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Analyzing the Presence of NATO in the Middle East

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Abstract

After the end of the Cold War and the evolution of NATO in terms of its operations and missions, this international organization appeared in all parts of the world, including the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. NATO strengthened its presence in the region in 1994 through the Mediterranean Dialogue Program and in 2004 through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Program. Therefore, NATO has many reasons and motives for its presence in the region, including the provision of energy security in the Western world, the fight against terrorism (military security), and relations with the Zionist regime (political security). Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to model the factors affecting the analysis of NATO's presence in the Middle East.

This study is in the field of descriptive survey research of correlation type, it is applied according to the purpose and subject of the research and it is cross-sectional in terms of time. Moreover, sampling of this research has been determined by the snowball sampling which was among experts and scholars in the field of political science in 2021.

Based on the TOPSIS method, 18 unimportant items were removed from the 42 designed items, and the following results were obtained based on the partial least squares method of the research model. Thus, some factors that affect NATO's presence in the Middle East involve energy security 0.842, economic security 0.738, political security 0.459, social Security 0.298, environmental security 0.193, and military security 0.684. What is certain is that energy, economic and military factors have a much stronger impact than other variables in justifying the presence of NATO, and reflect the fact that the presence of NATO is aimed at securing the interests of superpowers and emphasizing other indicators that improve the situation of the countries in the region is on the fringe of the main issue, which is to provide financial and economic benefits to the superpowers.

Considering the significant impact of various types of security on the presence of NATO in the region, NATO needs to redefine its responsibilities in the region and international area; it should be noted that these transformations must be due to the changes and conditions of the new world order, otherwise, the negative consequences that it will bring are more than its positive consequences. However, the Ukraine-Russia war and NATO's indecisive presence in this area, are among the most important reasons why NATO has not been able to redefine itself in light of the new world conditions and order.

Keywords: NATO, Middle East, Security, TOPSIS, Structural Equations

1. Introduction

After the end of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with the evolution of its content and functional concepts, based on its documents and perspectives, such as the Strategic New Concept, which is considered a manifesto of NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union and it is reviewed and updated every few years, and programs such as Partnership for Peace, have appeared in various parts of the world, such as Central Asia and the Caucasus. Based on the idea of global NATO, the organization has sought to change from a transatlantic situation during the Cold War, which was the connecting point between the Atlantic Ocean in Western Europe and North America, to a transatlantic situation and global role-playing around the world.

Therefore, after the end of the Cold War, NATO has always tried to gain access to this region, considering a series of dimensions and components, such as Western energy security and access to strategic parts of the world such as the Middle East. In order to achieve this goal, in 1996 and 2009, NATO considering the framework of the Mediterranean dialogue programs and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative with the Middle East and the Persian Gulf countries, has entered the phase of the military, defense, security, training, logistics, transportation and ... cooperation.

On the other hand, the countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf have a lot of incentives for NATO to be present in the region, including trying to confront Iran, setting up security zones in new regions without Iran, and adapting their armed forces to the latest international standards. But what has had a significant impact on NATO in the Middle East is the new state of US foreign policy in the Middle East since 2011. The stated presence in the Middle East has undergone many changes as a result of this new US policy. Therefore, the United States considers its future challenge in the East Asian region for reasons such as China's growing economic, military and diplomatic power, so the United States is trying to divert its forces, facilities, and attention to East Asia by decentralizing from the Middle East. Moreover, it has focused most of its efforts on preventing China from gaining power in the region. On the other hand, the US decentralization of the Middle East has been welcomed by NATO and has led to the increased NATO presence in this part of the world.

However, it should be noted that US foreign policy developments, as NATO's bigger brother, generally have a direct impact on NATO's global movements. In addition, the United States is a major supporter of NATO's global role-playing, in the form of the idea of a global NATO, based on a new strategic concept; Therefore, it is clear that NATO's presence in any region of the world, such as the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, the extent and manner of which is directly related to the goals of the United States. Therefore, this descriptive-analytical research method seeks to investigate the relationship between the US decentralization policy of the Middle East and the increasing presence of NATO in the Persian Gulf. Accordingly, in the framework of the objectives of the present study, first, the theoretical foundations are examined and then the research method and model estimation and research results will be presented.

2. Theoretical foundations

According to NATO's claim that its presence in the region is merely for regional security and the concept of security more broadly, globally, we need to pay more attention to the philosophy of this view.

With the collapse of the bipolar system and the emergence of new developments in the structure of the international system, especially civilian phenomena such as economic development, environmental change, migration, and unprecedented population growth, new diseases such as AIDS, terrorism and ethnic and racial violence, have led to serious criticisms of the traditional view of security.

In other words, the emergence of new phenomena and the inability of the realist view of security to analyze them have led to a revision of the classical concept of security, which falls only into the military category. The collapse of the Soviet Union due to two groups of reasons including military (arms rivalry) and civilian (economical, social, political) issues, was a confirmation of the ineffectiveness of traditional security theories in the present century. In other words, it should be noted that the field of international relations with the subject of studying war and peace has always witnessed academic developments and scientific leaps. Following the political changes that the international system has undergone in recent decades with the emergence of new actors and new conflicts, the school of "realism" can no longer respond to the new international realities; therefore, the above set of factors led to the review and design of new theories in security and independent and specialized studies were conducted in its analysis. The Copenhagen School is one of the main approaches in international relations that has focused on security studies of the post-Cold War period and the extensive changes that have taken place in the field of security (Dadandish, 2010). A revision of security studies was initiated by Bari Buzan; as a pioneer, he opened the field for critical security studies. By writing the book named "People, State and Fear" (Buzan, 1991), Buzan was able to provide the most comprehensive scientific analysis of the concept of security. Compilation of the book named "Identity, Migration and New Safety Guideline in Europe" (Buzan, 1991), which deals with new issues such as identity, culture and immigration and their role in relation to security with a constructivist approach, was considered as Buzan's second step in analyzing security in the post-Cold War era. Historical view of social phenomena and emphasis on the role of norms, rules and culture, going beyond the objective references of security and emphasizing human relations, linking social security and government security, emphasizing the founding nature of government, emphasizing metamaterial factors along with material factors of security, Emphasizing the common role of identity and sovereignty in defining the existential threat, the importance of the study of the state and the individual in security issues, and arguing that governments are no longer the sole source of security in the modern era are among the most important ontological issues of the Copenhagen School.

