


The crisis in Ukraine and the change in the polarization of the international system; Repercussions on the strategic partnership of Iran and Russia

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Original Article Main Object: International Relations Scope: Russo-Ukraine War</p> <p>Received: 30 June 2023 Revised: 05 August 2023 Accepted: 06 August 2023 Published online: 22 August 2023</p> <p>Keywords: neo-revisionism, polarization of the international system, Ukraine crisis.</p>	<p>The crisis in Ukraine, which started with the military invasion of Russia, has also structurally affected the international system. This crisis has been able to change the level and nature of the patterns of friendship and enmity in the international system; also, it affects the type of interactions between actors and alliances. This crisis can be analyzed from two structural perspectives: First, accelerating the process of changing the polarization of the international system from a unipolar structure to a multipolar structure; Second, the increase in polarization with the increase in the index of discontinuity in relations between actors and alliances at the level of the international system. Accordingly, this structural crisis can affect the relations between different actors, especially with Russia and America. In this framework, the present article seeks to answer the question, "How has the Ukraine crisis affected the strategic partnership of Iran and Russia with the change in the polarization of international relations?" The hypothesis that is raised in response to this question is that this crisis, by increasing polarization and accelerating the process of changing polarization, with increasing environmental uncertainty and strengthening strategic adaptation based on the systemic principle between Iran and Russia, will lead to strengthening the development process of comprehensive strategic partnership between two countries. This research relies on the comparative strategy, based on Kent Waltz's views on structural realism to answer the main question and prove the hypothesis.</p>
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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The crisis in Ukraine, which started with the military invasion of Russia, has also structurally affected the international system. This crisis has been able to change the level and nature of friendship and enmity patterns in the international system and also affect the type of interactions between actors and alliances. According to the concept of polarization and the structural approach to the problem, this crisis at the structural level can affect the relations between different actors, especially with Russia and America. The other actor is Iran.

The crisis in Ukraine can be considered as one of the most important developments in the structure of the international system. Regardless of the nature, the process of formation and the peak of this crisis, its consequences have affected the world at different levels. Among these consequences, we can mention the disruption in the grain export process of Russia and Ukraine and the embargo on Russia and its energy resources. The Islamic Republic of Iran is not exempt from the effects of this crisis. In such a situation where the regional environment is associated with conflicting trends, and the structure of the international system has become more complicated than ever before, the relations between Iran and Russia become doubly important.

Research question

How has the Ukraine crisis affected the strategic partnership between Iran and Russia by changing the polarization of international relations?

Research hypothesis

This crisis, by increasing polarization and accelerating the process of changing polarization, and by increasing environmental uncertainties and strengthening the strategic adaptation based on the systemic principle between Iran and Russia, has led to the strengthening of the development process of comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

Method and Theoretical framework

This research, based on the views of Kenneth Waltz in structural realism, as well as the descriptive-analytical method, investigates the effect of the polarization of international relations by the Ukraine crisis on the strategic partnership of Iran and Russia. The hypothesis that this crisis increases polarization and acceleration of the polarization change process, with the increase of environmental uncertainty and the strengthening of strategic adaptation based on the systemic principle between Iran and Russia was confirmed. These changes have led to the strengthening of the comprehensive strategic

partnership between Iran and Russia.

The conceptual framework of this research is based on Kenneth Waltz's views on structural realism and polarization of the international system. In Waltz's neorealism, the level of analysis of political issues is structured, and the principle influencing the behavior of governments is the structure of the international system. Polarization refers to the distribution of power in the international system.

Results and Discussion

One of the important levels of analysis, regarding international phenomena, is the structure of the international system. At this level, the role of governments is considered secondary, and the principle influencing the behavior of countries is the structure of the international system. Waltz explains further about the mechanism of this influence. Structure does not lead directly to an outcome, he says. The structure affects the behaviors in the system and acts as an indirect factor.

One of the most famous theories regarding the subject of polarization is Waltz's point of view, which states that the more the number of poles in the international system increases, the more likely war will occur. In this theory, two concepts are important. Discreteness, which means the type, direction, and intensity of convergent and divergent interactions between actors in the polarization structure of the international system and the second concept is related to the changes in polarity in the international system.

Analyzing Russia's behavioral logic for a military attack on Ukraine naturally requires considering a level of integrated analysis. Leaders' thinking variables and national, domestic, regional and international variables have simultaneously influenced this Russian decision; but the variables and components of the structure of the international system are more important for us, which are based on two principles: Russia's principled view of the structure of the international system and the decline of American power.

Iran, like Russia, believes in the hegemony of America and its decline in recent years. In such a situation, Iran's alternative option for the declining world order is the emergence of a regional world. The potential for a strategic partnership has been present for some time, influenced by factors such as the Syrian crisis and the US withdrawal from the JCPOA under Trump's administration. However, the crisis in Ukraine has escalated the situation to a new level. New developments in the world, such as the energy crisis and the sanctions on Russia, have increased environmental uncertainties for Russia and Iran, as well as developing the strategic adaptation of Iran and Russia to form a comprehensive strategic partnership.

Conclusion

Considering our investigations, the more the degree of polarization increases, the tension between the actors will increase accordingly and the instability in the system will intensify. From this point of view, the Ukraine crisis is driven by various national and regional factors, such as the political psychology of Putin and his associates, the pan-Slavic ideology of the Russian government, the perceived threat from NATO's proximity to Russia's borders, and Russia's Eurasian geopolitical aspirations. However, it also reflects some structural changes in the international system.

Russia's Neo-revisionism and the decline of American power and hegemony have intensified polarization and accelerated the change of polarization after the Ukraine crisis in the international system. In the meantime, Iran is trying to prepare for the formation of a regional world in the new multipolar system, all of these conditions have provided and increased the platform for the development of the strategic partnership between Iran and Russia that had already started.

Conflict of interest

The author declared no conflicts of interest.

Ethical considerations

The author has completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc.

Data availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the author on reasonable request.

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