

Tension and Conflict Theories between Countries: Review, Critique and Presenting a Theoretical Model

Mohammad Reza Hafeznia* - Full Professor of Political Geography, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Rebaz Ghorbaninejad- PhD Student of Political Geography, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Zahra Ahmadipour- Associate Professor of Political Geography, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Abdolali Ghavam- Full Professor of Political Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

Received: 18/03/2013

Accepted: 10/09/2013

Abstract

Tension and conflict between political-spatial units in different local, regional, national, and global aspects have been a part of the human beings history on this planet. The nation-state countries as the most basic political units of sovereignty and authority in the territorial space, which is under their own control, have experienced relations based on tension and conflict with their neighbors due to their quest for national survival and expansion of their sphere of and to achieve national interests. In many cases, governments, because of their perspectives toward geographical and geopolitical factors and values both within and outside their territory, have hold inharmonious views with neighbors or regional and global powers and in such a case tension and conflict occurs. Considering the importance of factors causing tension and conflict in countries relations, different and various perspectives from different scholars and experts from various disciplines such as geography, political science, sociology, management, international relations, geopolitics as well as different schools of thought in this area have been presented. The research hypothesis is that most of the theories presented by professionals and scholars relating to the sources of tension and conflict between countries have uni-factor or multifactor essence and none of them have succeeded in providing a comprehensive theoretical model. Accordingly, this paper by using descriptive-analytic approaches and using library resources attempts to assess and evaluate theories related to the origins of conflict and tension between countries and by the means of criticism and analysis of theories provides a new theory in the field of factors causing conflict in countries relations.

Keywords: Tension, Conflict, Geopolitics, International Relations, Nation-State.

* E-mail: hafezn_m@modares.ac.ir

Introduction

Terms and concepts of tension, challenge, dispute, conflict and crisis are commonly used in the literature of political geography and geopolitics and international relations. And they are often used to express types of hostile relations between two countries or rival powers. Tension and conflict between political units in different aspects of internal, national, regional and global, are as old as political and social history. Governments, as the most basic political units with authority and sovereignty in territorial space, which is under their own control, have experienced relations based on tension and conflict with their neighbors due to their quest for national survival and expansion of their sphere of influence and achieving national interests.

Geography and geopolitics of every region play a major role in the establishment of peaceful and friendly relations among nations, or tension and conflict over that region. In other words, the root of many conflicts and tensions in countries relations is in the geographical and geopolitical features. On the other hand, stability of values and geographical factors has caused maintenance of tensions and conflicts and this has made governments unable to overcome these conflicts and tensions.

Despite extensive studies conducted by western research and scientific centers on various aspects of crisis, conflict, contention and war, few comparative studies about these phenomena have been carried out along with identifying their origins to reach a series of generalizable scientific explanations. Moreover, the obtained results from these studies lack heterogeneity and homogeneity and they are not generally deductible. Also, they are not generalizable to future events. Study of tensions and international conflicts is not confined to the realm of political science and international relations, other scholars from other fields such as economics, law, sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, geography, etc. have conducted research in this filed. Naturally, the methods that experts in

various disciplines have used to study the phenomena of tension, conflict, dispute and crisis are used in a range of research techniques and methodologies such as case study, comparative study, empirical research, statistical and other studies. At present, there is no single general theory about tension and conflict accepted by scientists or experts in other fields of political sciences or experts from whom political scientists have inspired. There is no way to determine the source of conflict or war, because not only they are numerous, but also they have been gradually increased.

In this research, the researchers try to evaluate various theories offered by scholars and experts in the field of political geography, and political science related tension and the conflict origins in countries relations and after defining related concepts to tension and conflict and by engaging in the critical analysis of these theories, want to provide a new theory about factors causing tension and conflict in countries relations. The hypothesis upon which this research has been conducted is that most of the theories provided by professionals and scholars relating to the sources of tension and conflict between countries have uni-factor or multifactor essence and none of them have succeeded in providing a comprehensive theoretical model.

Theoretical Framework

Tension and Conflict

The term tension refers to a set of attitudes and tendencies such as distrust and suspicion which people and policy makers have toward others. Tension does not cause conflict by itself, but it enables different parties to show behavior based on conflict if each of them try to achieve incompatible objectives(Holsti,1991:288). Conflict is different from tension. Tension usually refers to a hidden hostility, fear, suspicion, and perhaps refers to a desire of dominance or revenge. However, tension does not exceed the level of attitudes and perceptions and does not include mutual deterrent efforts. Although tension often precedes conflict and it is always involved in it, it is not always synonymous with conflict and it is not always consistent with

cooperation. However, causes of tension are likely to be related to the causes of conflict. Furthermore, if tension is sufficiently intensified, depending on the extent of its influence on the decision making process, it may be converted independently to contributing factors or outbreak of conflict(Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff,1981:298).

Despite the wide variation in the causes and sources of tension in countries relations, political geographers, along with scholars from other disciplines, have done critical studies in this area and they have reached invaluable results. However, most of these studies were related to case studies and geographers have tried to evaluate a particular geopolitical conflict in a limited geographical area. However, these results are not generalizable to other conflicts and tensions.

Many of the underlying causes of tension and conflict between countries are considered in the realm of geographical and geopolitical factors and values. In other words, although occurring conflicts between countries may be affected by political or ideological factors, the vast majority of tensions and conflicts between countries have geographical origin and geographical values are the roots in the perceived national interests of the parties. Even if ideological and political factors are well analyzed, it becomes clear that such factors are also directly or indirectly have geopolitical nature such as: Thought and beliefs promotion motives, participation in international coalition, defending the groups' rights which have structural congruence, and protection of religious sites(Hafeznia, 2006:129). Researchers and scholars from the field of geopolitics have traditionally considered three main causes of tension and conflict in countries relations: 1.Territory, 2.Ideology 3.Resources. Most conflicts and disputes are formed due to the combination of these factors. The researchers and scholars have also introduced ethnicity as another element of tension and conflict, particularly in internal conflicts. However, a number of scholars, such as Oloughlin(2006) argue that economic factors are the most common causes

of tension and conflict. Furthermore, geopolitical experts have paid more attention to identity and territorial disputes in recent years (Gallaher and others, 2009:227-229).

However, every researcher in the field of study of the sources of tension and conflict in relations between countries, emphasized a group of factors and ignored the influence of other factors in creating the tension between states. In other words, most scholars in this field, have one-dimensional view to the issue of tension and conflict in international relations, and are not considered the extent and distribution of geographical and geopolitical factors of tension and conflict.

Methodology

This article is based on descriptive-analytic approach and the data collection procedure is generally based on library research. In library research, the emphasis has been put on the examination of documents, reference to the relevant domestic and foreign books, periodicals and newspapers, articles, magazines and internet websites. After data collection and classification, the data analysis has been mainly carried out using descriptions based on logic and reasoning.

This research is basic and applied in terms of purpose, that expands the theoretical basis of geopolitical factors of tension between countries, and after review and critique of theories proposed by scholars associated with the causes of tension and conflict between countries, provided a comprehensive model in this regard. The final model that extracted from this research, can be used in other geopolitical and geographical regions of the world and in relation between countries too. On the other hand, the approach used in this study, is a critical approach, in other words, researchers study the views and opinions offered by the authors and scholars in relation to geographical and geopolitical factors of tension in the relations of countries with a critical approach. Finally, after individual review of each

of the theories and based on the studies related to the research literature, is provided the final model of this research.