It is important to note that Buzan made the first serious criticisms of existing security approaches since the late 1980s, according to which the survival of states or state actors is no longer threatened solely by military factors; but other thematic areas, including political, economic, environmental and social, must be considered in this regard. The social factors of the security theory of Copenhagen school are particularly important. This links the issue of national security to national identity and makes it an integral part of national security; thus, although traditionally the theory of national security was dependent on the military sphere, but today it is the security of nations that determines national security as the most important creators of the concept of identity (Chena, 2008).

In the methodological analysis of this school, it should be said that the Copenhagen school is very prominent among the approaches of international relations in terms of its middle position in adopting the method. Rejecting the positivist assumptions and emphasizing

situational issues, awareness, and cognition confirm the interdisciplinary methodology of this school. The interpretive, historical view, emphasizing the unique aspect of social phenomena and paying attention to the normative dimensions along with the descriptive and analytical dimensions, are the epistemological introductions of the Copenhagen school. Thus, considering that it is based entirely on security studies, this school is one of the first approaches to determine an independent position for security studies.

From the point of view of the Copenhagen School, in the new era, security has lost its traditional meaning, whereas, in the past, security was viewed in the context of the Westphalia model and with a military dimension; but in the post-Cold War era, it underwent the transformation. In the new era, we are witnessing the expansion of security to multiple dimensions of military, political, economic, social, and environmental issues (Buzan & Weaver, 1998).

Buzan places his main emphasis in security analysis on the level of regional analysis and believes that countries should consider a special place in their foreign policy for the dimensions of security zones and pursue security in its multidimensional aspects. In other words, his main distinguishing features are post-Cold War security studies, the breadth of security and the inclusion of issues such as immigration, criminal (transnational), transnational and Sub-State organizations, and the environment and economic well-being that were not previously included in security definitions.

The main indicator of security studies in the past was one-dimensionality and emphasis on the purely military aspect, according to which with the change in the concept of security, its reference also changed. In the narrow definition of the concept of security, the government was the sole source of security, while in the post-Cold War era, individuals, groups, international groups, transnational and sub-state NGOs, and the media were all sources of security.

Buzan believes that in addition to the evolution of the source of security, in its multidimensional analysis, the impact of culture, geography, environment, civilization and religion, and most importantly, identity, must be considered. In other words, the purpose of the source of security is the identity of individuals in society (Abbasi and Mohammadi, 2013). Therefore, considering what has been said, the new analysis of security is not limited to the objective framework but is an intersubjective issue.

The starting point for security issues is the minds and decisions of its actors. The new approach of the Copenhagen School regarding security studies is its thinkers' attempt to break away from one-dimensional military security and to state a comprehensive security plan following the presence of new threats. The most important reasons for the need for a broad definition of security are changes in the nature of threats and their characteristics. Accordingly, security is divided into five parts: military, political, social, economic, and environmental. The main point of this analysis is the centrality of national security in the definition. Finally, since this school has a specialized approach to security analysis, it can be used as a suitable model for analyzing security issues of the present century (Ebrahimi, 2007). The diagram below shows the central signs of the Copenhagen school.

