supported Israel with their weapons (Mason, 2015: 11). In the beginning, King Faisal was not happy at all to impose an oil embargo against supporters of Israel. Not only because of the possible decline of oil income but he was also not willing to damage strong relations with the USA and Europe (Nonneman, 2001, 647). Though Iran did become a part of both wars and imposed embargo during the crisis, Tehran also maintained the oil flow to Israel's supporting countries and increased his interests in the global oil sector. Iran only sent to Egypt medical equipment for injuries in order to help Arabs. The Shah of Iran used extraordinary oil incomes which were earned during the Arab - Israel War to increase the armaments of Iran. The higher price of oil contributed to the purchase of military weapons from the US and its allies (Wagner, 2010: 51). Iran also supported Kurdish rebellions in Iraq against the Baghdad government together with the United States and Israel. Iraq cut diplomatic relations with Iran before the problems between Iran and Iraq were resolved after the Algiers Agreement in 1975. Iran gave up support to the Kurds and gained the acceded equal navigation with Iraq into Shatt al Arab river (Bakhash, 2008: 44). Even though Iraq was a threat to Saudi Arabia and had border disputes, they did not welcome the war. In this process, Riyadh did not take part of any side but became silent to the Iranian support of the Kurds and opened the doors for diplomacy. The main reason for this was the fact that the Baghdad government's deal with the Kurds would open the possibility of reducing tensions in Iraq-Saudi Arabia relations (Keynoush, 2016: 89). Saudi Arabia also liked to limit Iran's growing power and influence in the Arab Gulf indirectly with Iraq in the post-British era.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the constructivist theory of international relations is an important way to understand the establishment process of state identities in international relations, especially in the Middle East. Because the states in the region especially like Iran and Saudi Arabia, used the identical and ideological normative agents during the first years and they build up the state system to protect their newly constructive state identity. It is put forward in the study that constructivist theory also presents quite a different approach to the understanding of the state building process than the fundamental materialist approaches of international relations. In addition to this study explained that historical experiences, prejudices, and awareness played a very significant role in Iran and Saudi Arabia relations. Because of both states were founded on fundamental ethnic and sectarian identical factors which are also antagonistic with each other.

It was pointed out in the paper that since the 16th century Shiism is in the heart of the Iranian state's identity with Persian culture and survived successfully for long years. Wahhabism also has deep roots in the present Saudi Arabian society especially the places located in Najd and Riyadh. In the wake of the emergence of Wahhabism in Hejaz and in the early independence of Saudi Arabia, some components have dominated the identity of the state such as; monarchism, fundamentalist conservatism, opposition of other tribes like Hashemites and strong relationships with the U.S. In both states, they also consciously marginalized their previous state structures and regimes with illegitimacy. In Saudi Arabia, the early years of the state building process with nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes played a great contribution to unifying the country, while in Iran the Shah's army did the same in order to combine different regions of the state against the rebellious tribes and groups. Because of the ethnic fragility of Iran, the Shah was dealing with the unification of Iranian tribal peoples and trying to also improve the stability, but Saud bin Abdelaziz focused more on other aspects to consolidate his power.

As widely shown in the study that unofficial relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia were established in 1925 but still some issues remained on the ground. Since the cold war process, the two Western-supported and oil exporter countries wanted to move together against the same regional political developments as the growing Soviet threat, the spread of communism and Nasser's Arab nationalist movement. Two states mostly cooperated on the same common regional issues such as; the General Qasim coup in Iraq, developments in the Northern Yemen and the Dhofar rebellion in Oman, despite having disagreements on some issues like the Suez Crisis, the Baghdad Pact, the Palestine Issue, the Kuwait Crisis, and the Oil Embargo until British withdrawal. This period was shown in the study that the two states gave directions to their regimes that were compatible with their state identities. Because both were trying to secure their regime and legitimacy from domestic and foreign obstacles, they thus reinforced their fundamental political formation. The mutual distrust between the two countries was also maintained throughout the Shah's rule, because of not only Iran's control of the Gulf but also the quest for more power in the Middle East with the increasing military force of Iran. The primary strategy of both Iran and Saudi Arabia had been to protect their monarchic state identity against their common enemies until 1979. It is shown in the study that similar state identities such as monarchic regimes, rentier economy and allies in the same block simplified the cooperation and the common interest as in the case of Iran and Saudi Arabia despite ongoing problems. The main reason for this result was explained with sharing monarchic identities more important. But after Iran got more power and influence in the Gulf and tried to be the Shah of the Gulf, the relations with Saudi Arabia started to be damaged.

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