Findings

In this part, the theories of scholars and experts in the fields of political science and political geography in relation to the sources of tension and conflict between countries have been mentioned. After expressing the features of each theory, a short critique of each has been provided. At the end of this section and critique of each theory, a new theory about the origins of geopolitical tension and conflict between countries is provided by the authors.

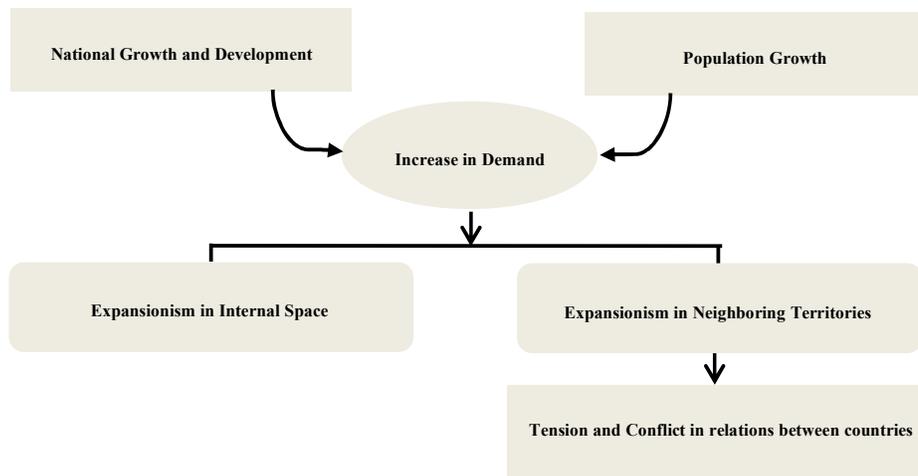
1. Nazli Shokri and Robert North (1975)

“Nazli Shokri” and “Robert North” In a book titled “Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence” (1975), have expressed their views about the rise of tension and conflict between countries. They have claimed that national growth processes often lead to expansionism, competition, rivalry, conflict and violence between nations. Summary of the theory of these authors “National Growth and International Violence” is as follows:

“The demands of a growing population increase for basic resources. As technology advances, the diversity and amount of required resources also increases. As a result of failure to satisfy these demands, a search will be conducted for new possibilities and if these resources could not be provided within the borders of the country, pressure across national boundaries will be exerted for the provision of them. Pressure can be in the form of commercial activities, the construction of commercial fleet and navy, dispatching armies to foreign countries, gaining colonial territories or foreign markets, establishing military bases abroad or in other ways. A country does not necessarily need to satisfy its needs beyond its territory. It

might lower its needs and pay attention to internal affairs, but most modern industrial countries exert pressure in some way or another” (Choucri & North,1975:15-17).

Figure 1.Choucri & North (1975) model of tension and conflict



This idea is in the realm of uni-factor theories. Shokri and North have sufficed to mention that increase in demand and national growth are the sole causes of tension between countries. However, there are various factors that pave the way for tension and conflict between countries.

2. Louise Richardson (1960)

“Louise Richardson” believes that the potential capacity of tension and conflict between countries is a function of the neighboring countries number of each country. Richardson, in an article titled “Statistics of Deadly Quarrels” published in 1960, in the journal of Science, considered war as a vital phenomenon. In this paper, before intercontinental missiles proves that regional relations including tension and conflict are the function of the number of neighbors that a country has(Richardson,1960:384). However, in

the process of foreign threat, neighboring country or countries may potentially be affected in the following ways:

A. Crisis Precipitation

Every country can expect the reflection of the immediate effects of neighbor's insecurity within its territory. By precipitating a crisis, countries indirectly and often reluctantly declare wars against others, especially neighboring countries.

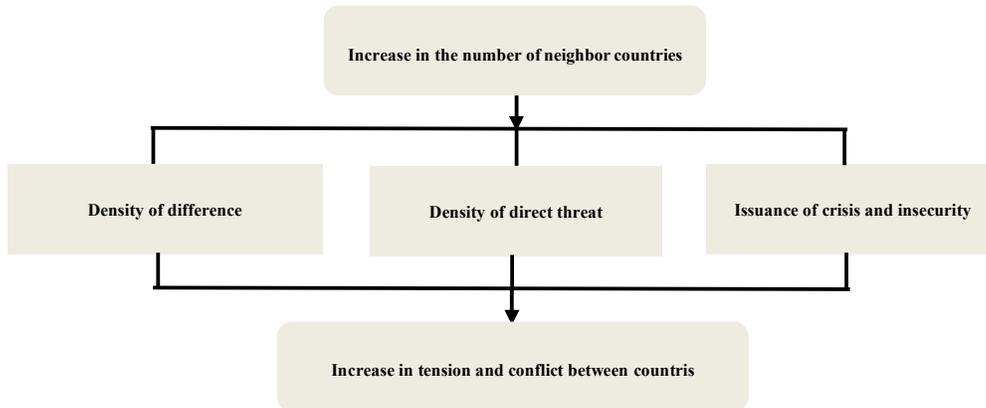
B. Density of Direct Threat

Most of the wars that occurred between the years 1945-2000, engaged countries with at least four neighbors. Examples like China- India, Egypt-Israel, Vietnam – China, Iran-Iraq and Armenia - Azerbaijan are appropriate for this conclusion. On the contrary, one of the major factors in the relative safety and security of countries like Australia, Canada and the United States is the small number of neighbors that they have.

C. Density of Difference

Number of neighbors also paves the way for increase in conflicts between neighboring countries. Boundary and territorial disputes, disputes over joint oil resources, Right to water in international rivers, practical issues of borders and ideological clashes often get a tangible meaning between neighboring countries. In fact, there is a direct relationship between the number of neighbors and increase in demands(Haye, 2002:12-14).

Figure 2. Richardson's (1960) model of tension and conflict



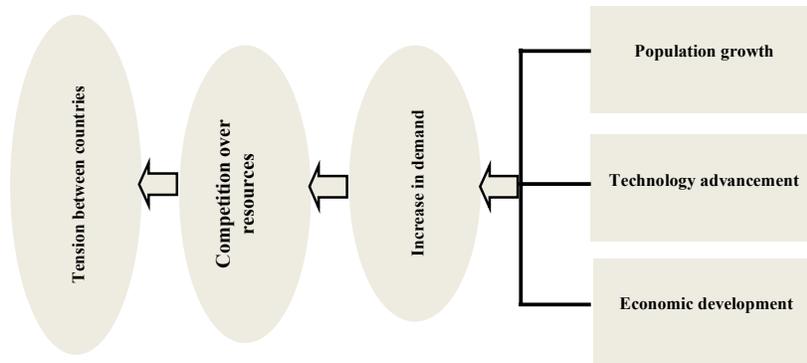
As can be seen in Figure 2, Richardson's theory is also in the realm of uni-factor theories. He also suffices to mention the number of neighboring countries as a single factor and has not included other factors causing tension. Therefore, this model cannot serve as a comprehensive model to be considered in this context.