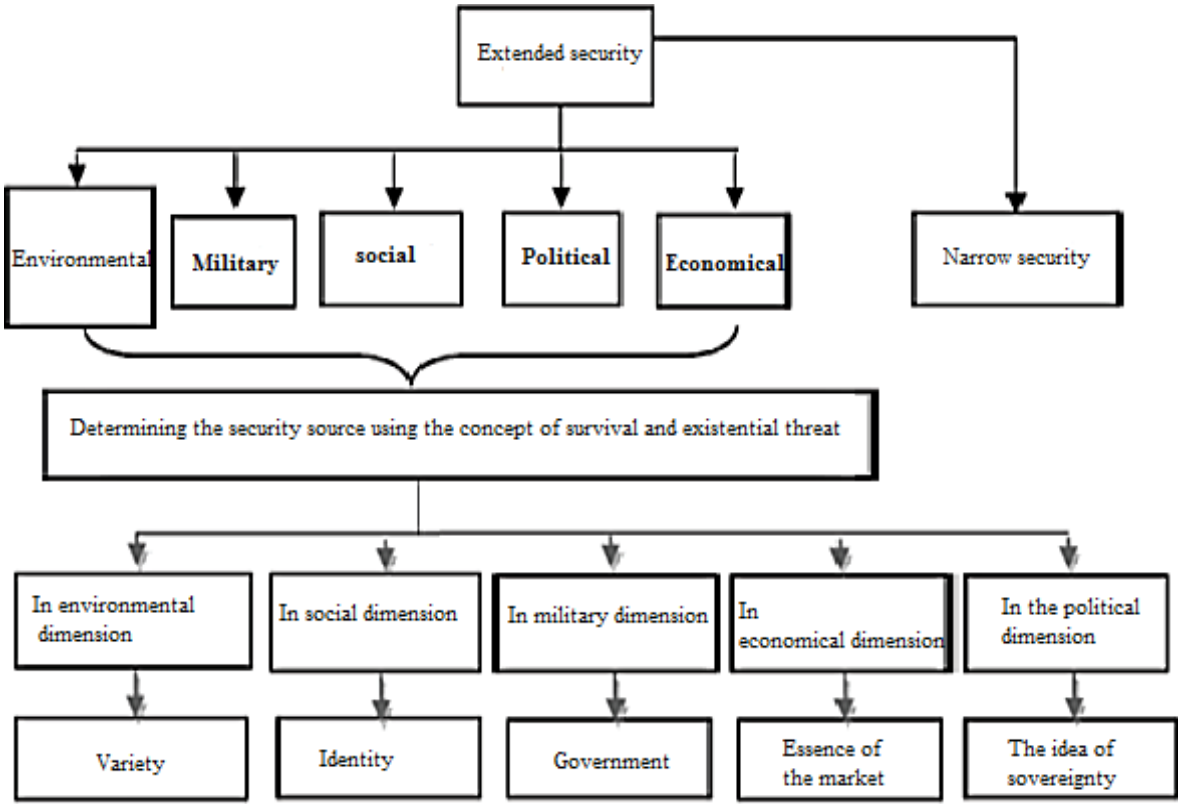

Figure 1*: Conceptual framework of security in the view of Barry Buzan (Abbasi and Mohammadi, 2013)*

3. Research method

The type of the present research is applied in terms of the purpose and nature of the investigated problem and in terms of the research method it is a descriptive survey. The statistical population of this study is Middle East experts and professors of political science. The designed questionnaire was adjusted with a 5-point Likert scale. In this research, two computational approaches of TOPSIS and structural equations have been used, each of which will be examined in the following parts.

4. TOPSIS

The word TOPSIS means methods of preference based on similarity to the ideal solution. The underlying logic of this method defines the (positive) ideal solution and the (negative) ideal solution. The (positive) ideal solution is one that increases the profit criterion and decreases the cost criterion. The optimal alternative is the one that has the shortest geometric distance from the (positive) ideal solution and at the same time the longest geometric distance from the (negative) ideal solution. In the TOPSIS alternatives ranking, the alternatives that are most similar to the ideal solution are ranked higher. The target space between the two criteria is shown in the Figure as an example. Here A + and A- are the ideal solution and the negative ideal solution, respectively. Alternative A1 has the less geometric distance to the ideal solution than alternative A2 and more geometric distance to the negative ideal solution.

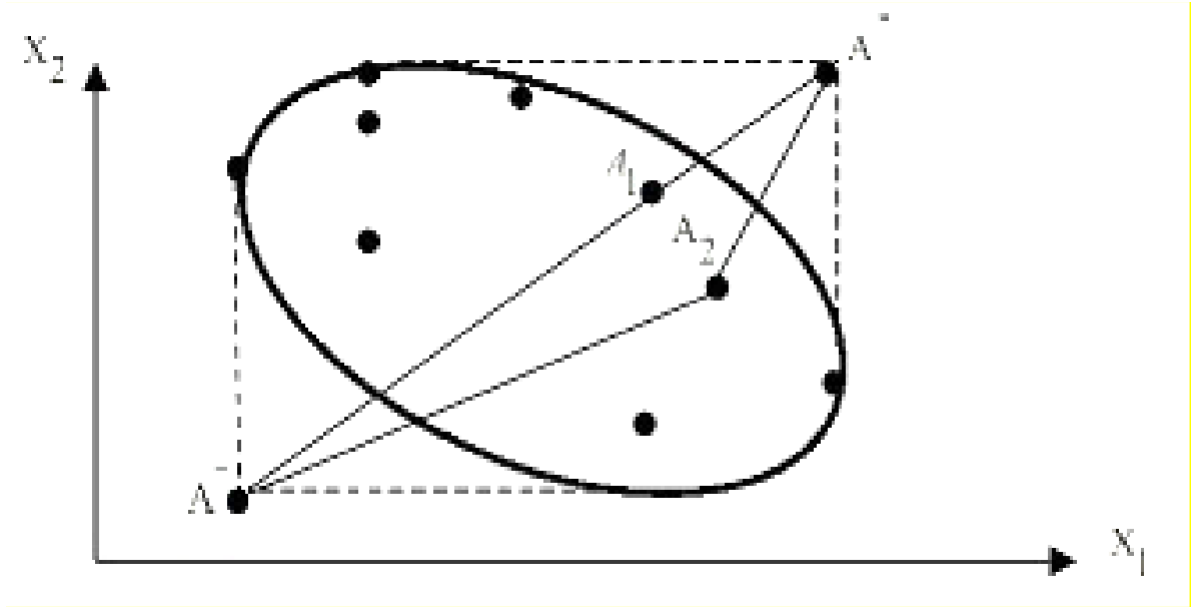

Figure 2: *Distance from the positive and negative ideal*

The purpose of the TOPSIS technique: Selecting the best alternative based on a number of criteria

Alternative selection criteria: The maximum geometric distance from the negative ideal and the maximum proximity to the (positive) ideal solution of the TOPSIS technique requires the weight of the criteria and the weight of the criteria should be determined from the best-worst method, Entropy method, SWARA method or AHP method. The steps of TOPSIS method are:

A: The formation of the decision matrix

The first step in this technique is to form a decision matrix. The decision matrix is a matrix for evaluating a number of alternatives based on some criteria. That is a matrix in which each alternative is scored based on a number of criteria. The decision matrix with X and each of its entries are shown by xij.

$$X = \begin{bmatrix} x_{11} & x_{12} \cdots & x_{1n} \\ x_{21} & x_{22} \cdots & x_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ x_{m1} & x_{m2} & x_{mn} \end{bmatrix}$$

