

## **The Study of the Role of Islamic Cultural Symbols in Islamic Unity and Convergence with an Emphasis on Western Asia Muslim Countries**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The institutionalization of historical-cultural values and symbols at the community level for strengthening the different various intellectual, linguistic, racial and cultural groups, has always been one of the concerns of political systems. This subject has been the focus of Islam since 1400 years ago and has been repeatedly emphasized. Therefore, according to the divergence process between Islamic countries, the current study has aimed to answer the question of what the role of Islamic culture symbols is in the process of unification and convergence of Muslim countries in the region of Southwest Asia. Therefore, through descriptive-analytical studies, and the use of documentary sources, the Islamic-cultural symbols can be studied in four categories of symbolic principles, symbolic places, unity forerunners, and symbolic institutions. The results show that the exploitation of rich sources of Islamic culture, which are of particular interest to the majority of Muslims, can play an irreplaceable role in creating unity and convergence, as well as eliminating the sources of tension and conflicts in the region, irrespective of the cultural influences of each country in the region, and the effects of globalization.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Unity, convergence, symbol, culture, Western Asia, Islam.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Southwest Asia is a vast region with numerous unifying political, economic, and cultural potentials, however, despite these capacities, it has been broken up under the influence of internal disputes and global powers, and this extent of divergence in the region is unprecedented throughout history. While the theory of convergence dates back to less than a hundred years, it has been an integral part of Islam since 1400 years ago. The Holy Quran mentions unity, integrity and solidarity, as the indices of the first ethnicities and nations, and has repeatedly emphasized it (Forqan: 25, Yunes: 19). And in the verse 103 of Surah Al-Imran, the unity and company are interpreted as a great blessings that bring the Ummah of Islam from despair and destruction to the peaks of enormity. Despite the precious unifying resources such as the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet's tradition, and the cultural richness of Islam, which strictly prohibit the division and separation of Muslims, the historical course shows that after the demise of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disputes over the ruling and leadership of the Islamic Ummah, the disruptions, conflicts that have arisen for power, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and its impact on the formation of new countries in Western Asia, usually under the auspices of Western governments, along with the formation of foundations for divergence, the realization of the motto of convergence and the formation of the united Islamic Ummah in the region, has been challenged. Today, the Islamic Ummah is unevenly geographically divided and faced with many internal and external challenges. For this reason, in the context of the growing socio-political globalization, for the South West Asia region, being surrounded by changes, in which its four geographical directions are embraced with violence and instability (Shafizade, 2010: 30), Islamic convergence for gaining power is regarded as an undeniable necessity. The necessity initiated post-Cold war, with Western efforts to erode the image of Islam, intensified with the futile actions of some radical Islamic extremists in the 9/11. The Western Asia as the cradle of Islam, is now considered by the Western powers as the bed for nurturing the terrorism, raised as a threat to the West, making it a more ideological challenge than communism, and the role of the United States as an external force in its destruction is deemed important (Afzali, 2006: 159; Hafeznia, 2011: 58 and Qaedi, 2015: 15).

Since culture is considered as one of the most important and richest sources of identity, Smith believes that this identity itself is a continual re-production and reinterpretation of cultural factors such as values,

symbols, memories, myths and traditions, which are the heritage of nations, and a factor in their social solidarity (Moire, 2000: 32; Smith, 2004: 29). The problem and concern of the current study is the identity-creating and unifying role of the rich Islamic culture among Muslims, which has been faced with the threat of globalization. This article, besides a general overview of the concept and dimensions of the convergence theory, aims at recognizing the symbols of Islamic culture for unity and convergence of the countries of the region. In this regard, we are looking forward to answer the question that what the roles of Islamic culture symbols are in the process of unity and convergence of Muslim countries in the region. The research also presumes that the symbols of Islamic culture could affect the unity of the countries of the region.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1) Convergence**

Unity and alliance indicate "unity", "monotony", "solidarity", "convergence" and "movement in a common direction" or "having a common direction" to achieve a common goal (Velayati, 2010: 153). In this process, the political units voluntarily abandon their total authority to achieve common goals and follow a supranational power. Convergence theory scholars believe that countries, in the process of convergence, start bilateral or multilateral trade and economic exchanges, and, in the shadow of economic convergence, achieve military, political, and cultural convergence (Puchala 1972: 25). In Metarine's point of view, the convergence is "the complexity of the social process", the increase in the works of non-political entities in the community and strengthening the role of specialists, the cooperation of sub-national experts in the transnational field, the emergence and enhancement of international cooperation and, finally, the formation of economic convergence and institutionalization of the co-operations (Shafizade, 2010: 388).