3. Richard Ashley (1980)

"Richard Ashley" assumes that human beings, based on a dialectical process, try to reduce the gap between actualities and musts. Human beings in an endless competition over scarce resources interact with their environment. By accepting explanations based on the pressures of "Shokri" and "North" on international conflicts, as its point of departure, emphasizes demographic factors, technological and economic interaction within themselves and other countries. It seems that economic expansion, according to "Ashley", is the main cause of international conflicts. Population growth and technological advancements lead to increase in demands which must be satisfied. When the demands of developing countries coincide and when there is no way for cooperation, international

conflict may arise(Ashley,1980:162-163). Ashley’s work like many researchers who have analyzed conflict and war between countries over the past one or two decades is invaluable because it directs our attention to the fact that government policies, with war or peace motives, are determined not only by internal processes of national political systems, but also by interacting with other governments. Governments interact with friend and enemy countries without necessarily involving in the processes of action - reaction that Richardson and some of his pupils have in mind. Arms competition in its true sense is a kind of bargaining and leverage-Building which does not necessarily have to end in war and perhaps leads to a more stable relation with the characteristic of pacified arms competition and a tendency toward other ways of foreign policy(Most & Star,1983:155-157).

Figure 3. Ashley’s (1980) model of tension and conflict



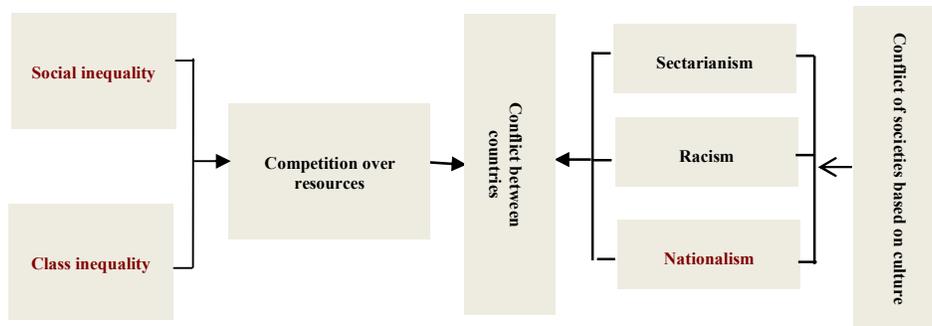
Ashley considers competition over resources between countries due to increased demand in domestic and international level as the major factor causing tension in relations between these countries. Accordingly, we can conclude that Ashley’s model is also uni-factor which cannot explain exactly geopolitical factors in relations between countries.

4. Peter Meyer (1994)

According to “Peter Meier“, heterogeneous communities along with special cultural systems and social and class inequality are considered to be causes of conflict and war. If two or more countries compete over scarce supplies and materials, it can lead to conflict and tension and even war between them(Meyer,1997:30-31). It seems that the most important factors in war lie in collectivism, ethnicity, nationalism and relationship based on mutual fear which, in turn, is the result of logical conclusion of racial, ethnic group nobility(Meyer,1997:67). In general, According to Meyer’s viewpoint, the following changes can be considered as causes of conflict and war between countries states:

1. Economic changes which can lead to changes in the construction of new social goals and cause wars that are aimed at plundering and exploitation of other countries.
2. Ideological changes that can legitimize status quo and unfair wars.
3. Technological changes and developments that could change production lines and relations between and within groups.
4. Social changes which can lead to changes in social classification and transformation in the privileged class.
5. Political changes which can disestablish institutions and legal patterns and create new system of patterns(Meyer,1997: 94).

Figure 4. Meyer's (1994) model of tension and conflict



As can be seen in Figure 4, we can define Meyer's model as bi-factor. He has mentioned two factors of competition over resources and cultural and ethnic heterogeneous along with numerous geopolitical factors causing tension in relations between countries. Hence, this model cannot be a comprehensive model to be considered in this context. Meyer has ignored hydro-political, environmental, ecological and territorial factors in his model.

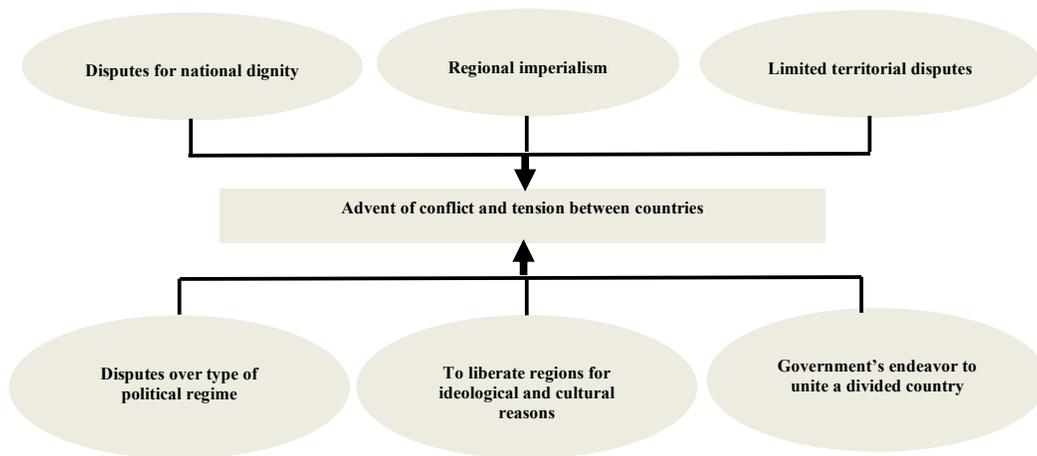
5. K. J. Holsti (1986)

"K. J. Holsti" conducted a study in 1986 on international disputes which finally led to war between countries, he chose 97 disputes between countries from 1919 to 1986 as samples, and out of them, he considers the following six factors as the main causes of conflict and strife between countries:

1. Limited territorial disputes;
2. Disputes related to government composition and type of political regime;
3. Disputes of national dignity;
4. Regional imperialism;
5. Independence wars or revolutionary wars;
6. Disputes emanating from a government's goal to unit a divided country(Holsti,1986:272-296).

Although Holsti's theory is a multi-factor model compared to previous models, it is relatively comprehensive, however, it ignores hydro-political, geo-economic and environmental issues causing tension between countries. Hence, this model cannot be modified into a comprehensive theoretical model relating to the geopolitical causes of tension between countries.

Figure 5. Halsti's (1986) model of tension and conflict



6. Quincy Wright(1983)

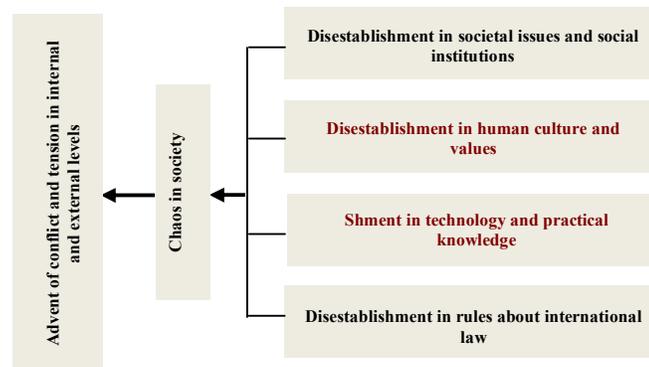
Quincy, by investigating the half-century of American history from 1890 to 1940 AD, has made a huge effort investigating the causes and nature of wars. In his book "A Study of War", he has tracks and analyzes four major components on this issue. These elements include:

- Development of technical knowledge or technology, especially techniques related to military issues;
- Rights, in particular, rules relating to the prevention and declaration of war;
- Social institutions, especially those related to units of political- racial nations, empires and international organizations;
- Public opinion and perceptions related to goals and values(Wright,1983:22-28).