B: Formation *of a normal decision matrix*

Normalization or non-scaling is the second step in solving all multi-criteria decision-making techniques based on the decision matrix. In MCDM methods, it is better to use the term non-scale. In TOPSIS technique, normalization is done by the vector method.

$$n_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij}}{\sqrt{\sum_1^m x_{ij}^2}}$$

The output *of this step is displayed as the following normal matrix:*

$$N = \begin{bmatrix} n_{11} & n_{12} \cdots & n_{1n} \\ n_{21} & n_{22} \cdots & n_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ n_{m1} & n_{m2} & n_{mn} \end{bmatrix}$$

C: Formation *of a balanced normal decision matrix*

In the third step of learning the TOPSIS method, the created normal decision matrix must be balanced. For this purpose, the weight of each criterion is multiplied by all the entries below the same criterion. The weight of the criteria must be determined in advance. For this purpose, entropy technique, AHP, best-worst method (BWM) and SWARA method are usually used.

$$V = \begin{bmatrix} v_{11} & v_{12} \cdots & v_{1n} \\ v_{21} & v_{22} \cdots & v_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ v_{m1} & v_{m2} & v_{mn} \end{bmatrix}$$

D: Calculation *of the positive and negative ideals*

Calculating positive ideal point, PIS and Negative ideal point, NIS is the next step. In this step, a positive ideal (A +) and a negative ideal are calculated for each index.

For criteria that have a positive load, the positive ideal is the highest value of that criterion**.**
For criteria that have a positive load, the negative ideal is the lowest value of that criterion**.**
For criteria that have a negative load, the positive ideal is the lowest value of that criterion**.**
For criteria that have a negative load, the negative ideal is the highest value of that criterion.
F: Distance from positive ideal and negative ideal and calculating the ideal solution

In this step, the relative proximity of each alternative to the ideal solution is calculated. The Euclidean distance of each alternative from the positive and negative ideals will be calculated by the following formula**.**

The final step is to calculate the ideal solution. In this step, the relative proximity of each alternative to the ideal solution is calculated. To this end, we use the following formula**:**

$$d_i^+ = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^{n} (V_{ij} - V_j^+)^2}$$

$$d_i^- = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^{n} (V_{ij} - V_j^-)^2}$$

$$CL_i^* = \frac{d_i^-}{d_i^- + d_i^+}$$

E: Calculation *of the positive and negative ideal*

The value of CL is between zero and one. The closer this value is to one, the closer the solution is to the ideal answer and the better the solution is**.**

5. Structural equation method

There are two approaches to estimating the parameters of a structural equation model, including the covariance-based approach and the variance-based approach (PLS). The partial least squares approach is, in fact, the second generation of structural equation modeling methods first developed by Wold (1974). This approach focuses on maximizing the variance of dependent variables that are predicted by independent variables. Researchers have considered this approach for reasons such as the use of embedded tools, compatibility with complex models, the possibility of using a measurement model with an index and less dependence on sample size, level of measurement of variables and normal distribution (Chin, 1998).

As it was mentioned, the partial least squares model can be divided into the Outer and Inner Models.

Outer model: Outer model indicates the relationships of items (questionnaire items) with factors (hidden variables), and is equivalent to the confirmatory factor analysis or measurement model in LISREL and Amos software.

Inner Model: Inner Model is similar to path analysis and the structural part of a structural equation model. After the Outer Model examination, it is necessary to present the Inner model that shows the relationship between the hidden variables. Thus, using the Inner model, the research hypotheses of the model can be examined.