Carl Deutsch comments on the relationship between convergence and communications: "Countries are societies that are linked to one another through communication chains and transportation systems, while they getting interconnected, they are accomplishing the process of convergence (Dougherty, 1981: 24). Ietzioni expresses three forces for unity and convergence: a) intimidating force including the military and police forces; b) material or economic force, technical and organizational and administrative capabilities; and c) ideological and identical forces, including the values, symbols and cultural and religious beliefs (Qaedi, 2015: 13). Therefore, the countries have a common destiny in the form of convergence and unity, and cannot act without consensus.

### **2) Symbol**

Signs and symbols are the oldest, most complex, most influential, and most interesting tools used to reveal the hidden issues of the material and spiritual world, and human beings have been able to use these tools to manifest their thoughts, and even their imagination, in the form of art (Karimian, 2005: 121). The symbol ambiguously indicates various meanings, stimulates emotions and strengthens attachments and connections (Karimi, 2011: 185). It also expresses significant cultural and historical concepts through which the culture and the thoughts of the ancients can be understood. Symbols can be considered equal to myths, images, manifestations, signs, and all the external and symbolic aspects of the material and spiritual heritage and semantic carriers, including cases such as "mental and objective images, historical stories and compositions, literature, Folklore, language, buildings, historical works, centers, and buildings, sculptures, paintings, spiritual masterpieces and creative artistic activities" (Zarqani, 2014, 132). Symbols play an important role in strengthening solidarity and national solidarity within political systems. For this reason, governments use different symbols as the focal point for improving unity and solidarity; these symbols can be the geographical objects such as the rivers, peaks, mountains, lakes, beaches ... or national flags and anthems, totems, coins, monuments, memorials, national capitals, celebrations, national legends, epic poems, sports teams, and loyalty letters of allegiance (Miheydar, 1992: 188; Karimi, 2011: 197; Braden & Shelley, 2004: 145).

Hrtshoorn (1950), in his functional theory of government, and in the form of a model, believes that the existence and continuity of a country depends on a dynamic balance between centripetal and centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces lead to the combination, unity, and continuity of a country- the examples of such force are common language and culture, a long common history, and proper borders. Centrifugal forces help to break down and divide the country- such forces are the internal divisions of culture and language, a short common history, and conflictual boundaries. He considers the continuance of existence of a country to be dependent on dominance of centripetal forces over centrifugal forces (Haggett, 2000: 364). In his opinion, the most important centripetal forces are the land, political ideology, religion, language, culture, and a long history in common.

Jean Gottmann (1952), explaining his theory of the formation of countries, and their intrinsic solidarity, had discovered the importance of symbols such as history, myth, literature and social habits, common religious principles, heroes, in constructing and destroying states, and believed that these beliefs, views, and ways of doing different things included in the "soul" of a nation are combined to form traditional symbolism and establish a system with conservative views, that is resistant to change. (Moire, 2000: 29). Gottmann emphasized

more on the spiritual and mental aspects of a nation. He believed that a region, to be isolated from its surrounding, needs a firm belief relied on a religious faith, a special social vision, and a series of political memories, and often a mixture of the three (Mojtahed Zadeh, 2002: 375).

### **3) Islam and Social Solidarity**

Religion is one of the main unifying factors contriving the solidarity. Religion directs the groups and humans, to use legitimate means to achieve political power, and call society into a common belief system. Therefore, according to Durkheim, through the participation in religious rites and ceremonies, the moral strengths of the society become visible and social feelings are strengthened (Dowudpur, 2009: 37). The Islamic religion, in its heavenly book, has emphasized the Islamic unity and solidarity with different interpretations, and expressed several Qur'anic words about Islamic unity: "adhere [4], rectify [5], communicate [6], cooperate [7], peace [8], repairing the conenctions of people [9], company between your hearts [10], unique Ummah [11], fellowship [12], and amity [13]". Islam seeks to unite people on the basis of their material and spiritual interests and form a unified society, thus inviting the community to solidarity, and in verse 63 of the Surah al-Anfal: " And He united their hearts... and made unity among their hearts, Had you spent everything on earth, you would not have united their hearts, but God united them together. He is Mighty and Wise", it has addressed this subject. The Prophet of Islam (PBUH) stated in a narration about Islamic convergence and unity: "unity and solidarity are mercy and the division and separation are punishment". Imam Ali (pbuh) says: "the hand of God is with the congregation. Avoid divisions and separation".