These four main factors which include variables and phenomena such as technology, law, politics, sociology, psychology, culture and human biology are on the verge of constant change and disruption, therefore, they cause chaos in society and finally they cause war and violence. In other words, peace is guaranteed only when forces and factors associated with these variables are in equilibrium. Any instigation that upsets the balance in one of the above categories increases the risk of conflict and war between nations.

Critique of the Wright's theory is that he tries to take a sociological analysis of tension between countries and he has failed to consider geographical and geopolitical factors that play an important role in tension and conflict between the countries.

Figure 6. Wright's (1983) model of tension and conflict



7. Peter Hagget(1972)

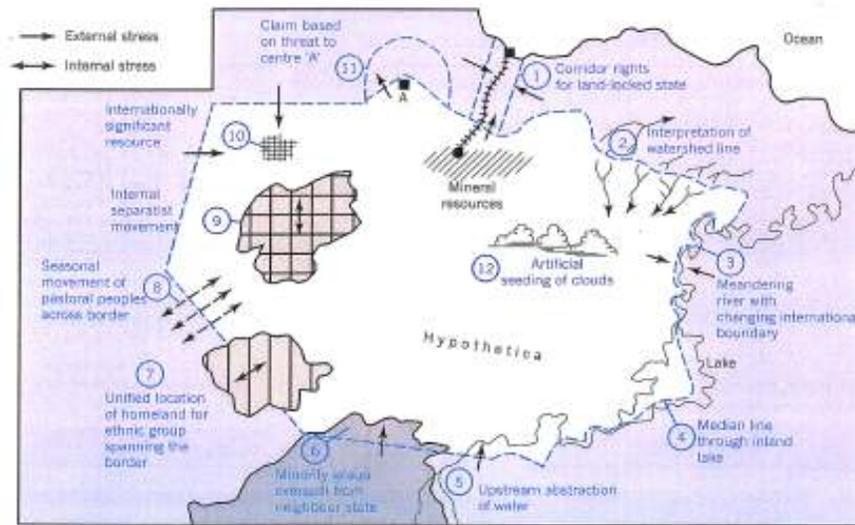
Model of Hypogetica from Peter Hagget is an attempt to study geographical factors causing tension in relations between countries. This model involves a hypothetical country called "The Hypogetica" which has a set of specific conditions causing disputes with its neighbors. The hypothetical country is

landlocked and has potential twelve points causing tension in relations with its neighbors(Hagget, 1983:477)(Hagget, 2001: 521). Hagget presented this model for the first time in 1972 in the first edition of his book “Geography: A Modern Synthesis”. This model has been mentioned without any change in subsequent editions of the book in 1975 and 1995 and 1983. Also, in a new book by Hagget called “Geography: A Global Synthesis” which was published in 2001, has been mentioned(Hagget, 1972, 1975, 1983, 1995, 2001). In this model, Hagget has mentioned the following twelve geographic factors causing tension in relations between countries:

1. Right corridors for landlocked countries in order to access the sea through the territory of neighboring country.
2. Disagreement over the division of waterline in mountainous borders
3. Repeatedly changing international fluvial border
4. Disagreement in the determining the border in joint lake and how to exploit its resources
5. Stealing upper side waters by countries located on top of it.
6. Spatial and territorial extension and spreading of an ethnic group to a neighboring country.
7. Establishment of racial or ethnic minority groups along two international borders.
8. Seasonal movement of nomads across two international borders
9. Ethnic separatist movement within a country.
10. Establishment of an important international resource next to the border that is claimed by neighbors. This resource may be an important strategic resource such as uranium or a cultural resource such as holy places.
11. The claim of a country over the territory of neighboring countries to maintain its superior and vital regional position and resources.
12. Legal conflicts over artificial fertilization of clouds to provide rain showers within the country and producing rain in the territory of neighboring country as a result of the movements of clouds(Hagget, 1972, 1975, 1983, 1995, 2001).

In figure(7), Peter Hagget’s model of Hypothetica and twelve geographical factors causing tension are shown.

Figure 7. Peter Hagget's "The Hypothetica" model(1972)



In his model, Hagget has mentioned geographical and geopolitical factors causing tension between countries, and compared to other theories, has put more emphasis on spatial and regional variables. However, Hagget's model lacks the variables related to environmental, ecological and geo-economic resources that cause tension. Hence, we cannot consider it as a comprehensive model.

8. Geoffrey Kemp and Robert Harkavy(1997)

Geoffrey kemp and Robert Harkavy, in the book "Strategic geography of The Middle East" and in a study on the geographical factors causing regional conflicts in the Middle East have mentioned the following four geographical characteristics that cause conflict between countries:

A. Demographic trends and asymmetries

Population growth and housing, health services, job and provision of food and daily necessities, migration and problems related to population

movements from one country to another, government intervention in family planning and birth rates, age composition of the population and age ratio of population growth, sex composition of the population and social issues relating to women, education stands, employment levels, the average age of marriage, job and educational opportunities, ethnic composition of the population, and etc., are demographic indicators which can result in insecurity within a country and its impacts can lead to conflict between neighbors. Population threats manifest themselves in various forms in relations between countries such as effects of uncontrolled births, migration, legal and illegal immigration, and development and lack of development(Kemp and Harkavy, 2004: 132-138).

B. Ethnicity, religion, and civil war

Civil war and the collapse of a country entail many implications threatening the stability of governments outside the focus of conflict and quarrel. One of the main reasons of civil wars within countries relates to heterogeneity of countries in terms of their ethnicity and religion. Civil war, particularly for neighboring countries which have religious and ethnic similarities with groups engaged in violent conflict, is very threatening. Another concern is that internal unrest could spread to neighboring countries and engage those people which have similarities with ethnic and religious groups or common interests with groups engaged in war(Kemp& Harkavy: 1997: 139-141).

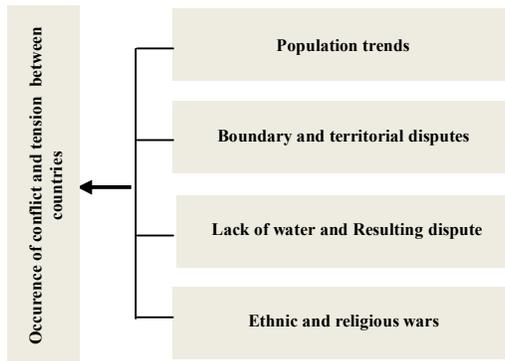
C. Territorial disputes

Dispute over land control and ownership are the most common causes of conflicts and wars between countries. Kemp and Harkavy in their study has investigated long-lasting and ongoing conflicts between Israel and Palestine, Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon, Iraq and Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, Iran and the United Arabic Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Bahrain and Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia over boundary and territorial claims.

D. Conflict over water

Today, considering the world population growth and resulting quantitative increase in water consumption, increased urbanization, increased demand for water quality and livelihoods, recession of subterranean waters in different parts of the world, need for water for the development of industry and agriculture and etc. We should expect water resources to be the main causes of tension and conflict in relations between countries in the 21st century at a global level and increasing ethnic and national conflicts between ethnic groups within a country at a national level. In their study, Kemp and Harkavy have studied tension and conflict between Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Jordan over the Jordan River, between Turkey, Syria and Iraq over the Tigris and Euphrates, between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia over the Nile. They have concluded that the dispute over water is one of the enduring geographical factors in creating tension and conflict between countries(Kemp and Harkavy, 2004: 165-173).