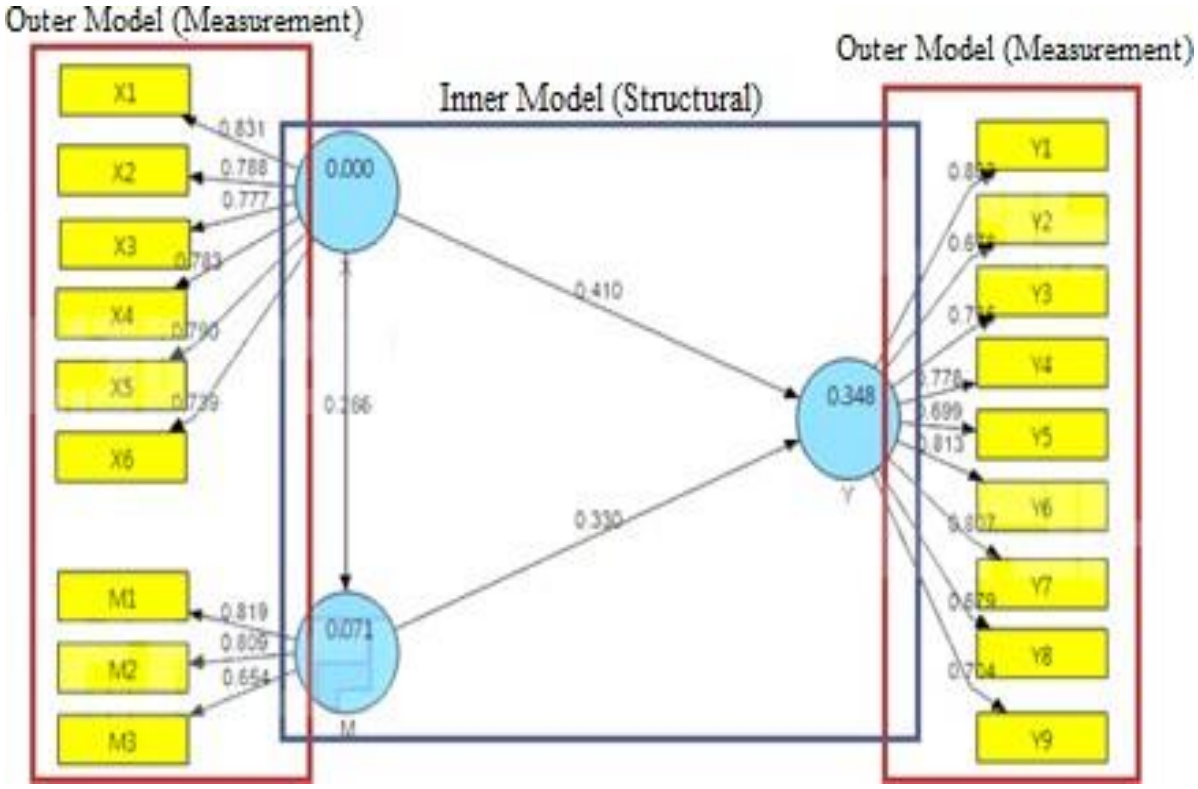

Figure 3: *Partial least squares approach*

6. Model estimation

Before considering the model, it is necessary to introduce research questionnaires.

Table 1: *Questionnaire items*

Row	Variable	question number	Number of items
1	NATO presence	6-1	6
2	Military security	12-7	6
3	Social Security	18-13	6
4	Political security	24-19	6
5	Economic security	30-25	6
6	Environmental security	36-31	6
7	Energy security	43-37	6

In the following, we will try to remove the unimportant variables of the research using the TOPSIS method. Based on the above fuzzy numbers and verbal expressions, the average fuzzy scores of experts' opinions about the alternatives available in this research are shown in Table (2).

Table 2: *Average fuzzy scores of each NATO presence alternative*

	Mean of fuzzy scores of each of the studied alternatives		
Non-latent 1	4.76	6.68	8.68
Non-latent 2	4.546667	6.546667	8.546667
Non-latent 3	4.64	6.613333	8.613333
Non-latent 4	4.613333	6.586667	8.586667
Non-latent 5	4.786667	6.746667	8.746667
Non-latent 6	4.56	6.533333	8.533333

Source: Researcher calculations

Changing fuzzy numbers to verbal expressions:

The distance between the fuzzy number corresponding to the alternatives and each of the verbal expressions is described in Table (3).

Table 3: *Verbal expressions corresponding to the mean of fuzzy scores of research alternatives*

	Verbal expressions correspo			
	Alternative distance to ver			
	Very weak	Weak	Average	G
Non-latent 1	5.12	3.71	1.71	0
Non-latent				

Source: Researcher calculations

In the following parts, we will discuss the findings of the fuzzy TOPSIS technique to

prioritize the studied alternatives**.**

Step 1: Form a decision-making matrix for evaluating alternatives: this matrix is shown in Table (4).

Table 4: *Fuzzy scores evaluation alternatives (decision matrix)*

Non-latent 1	**5**	**7**	**9**	**5**	**7**	**9**	**1**	**3**	**5**
Non-latent 2	7	9	11	5	7	9	5	7	9
Non-latent 3	5	7	9	5	7	9	1	3	5
Non-latent 4	5	7	9	7	9	11	1	3	5
Non-latent 5	7	9	11	7	9	11	1	3	5
Non-latent 6	7	9	11	7	9	11	1	3	5

Source: Researcher calculationsStep 2: Non-scaling the decision matrix: the results of non-scaling are presented in Table (5).

Table 5: *Fuzzy unscaled matrix*

Non-latent 1	**0.4545**	**0.6363**	**0.8181**	**0.4545**	**0.63636**	**0.81818**	**0.0909**	**0.2727**	**0.4545**
Non-latent 2	0.6363	0.8181	1	0.4545	0.636364	0.818182	0.45454	0.6363	0.8181
Non-latent 3	0.4545	0.6363	0.8181	0.4545	0.636364	0.818182	0.0909	0.2727	0.4545
Non-latent 4	0.4545	0.6363	0.8181	0.6363	0.818182	1	0.0909	0.2727	0.4545
Non-latent 5	0.6363	0.8181	1	0.6363	0.818182	1	0.0909	0.2727	0.4545
Non-latent 6	0.6363	0.8181	1	0.6363	0.8181	1	0.0909	0.2727	0.4545

Source: Researcher calculations

Step 3: The third step in creating a fuzzy weighting unscaled ($\tilde{V}$) matrix is the weight of the experts' opinions, which is considered the same. The fuzzy weighting unscaled matrix is presented in Table (6**(.**

Table 6: *The fuzzy weighting unscaled matrix* **)**$\tilde{V}$ **(**

Non-latent 1	**0.00252**	**0.00353**	**0.00454**	**0.00252**	**0.00353**	**0.00454**	**0.00050**	**0.00151**	**0.00252**
Non-latent 2	0.00353	0.004545	0.00555	0.00252	0.00353	0.00454	0.00252	0.00353	0.00454
Non-latent 3	0.002525	0.003535	0.00454	0.00252	0.00353	0.00454	0.00050	0.00151	0.00252
Non-latent 4	0.002525	0.00353	0.00454	0.00353	0.00454	0.00555	0.00050	0.00151	0.00252
Non-latent 5	0.003535	0.004545	0.005556	0.003535	0.00454	0.00555	0.00050	0.00151	0.00252
Non-latent 6	0.003535	0.004545	0.005556	0.003535	0.00454	0.00555	0.00050	0.00151	0.002525

Source: Researcher calculations

Step 4: Calculating the sum of the distances of each of the alternatives from the fuzzy positive ideal and the fuzzy negative ideal; the results of the fuzzy positive ideal values are considered in Table (7) and the results of the fuzzy negative ideal are shown in Table (8).