Figure 8. Kemp and Harkavy’s (1997) model of tension and conflict



Kemp and Harkavy’s theory, as a multi-factor model, includes geopolitical factors causing tension in relations between countries and with emphasis on issues of ethnic and religious, territorial, hydro-political and population tries to put emphasis on the role of geography and geopolitics

that cause tension in relations between countries. However, due to lack of attention to environmental issues and geo-economic tension inducing factors, the model cannot be considered as comprehensive.

9. Thomas Homer – Dixon (1991, 1994)

According to “Thomas Homer - Dixon“, the impacts of environmental and ecological factors on national security are assessed directly and indirectly. In direct impact, consequences of the occurrence of subsequent changes in environment, governments compete with each other to prolong their domination over natural resources, but in indirect method, changes in environment cause political-social consequences which pave the way for conflict. Accordingly, Homer - Dixon theorizes three types of relation(Homer-Dixon, 1994):

1. Disputes between governments resulting from lack of non-renewable natural resources and such disputes are well perceived in historical terms.
2. Disputes between countries resulting from lack of renewable natural resources.

In relation to renewable natural resources that cause tension and conflict in relations between countries, there are issues related to fishing in the disputed areas and important sources of fresh water.

3. Indirect conflicts influenced by environmental changes. These types of disputes that Homer - Dixon consider much more dangerous than the previous cases occur in two ways:

A. The problem of identity groups

Pressures from environmental problems create large population movements which lead to the formation of identity groups, groups that primarily stimulate dispute. Ethnic conflicts that continue in different parts of the world are the evident examples. Problem of suitable environmental conditions is an important issue in the preparation of population and its policies that in the form of migration or immigration continue to cause

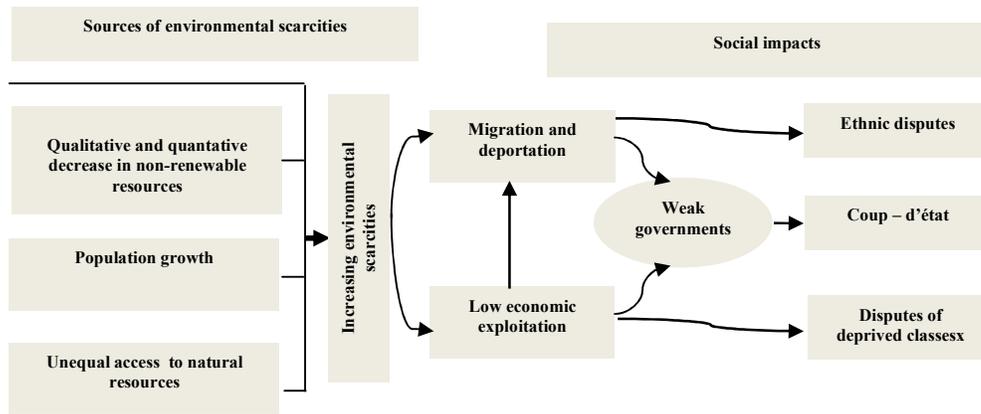
conflicts and problems for countries. The scope of these impacts is not limited to the domestic sphere, but also extends to international politics and world affairs(Suhrke, 1993:14-15).

B. Deprivation problem

Environmental problems by fueling economic deficiencies, paves the way for the formation of a sense of deprivation among citizens and thus induce tension and conflict. Differences based on natural environment result in more demands from government in improving life quality and it would create rupture in different regions which leads to weaken the legitimacy of political system. Ongoing conflicts in the Philippines and China serve as examples that confirm this claim(Homer-Dixon, 1993: 65-67).

However, it should be noted that this approach, and in particular Homer - Dixon's claims, have been criticized. Criticisms which discuss the strength of the relationship between the two areas of security and the environment, consider it as weak. According to these critics, this relationship has appeared as weak not only in theoretical terms but also in the context of political-social history. This criticism is proposed in connection with "Indirect Relation" since interference of intermediate factors which affect changes is so vast the choice of the environmental factors seems unjustifiable(Levy: 1995:56). Homer- Dixon has taken a completely uni-factor perspective toward tension and conflict between countries which is based on environmental factors. However, the strong relationship between variables of safety and environment in their model is questionable.

Figure 9. Homer - Dixon's model(1994) of the relationship between environmental scarcities and tension and conflict



Source: Homer-Dixon, 1994:28

10. John Robert Prescott (1972)

John Robert Prescott, a political geographer, divides border disputes into four groups which in turn cause tension and conflict in relations between countries:

Group 1. Territorial disputes

It is a case in which a country has a claim of ownership and sovereignty over parts of the territory of another country. Countries can have territorial claims of ownership over its neighbors to increase their power or they can use territorial dispute as a tool to implement in their foreign policies(Prescott, 1972:114).

Group 2. Positional Dispute

These disputes include conflicts that include opposing perceptions from documents related to the position and location of boundaries. Positional disputes are found in areas with borders of pre-settlement or imposing nature or areas in which agreement has been reached on boundary lines between two countries before juxtaposing them with valid maps and

documents(Beckinsale,1969: 974-975).

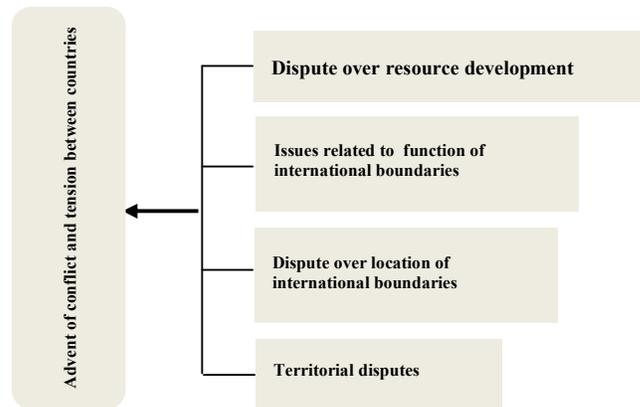
Group 3. Functional disputes

These types of disputes include conflict between two countries in their international operations over borders such as issues relating to customs duties and immigration control(Prescott,1972:118).

Group 4. Dispute over resource development

Since governments are considered as absolute rulers within their territorial jurisdiction, they are free to use existing resources to their own benefit to the best. Although it is likely that development and utilization of resources of a country affects other countries, political and legal problems come into scene. Much of the conflict and disputes over resource development relates to water, however, atmospheric pollution or unilateral exploitation of joint oil ponds can also cause conflict and tension between neighbors. When a river forms the boundary between the neighboring countries, many problems arise relating to shipping, reservoir construction, bridge installation; irrigation and the change in the course of river(Muir, 1975: 181-182). Exploiting the main branches of Boundary Rivers can cause tension and conflict between countries located in the upper reaches of the rivers(Simsarian, 1968:492). Polluting rivers that stream from one country to another or boundary waters by countries which have control over the upper reaches create a lot of problems between countries(Ross, 1971:332).

Figure 10. Prescott's model(1972) of tension and conflict



Although Prescott's model has a multi-factor perspective toward tension and conflict between countries, because of ignoring ethnic, religious and cultural issues which cause tension, is not comprehensive and fails to account for all geopolitical tensions in relations between countries.

11. John Collins (1998)

John Collins in the book "Military Geography", divides geopolitical disputes between countries into four categories: strategic friction, economic friction, cultural friction, and environmental friction(Collins,1998: 284-288).

A. Strategic Friction

Border disputes between countries in different aspects, territorial claims to the territory of other countries, including rivalry over controlling critical locations such as straits fall within the domain of economic friction. -

Dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates over controlling Abu Musa Island located in Hormuz Strait and dispute between Britain and Spain over Gibraltar Strait which connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea are examples of critical points that are of more strategic

importance for travelers from these waters than disputing parties (Collins, 1998: 287-290).

B. Economic Friction

Nowadays, having wider economic opportunities and rich lands is a major advantage for any country. Thus, most territorial and border disputes between countries, in addition to strategic aspect, have economic aspect as well. Conflicts between China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia over Spratly Islands in the South China Sea for its rich oil and gas reserves and mineral deposits are examples of economic friction.

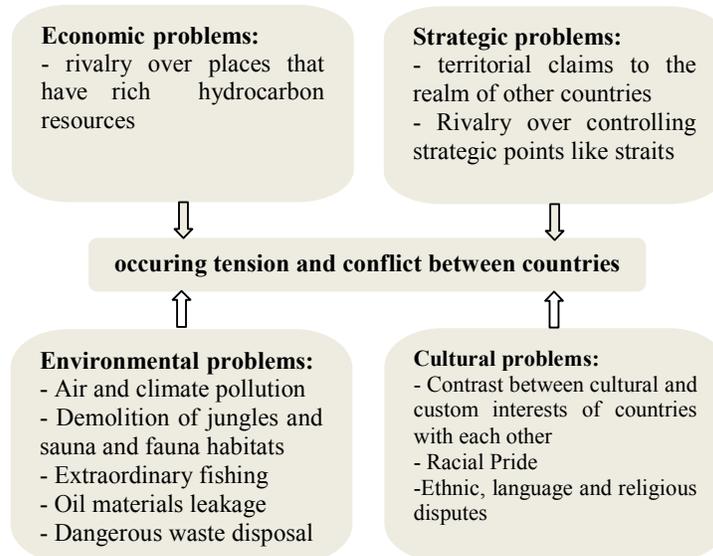
C. Cultural Friction

Lines separating human races, where cultural interests and ways of living are different, create a long-lasting hostility between ethnic and religious groups(Coogan,1996: 64). In the case of conflicts between cultural interests, and traditions and customs of countries, being proud of one's lineage and race creates a long-lasting hostility because racial interests are far more important than other interests(Oballance, 1995: 75-76).

D. Environmental Friction

Human beings need a habitat with clean air, clean potable water, adequate food and welfare services, but issues such as pollution, exploitation of resources and others that have surrounded the world has made it difficult to provide the minimum requirements of the rapidly growing population in the world(Conrad, 1995:6). Air pollution, deforestation, mismanagement in agriculture, excessive fishing, oil leakage from rigs, dissipation of water resources, disposal of dangerous wastes are examples of hazardous activities that cause environmental, regional and even short-term and long-term effects on ecosystem and living conditions(Collins ,1998:297-298).

Figure 11. Collin's model(1998) of tension and conflict



There is a point that worth considering in Collins' model; it ignores hydro-political issues. Also, it ignores issues related to the functioning of cyberspace in tension between countries. Considering issues that cause cultural, economic, strategic and environmental tension, all of which have geographical infrastructure, is the significant aspect of Collins' Model.

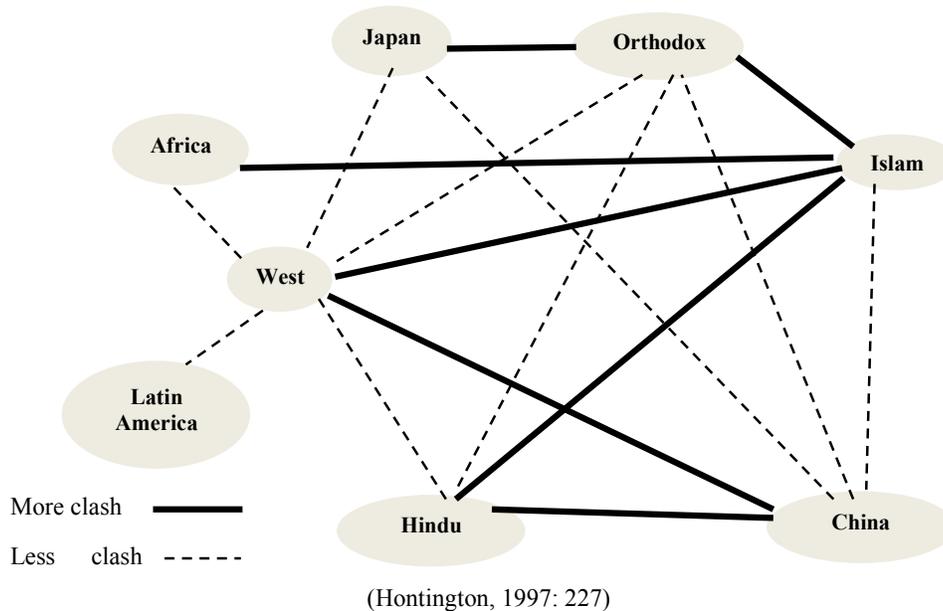
12. Samuel P. Huntington (1993)

Samuel P. Huntington in a paper entitled "Clash of Civilizations" published in the summer of 1993 AD in Foreign Affairs magazine, mentioned the new source of conflict and confrontation between countries as Fault Lines between civilizations and cultures. He claimed that fundamental sources of conflict in the world after Cold War will be not ideological or economic, but the main gaps between humans and main sources of tension and conflict between countries will be cultural factors.

Nation- states will remain as the most powerful actor in world affairs, but the major political conflict will be between nations and groups from different civilizations. Clash of civilizations will determine the scope of future conflicts(Huntington, 1993:22). Civilization from Huntington's view is the sublime level of human classification and the most extensive level of cultural identity of human beings which distinguish them from other species. Civilization is defined both with common objective elements between people, such as language, history, religion, customs and different institutions and with identity which people form mentally. Huntington's criteria indistinguishing civilizations from each other are history, language, culture, traditions, and most importantly religion. According to Huntington, Civilization Identity will become increasingly important and the world will be formed in wide scale by the interaction between seven or eight major civilizations. These civilizations include: Western civilization, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Orthodox - Slavic, Latin American and possibly African Civilization(Huntington, 1993:24-25). His belief based on the future world order emphasizes on transnational power of world Geo- cultural blocks in comparison with Geo - Economic blocks(OTuathail & Others, 1998: 7). Huntington hypothesizes that differences between civilizations are real and important; self-realization and consciousness is increasing; clash of civilizations will eradicate ideological conflicts and other forms that constitute the dominant form of global conflicts; successful international political, security and economic institutions will be more likely developed within civilizations not outside, clash of groups from different civilizations will be more rapid, long-lasting and bloody than clashes of groups from within a civilization; clashes of groups from different civilizations are the most hazardous driving force in making world wars; major axis Policy - Global, relations between The West and The Rest will form the major axis of global policies; and the main focus will be on conflict between the West

and several Islamic- Confucian countries(Huntington, 1993: 47-48).