Table 7: *The sum of the distances of each of the alternatives from the fuzzy positive ideal*

Non-latent 1	**0.996464988**	**0.996464988**	**0.998485189**
Non-latent 2	0.995454887	0.996464988	0.996464988
Non-latent 3	0.996464988	0.996464988	0.998485189
Non-latent 4	0.996464988	0.995454887	0.998485189
Non-latent 5	0.995454887	0.995454887	0.998485189
Non-latent 6	0.995454887	0.995454887	0.998485189

Source: Researcher calculations

Table 8: *The sum of the distances of each of the alternatives from the fuzzy negative ideal*

Non-latent 1	**0.003630279**	**0.003630279**	**0.001725076**
Non-latent 2	0.004619671	0.003630279	0.003630279
Non-latent 3	0.003630279	0.003630279	0.001725076
Non-latent 4	0.003630279	0.004619671	0.001725076
Non-latent 5	0.004619671	0.004619671	0.001725076
Non-latent 6	0.004619671	0.004619671	0.001725076

Source: Researcher calculations

Step 5: Calculating the relative proximity of alternative i by the ideal solution and ranking alternatives; the results are indicated in Table (9).

Table 9: *Ranking alternatives*

Alternative	**Distance to the positive ideal**	**Distance to the negative ideal**	**Weight**	**Rank**
Non-latent 1	149.3305	0.673253	0.003488244	5
Non-latent 2	149.3263	0.677466	0.004716327	1
Non-latent 3	149.3347	0.669048	0.004560211	3
Non-latent 4	149.3358	0.668189	0.004654475	2
Non-latent 5	149.3422	0.661667	0.003410999	6
Non-latent 6	149.3482	0.655993	0.004493161	4

Source: Researcher calculations

The results of ranking the alternatives with the fuzzy TOPSIS technique indicate that the " Non-latent 2" alternative has a higher priority than the other options. Questions with a mean below 4 were removed from the non-latent questions of NATO presence indices. From the NATO presence variable, 3 indices are non-latent; 2 indices of military security; 3 indices of Social security; 3 indices of Political security; 3 indices of Economic security; 1 index of Environmental security; 3 indices of Energy security. Accordingly, using the TOPSIS method, out of 42 non-latent indices, 18 indices were removed from the model due to the lack of the minimum average required to enter the model.

In the partial least squares model process, the measurement model is evaluated first and its validity and reliability are examined according to the criteria set in the outer models. Then, if the reliability, validity and commonality index of the measurement model is confirmed, the structural (inner) model can be evaluated. There are two factors in evaluating the reliability of external models: one-dimensionality and inner reliability (structural reliability coefficient). Therefore, to confirm the first factor, i.e. being one-dimensional, the factor value must be greater than 0.6. A factor load value of less than 0.6 is considered small and should be removed from the model. In the second factor, the structural reliability coefficient and Cronbach's alpha must be greater than 0.7. As it can be seen from the results in Table (10), the reliability of the measurement model is confirmed.

Table 10: *Factor load values, extracted mean-variance and combined reliability*

Cronbach	**CR**
0/796	0/911
0/887	0/885
0/0741	0/814

In addition, it is necessary to deal with the validity of research questions. There are two types of validity in this section: convergent validity and divergent validity. Convergent validity means that the latent variable is appropriately explained by the explicit variables. Also, to measure the convergent validity, the extracted mean-variance is used, the minimum acceptable value of which is 0.5. The existence of divergent validity also means that the latent variable is better explained by its explicit variables than the variables of other factors. In PLS process modeling, we use the Fornell-Larcker criterion to measure it. The Fornell-Larcker criterion states that a variable should be more dispersed among its representations than the representations of other latent variables. In other words, the derived mean-variance of each latent variable must be greater than the highest square of the correlation of that variable with other latent variables. According to the values in Table (11), the validity of the measurement model is also confirmed.

Table 11: *Results of Fornell-Larcker test and mean-variance extracted*

Index	Energy security	Environmental security	Economic security	Political security	Social Security	Military security	AVE
Military security	0.845						0.714
Social Security	0.068	0.796					0.633
Political security	0.061	0.658	0.741				0.549
Economic security	0.080	0.534	0.677	0.724			0.525
Environmental security	0.032	0.332	0.666	0.576	0.812		0.844
Energy security	0.066	0.646	0.531	0.401	0.448	0.803	0.678

The quality test of the measurement model (subscription index) is presented below. This index measures the model's ability to predict observable variables through their corresponding hidden variable values. Positive values of this index indicate the appropriate and acceptable quality of the measurement model. Table (12) lists the subscription index values for each of the variables. As can be seen, the values are positive and greater than zero. As a result, the quality of the measurement model is confirmed.

Table 12: *Measurement model quality test results*

Variable	CV Com
Military security	0.540
Social Security	0.471
Political security	0.395
Economic security	0.368
Environmental security	0.641
Energy security	0.441

After evaluating the measurement model and confirming the reliability and validity, the structural model can be evaluated. Additionally, two criteria are used to evaluate this model. It should be noted that the basic criterion for evaluating the degree of explanation of dependent variables is the coefficient of determination. The coefficient of determination shows what percentage of the changes in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. The value of this coefficient varies from 0 to 1. Chin (1988) considers values close to 0.67 to be desirable, close to 0.33 to be normal, and close to 0.19 to be weak.

In order to estimate the relationships between the research variables based on the partial least squares, it is first necessary to formulate the relationship between the variables based on

the theoretical foundations presented in the research. Before estimating the final model, we estimated the model without making a connection between the research questions, which is shown bilaterally in the following figure. But it was observed that the model error rate is about 9%. Therefore, we performed the final estimation of the model using the editing again feature provided by Smart PLS software, and considering that the error of the estimated model fell below 5%, it was concluded that the application of the new correlation has improved the results. Based on the results, all variables entered in the model have a suitable factor load, so their presence in the model is statistically justified.