Figure 12. global politics of civilizations: emerging lining



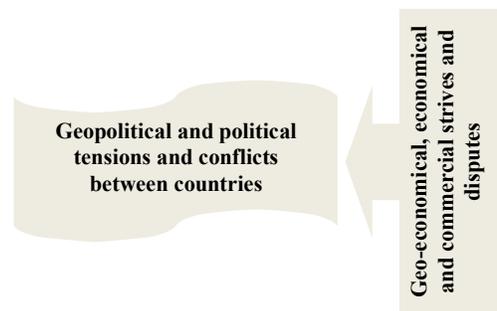
After presenting the theory of civilizations clash, much criticism came from scholars and experts in the field of international relations from different parts of the world. Huntington's model with emphasis on civilization (religion) aspect of tension and conflict between countries fails to include other factors.

13. Edward N. Luttwak (1990)

Edward N. Luttwak in a paper "from geopolitics to Geo-economy: logic of Conflict, Grammar to Commerce"(1990) published in the journal "The National Interest" in the United States, believed that with the end of the Cold War, the importance of military power in the current affairs of world will continuously decrease; military methods will be replaced by

economic methods, usable investments instead of military capability, civil innovations instead of military technology and markets instead of barracks - and military bases. However, it should be noted that all these cases are not many and does not form a goal(Luttwak, 1990:17-18). He continues to mention that although methods related to commerce can be affected by methods related to war, it should be noted that in geo-economic period not only factors but also dispute means should be economic. If economic disputes lead to political conflicts, such conflicts must be resolved through tactics. Such tactics include import restrictions, subsidy on exports, financing competitive technical projects, supporting selected educational methods and competitive structures and etc(ÓTuathail and others, 1998:128).

Figure 13. Luttwak's model(1990) of tension and conflict



Luttwak's theory only includes geo-economic factor that causes tension and conflict in international relations. He considers geo-economic variables both as causes of disputes and means of disputes. However, the events during the past two decades in relations between countries refute his theory.

Discussion

Since geopolitics is the study of the mutual relationships of geography, power, and politics and accounts for consequences resulting from their interaction, a model that can explain all sources of tension between countries

should include all variables related to three parameters of geography, power and politics. The main drawback of all models is that they consider only one aspect of geopolitics and they have failed to account for all dimensions. According to this view and authors of this article, a model that can explain geopolitical causes of tension and conflict in relations must simultaneously include cultural and geo-cultural, geo-strategic, territorial and boundary disputes, geo-economic, hydro-political, environmental and cyberspace related variables.

In association with Geo-cultural sources of tension between countries, it can be said that because of the lines that separates the races, produce deferent cultural interests and lifestyles, it creates the sustainable animosity between ethnic and religious groups. Part of neighbors conflicts arising from competing or conflicting longstanding cultural interests. This sources of contention are geo-cultural resources: Longstanding ethnic and nationalistic competitions, Efforts to exporting cultural values, The spread of value system and support of co-religionists in neighboring countries. Territorial factors causing tension between the states, refers to a situation where a state has claim of ownership and sovereignty over parts of the land to another country. Territorial claims against neighboring countries may have to increase their power through the acquisition of more land and or It is possible that the boundary disputes should be used as a tool in their foreign policy. Geo-economical sources of tension between countries is when part or all of the economic potential of the countries is depended on geographic issues and is threatened by the other one. one of the most influential factors in the world geo- economical issues that can create tension and conflict between states, is energy and related policies. Given the importance of energy, especially fossil energy such as oil and gas in human life and the growing interdependence of nations, the energy sources, routes of transmission, energy markets, energy trading, energy technology, and so have a special reputation in International Relations. That is why energy has

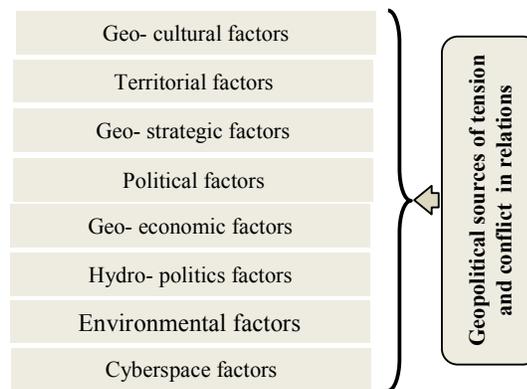
played a decisive role in national and international policies and has shaped patterns of competition, cooperation, conflict, aggression, cooperation, convergence and divergence in the international arena and relations between countries. The best examples of political tensions between countries can also be specified to force on government to change the policy, an attempt to overthrow the government, fueling secessionist movements, weakening and vulnerableng the government against the movements of foreign states and Etc. In other words, any kind of threat to identity, entity or interest of the particular state, is considered a political threat. The idea of the state, especially its national identity and ideology, are common objectives of political threat. However, border disputes between countries in different aspects, territorial claims to the territory of other countries, the struggle for control of the strategically sensitive areas such as straits and waterways are the geo-strategic conflicts. Iran and UAE dispute over control of the island of Abu Musa in the Strait of Hormuz and disputes between Britain and Spain over the Strait of Gibraltar connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, are examples of critical areas that theirs strategic importance for the maritime routes is more than parties of the conflict. Hydro-political factors are associated with the problem of water scarcity and its increasing gradually due to increased water consumption, which caused water play an important role in shaping political and social relations between nations, especially in the arid regions of the world. Today, water is considered as a geopolitical aspect that affects relations between states. Control of water resources of international rivers by upstream states, pollution of water resources of international rivers in upstream countries, encroach on the water of the river and impede natural course of the river by upstream country, change the course of international river, issues of trans-border rivers shared between countries and differences in the interpretation of water into the mountainous border are geopolitical variables of tension in relations between countries. In relation to environmental sources of tension

between countries have to say that today Issues such as air pollution, deforestation, agricultural mismanagement, overfishing, oil spills from tankers, abuse of water resources and the disposal hazardous waste are environmental malicious activities that destruct local, regional and even global habitats and have short and long term effects on the ecosystem and the human condition, and Therefore plays a vital role in creatin tension between the neighboring countries. the impact of environmental degradation and conflict over state security can be directly or indirectly. Dercetly, environmental changes can actuate governments to conflict with others for takeover or acquisition of scarce resources, and indirectly, environmental destruction can has have social and political effects that lead to produce conflicts in international relations and damage state security. Finally, in relation to role of variables related to the function of the cyber-space in creating tension between countries, can be said that because of can use from the cyber-space capabilities in political activities such as change in governments, intelligence, to shape of virtual assemblies, civil disobedience, destruction of political legitimacy and credibility, psychological political warfare, infiltration and sabotage and terrorism, censorship and anti-censorship, users interact with the political systems and etc, so it has high capability in producing tension between governments and political systems. one of the competing objectives of political actors is Attempt to accompany the ideas of people. Therefore, the political campaign, influencing other societies and to provide oppurtunity for the actors in the field of public acceptance are the results of that competition between goverments. Obviously, as in the real space there are competition, tension, conflict and war in relations between states, this things are possible in cyberspace too. In other words, the symmetric of conflict and war in the real space is the conflict and war in the cyberspace.