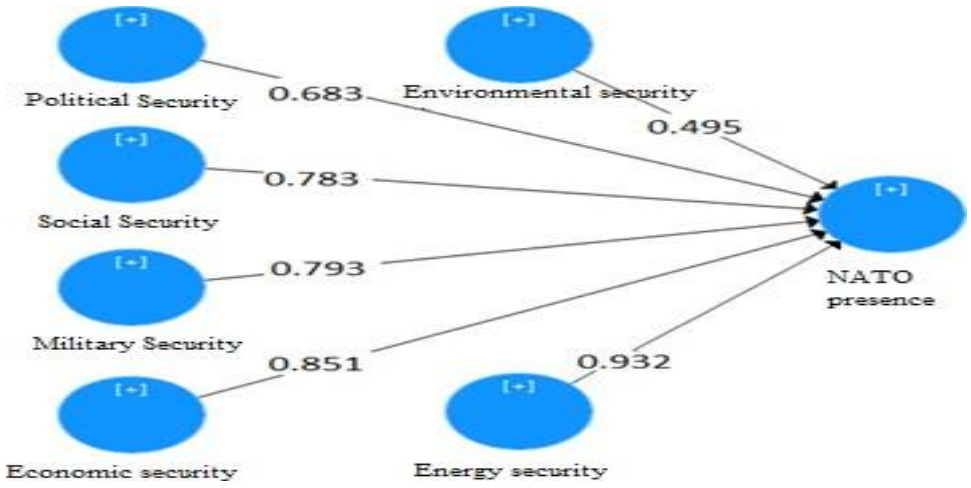

Figure 4: *The graph for factor load of variables*

Now, considering the justification of the presence of the desired variables in the model, the question that comes to mind refers to this fact, to what extent does each question have an effect on the studied indices? To answer this question, the graph of normalized coefficients is presented in the next section.

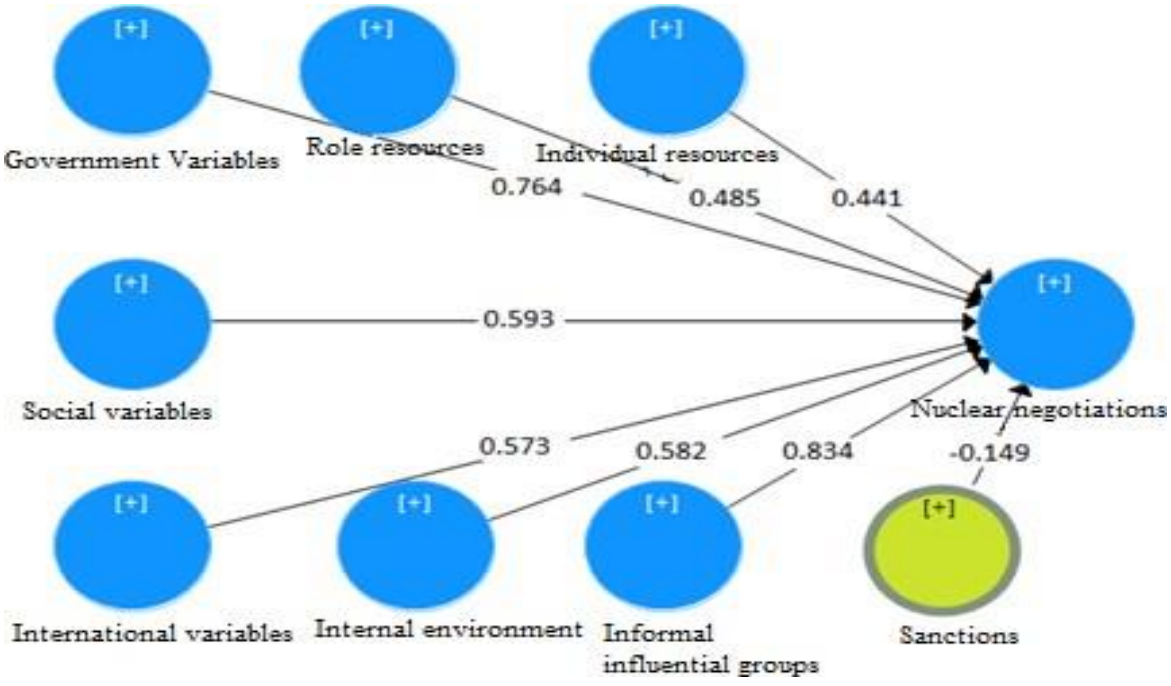

Figure 5: *Standardized coefficients for questions*

In the following, after determining the effectiveness of research variables, we will examine the significance of research variables based on the t-statistic. The significance of the coefficient means the real relationship between the research variables. In Figure (5); The t-statistic of each question and the relevant criteria are presented.

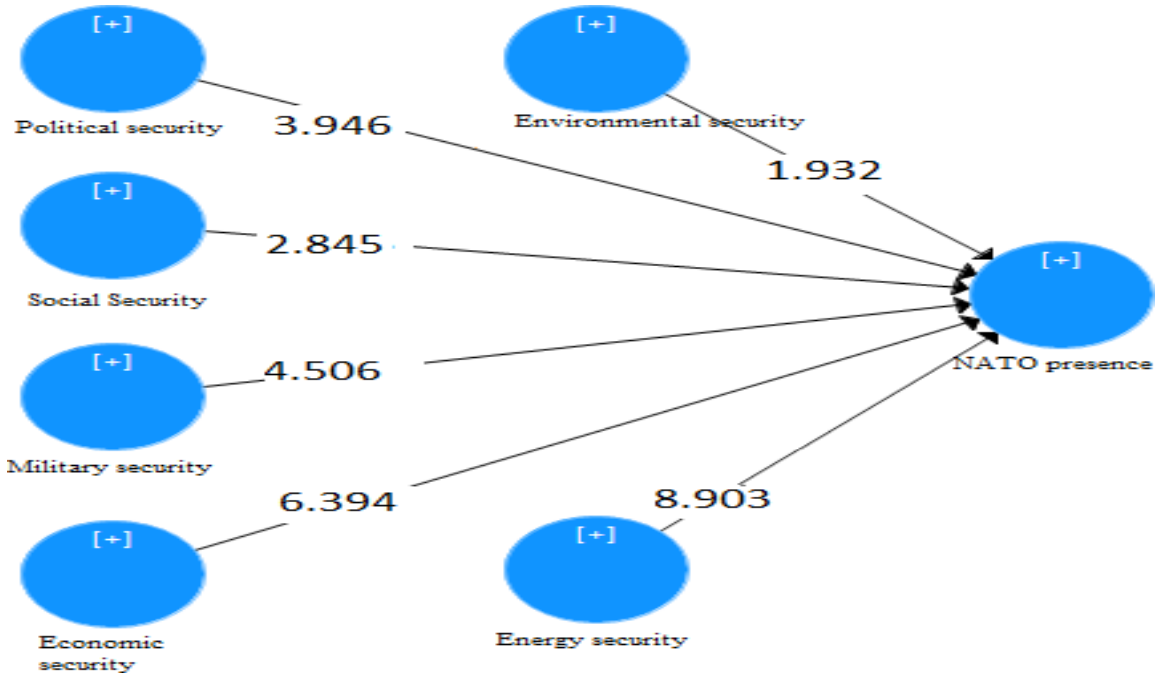

Figure 6: *Significant coefficients based on t-statistic*

The answers to the following questions are among the most important issues in the field of data fitting to the model; To what extent does the fact that the model formulated on the basis of the theoretical framework and empirical background correspond to reality? To what extent does the collected data, support a theoretically developed model?

Acceptable scientific criteria for confirming the developed theoretical model using the collected data is the main discussion in the model fit indices. In the following, based on the results, the goodness of fit index for the model is presented in Table (13):

Table (13); *The goodness of fit index for model*

	coefficient of determination	**Modified coefficient of determination**
SRMR index	0.027	0.021
GFI	0.943	0.955

Considering that the GFI index was (above 70%) and the root means the square error of approximation was (less than 8%), the model is at the desired level in terms of goodness of fit index for the model.

7. Discussion and conclusion

Considering the fact that the bipolar system collapsed, along with the collapse of the Soviet Union, all the institutions and mechanisms that emerged from the system were predicted to be destroyed, but NATO and Warsaw, two security alliances from the Cold War, faced two different destinies. Warsaw collapsed following the collapse of the Soviet Union, while NATO

was likely to suffer the same fate, but contrary to all expectations, NATO was able to overcome this identity crisis successfully and justify its survival for the 21st century by redefining its functions and tasks. The treaty, which its existence seemed meaningless despite the United Nations as the custodian of stability and security in the world, was able to survive not only through structural and semantic changes but also acted as the executive arm of the United Nations and the world police while the Security Council was facing the lack of executive assistant. Perhaps the most important role in this survival was played by the evolution of the concept of security. In the post-Cold War era, we are witnessing the emergence of approaches in international relations that focus on redefining the concept of security. Similarly, the main question of the present study is how the concept of security in NATO is defined in the era of the new world order, and what have been the structural changes of this organization to adapt to this change?

The Copenhagen School, as one of the most prominent schools in this field, took a fundamental step in redefining security by providing a broad interpretation of the concept of security and expanding the scope of security to multiple dimensions. Accordingly, after the Cold War, the nature of the threats has been changed and became more widespread and diverse than in the past. In this regard, with the evolution of the concept of security during the Cold War from the hardware dimension and one-sided (unilateral) to software dimensions and multilateral in the post-Cold War era, we considered a change in the functions of NATO from a purely military institution to a political-security institution. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to model the factors affecting the analysis of NATO's presence in the Middle East.

Based on the TOPSIS method, 18 unimportant items were removed from the 42 designed items, and the following results were obtained based on the partial least squares model of the research method. Thus, some factors that affect NATO's presence in the Middle East involve energy security 0.842, economic security 0.738, political security 0.459, social Security 0.298, environmental security 0.193 and military security 0.684. What is certain is that energy, economic and military factors have a much stronger impact than other variables in justifying the presence of NATO, and reflect the fact that the presence of NATO is aimed at securing the interests of superpowers and emphasizing other indicators that improve the situation of the countries in the region is on the fringe of the main issue, which is to provide financial and economic benefits to the superpowers. According to the research results and the significant effect of various types of security on the presence of NATO in the Middle East; NATO needs a broad redefinition and transparency of its presence in the Middle East.

The redefinition of international threats and the broad interpretation of the concept of security shifted the tasks of territorial defense to an organization with the function of adopting preventive strategies, and a dynamic organization for managing international crises. Moreover, it changed from an inflexible defense-offensive organization into a multifaceted security alliance. In such a process, the concept of security and instances of insecurity, as well as its needs and requirements, underwent a fundamental transformation; therefore, the institution, which initially had a military nature with the aim of ensuring territorial security, should slowly change its functions considering the expanding borders, gradual modernization, and structural reforms. It should be noted that these changes must be due to the developments and conditions of the new world order, otherwise, the negative consequences that it will bring are more than its positive consequences. However, the Ukraine-Russia war and the indecisive presence of NATO in this area, are among the most important reasons why NATO has not been able to redefine itself in light of the new world conditions and order.

8. Resources

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