Topical classification of these variables is shown in Figure 14. in this classification we have tried to include all geopolitical factors that cause

tension and conflict in relations between countries and every factor causing tension and conflict is listed . Thus, we can conclude that this model, to some extent, has the capability to account for all geopolitical sources of tension and conflict in relations between countries.

Figure 14. geopolitical sources of tension and conflict in relations between countries



Conclusion

By looking at theories proposed by experts in the fields of geography, geopolitics, political sciences and international relations in relation to factors that cause tension and conflict in relations between countries, we come to the conclusion that none of these theories have been able to account for all of geopolitical sources which cause tension and have only explained part of these factors. In other words, they have a uni-factor or multi-factor perspective towards the problem and, therefore, they cannot be considered as a comprehensive theory and model in this context. Some of these theories have considered cultural and civilization factors in relation to tension and conflict between countries, and others have considered geo-economic and economic factors, and some of them have considered environmental and/or territorial and boundary disputes as sources of tension and conflict. Meanwhile, Peter Hagget(1972) and John Collins (1998) have tried to take a comprehensive and

multi-dimensional look at the issues of tension and conflict between countries, and in their theories, they have pointed out different variables such as strategic, cultural, economic, environmental and hydro-political factors. However, they have also failed to provide a model that accounts for all geopolitical sources that cause tension in relation between countries. According to this view and authors of this article, a model that can explain the causes of tension and conflict in relations between countries should simultaneously take into account cultural, geo-cultural, geo-strategic, and territorial and boundary disputes, geo-economic, hydro-political, environmental variables and factors related to the functioning of cyberspace. Each of these groups has several objective and subjective variables which dependently or independently pave the way for tension and conflict between countries. The common feature of these eight groups is that all of them are based on geographical and geopolitical entity and they emphasize on the dimensions of space and territory of the factors that cause tension between states. Although each of these geopolitical factors of tension can be studied separately, however, each of these variables has an effect on other variables and plays an important role in activating another. Each of these groups has several objective and subjective variables which dependently or independently pave the way for tension and conflict between countries. It can be said that each geopolitical variable that causes tension between countries, is one of these eight groups. On the other hand, each of these sources has several tension geopolitical variables that operate as cause and effect and cause dispute and conflict between states. The common feature of all these variables is their relationships to geographic and territorial bases of countries and regions.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their appreciation to the Research Deputy of Tarbiat Modares University and all the people who cooperated with us in writing and editing this research.

References

- Ashley, Richard(1980). *The Political Economy of War and Peace*. London: Francis Pinter.
- Beckinsale,R.P(1969). Rivers as political boundaries. *Water,Earth and Man Magazine*. London. No:40.pp:972-981.
- Cohen, Saul,B(1994).Geopolitics in the New World Era. The paper in book: *Reordering the world*. Edited by: George Demko. U.S.A.: west view press.
- Collins, John(1998).*Military Geography*.Washington: Brassey.
- Conrad, Joseph(1995). *Environmental Considerations in Army Operational Doctrine, a White Paper*.Fort Leonard Wood: U.S. Army Engineer School.
- Coogan, Tim Pat(1996). *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal1966-1996*. Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart.
- Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff(1981). *Contending Theories of International Relations*. publisher: Longman Higher Education.
- Duverger, Maurice(1972). *The study of politics*.U.S.A, Ohio: Crowell Publisher.
- Duverger, Maurice (2010). *Principle of Political Science*. Translated By: Abolfazl Ghazi. Tehran: Amirkabir Press edition[in Persian].
- Flint,Colin(2008). *Introduction to Geopolitics: Tensions, Conflict and Resolutions*.Britain. Routledge.
- Gallaher, Carolyn and others(2009). *Key Concepts in Political Geography*.London and California: Sage Publication Ltd.
- Hafeznia, Mohammad Reza (2006). *Principles and Concepts of Geopolitics*, Mashhad: Papoli Publications[in Persian].
- Haggett, Peter(1972). *Geography: A Modern Syntheses*. New York: Publisher: Harpercollins College Div.
- Haggett, Peter(1983). *Geography: A Modern Syntheses*. New York: Publisher: Harpercollins College Div.
- Haggett, Peter(2001). *Geography: A Global Synthesis*. Publisher: Prentice Hall.
- Haye, Brian(2002). *Statistics of deadly quarrels*. Durham: American Scientist, Volume 9.
- Holsti, K.J(1986).Resolving International Conflicts: A Taxonomy of Behavior and some Figures on Procedures. *Journal of conflict Resolution*.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas(1991). *Environmental Change and Human Security*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas(1994). *Environmental Scarcities and violent conflict: Evidence from Cases*. *International Security*, 19(1).pp: 5-40. Published by: The MIT Pres.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas. Jeffrey H. Boutwell and George W. Rathjens(1993). *Environmental Change and violent Conflict*. *Scientific American*. 268(2).
- Huntington, Samuel(1993). *The Clash of Civilizations*. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol: 72. No:3. Pp: 22-49.

- Huntington. S.P. (1997). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Karimipour, Yadollah. (2000). *An Introduction to Iran and neighbors (Sources of Tension and Threat)*. Tahran: Jahad Daneshgahi Press[in Persian].
- Kemp, Geoffrey & Harkavy, Robert. (2004). *Strategic Geography of Middle East* (volume. 2). Translated By: Seyyed Mehdi Hosseyni Matin. Strategic Studies Institution's Press .
- Kemp, Geoffrey & Harkavy, Robert(1997). *Strategic Geography and the Changing Middle East*. Publisher: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Levy, Mark(1995). *Is the Environment a National Security Issue?* *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 35-62. Published by: The MIT Press.
- Luttwak, Edward N (1990). *From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar to Commerce*. *The National Interest*. Vol: 20. Pp: 17-24.
- Meyer, Peter. (1997). *Sociology of War and Army*. Translated By: Mohammad Sadegh Mahdavi & Alireza Azghandi. Tehran: Ghoumes Press[in Persian].
- Most, Benjamin & Star, Harvey(1983). *Conceptualizing War: Consequences for Theory and Research*. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Muir, Richard(1975). *Modern political Geography*. London. the macmilan press Ltd.
- Nazli, Choucri & North, Robert(1975). *Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence*. Sanfrancisco. Califi Freeman.
- North, Robert & Choucri, Nazli(1983). *(Economic and Political factors in International Conflict and Integration)*. *International Studies Quarterly*.
- Ó Tuathail, Gearóid. Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge(1998). *The Geopolitics Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.
- O'Ballance, Edgar(1995). *Civil War in Bosnia, 1992-94*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Prescott, John Robert (1972). *Political Geography*. United Kingdom. Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richardson, Lewis, F(1960). *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels*. Boxwood Press, Pittsburgh Pa.; Quadrangle Books, Chicago cago, IllScience 30 December 1960: Vol. 132 no. 3444 pp. 1931-1932 . DOI: 10.1126/science.132.3444.1931-a.
- Ross, W.M(1971). *The management of International common property Resources*. *Geography Review*. Pp:327-341.
- Simsarian, J(1978). *The division of Waters affecting the United States and Canada*. *Am.J.Internal Law*. No:32. Pp: 488-518.
- Suhrke, Astri(1993). *Pressure points: Environmental degradation, Migration and Conflict*. *Occasional Paper*, No:3. March 1993, pp:3-43.
- Wright, Quincy(1983). *A Study of War*. Chicago:Publisher:University of Chicago Press; 2nd.