## **III. FINDINGS**

### **1) The Role of Cultural Symbols in Unity and Solidarity**

The views of scholars on the components and elements of unity and solidarity are diverse, i.e., according to the scholars, unity may be formed on different foundations in a society. Rookan and Erwin believe that the identity-creating and effective factors in solidarity to be myths, symbols, history, and institutional factors (Moire, 2000: 27). Some consider the common historical background, shared common cultural heritage, common goal and pains, and common religion, as the most important components of solidarity, and some also include culture, flag, geographical area and language as elements of national unity, solidarity, and convergence. If these common characteristics are considered as a symbol among countries, they would have a more effective role in convergence and unification. Symbols, through recalling the continuity of the history of the groups and the demonstration of the persistence of the sense of belonging and commitment of the members to them, besides cognitive and emotional organization of the followers, invite them to consolidate, stabilize, and continue the symbolic aspirations, and mobilize people for collective action, and in the words of Kanter, a mobilization, often carried out through the use of symbols, is certainly an important step in the creation of social movements, beneficiary groups, including ethnic groups, and generally, the collective behavior. According to this view, people are mobilized around the symbols that make sense to them (Karimi, 2011: 187). Meanwhile, religion, as one of the most radical cultural elements in most societies, is considered as one of the essential factors in national unity and solidarity. The existence of a common religion within a common land and territory has always been regarded as one of the foundations for the establishment of national unity and solidarity in societies, and has played a fundamental role in the emergence of social consensus and solidarity. Therefore, solidarity, unity and convergence are achieved when the emotions of individuals are set by cultural symbols. Where actions are regulated and harmonized by norms (Jonathan, 2005: 446). Therefore, it seems that the use of symbols and signs containing the sustainable values, can reduce the libertine mundane anxieties and temptations and replace them with tranquility (Karimian, 2010: 12). Accordingly, in a general overview of different theories, the common cultural capacities effective on the unity and convergence of Muslims can be analyzed in four categories as shown in Fig. 1:

#### **A) The Unifying Role of Islamic Religious and Spiritual Doctrines**

The Islamic teachings, principles, customs, and culture, as well as respect for these customs, have a significant role in shaping social consensus and solidarity. The exploitation and use of the symbols and signs of Islamic culture, which have credible and universal values, can play an important role in reducing the ground of libertine worldly disputes and selfishness, which have been intensified with the process of infiltration of the western culture. The unifying role of these doctrines has been experienced in many cases. The Soviet Union, which, because of the seizure of various lands, had a restrictive program to promote and enforce Russian language with its possessions for about 70 years, in order to deal with numerous minorities and heterogeneities in its possessions, in practice, treated the nations and cultural-religious minorities under her possession, "Russian-like" and "Tsar-like". In spite of the long dominance of communist rule that pressured Muslims and turned their mosques into stables and museums, ultimately, due to the religious beliefs of the people, these actions never led to the separation between Islam and the beliefs of the people of these regions, and on the

contrary The number of Islamic names, observance of religious customs, adherence to worship practices such as fasting and Islamic festivities such as Eid al-Fitr, etc., are examples of this endurance (Mahmoudi, 2007: 8). In this regard, in order to establish unity among the Muslims, it is necessary to emphasize the commonalities and cultural-religious symbols, and to avoid prejudice and insistence on differences. Lawrence Brown believes that: "there were efforts to put an end to the Islamic caliphate in order to eliminate the foundations of Islamic unity and grounds of Muslim bondage and their relationship". He considered the Holy Quran as the strongest factor in the cultural and religious bond between Muslims "(Salami, 1392: 42). The sum of these teachings in the beliefs of Islam is shown in the following table.

**Table 1: the common teachings in spiritual and belief culture of Islam**

Row	Title	Explanation
1	Holy Quran	The Holy Quran is one of the most valuable spiritual assets of Muslims. There is no difference among Muslims, including Shi'a and Sunnis, about the Holy Qur'an being the Book of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to lead the people with it. Considering the importance of unity, the word "Ummah" has been solely mentioned in the Quran in more than 60 cases, and it has been partially mentioned for about 20 cases. About the unity of the Islamic Ummah, it is said: "This nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord, so fear Me." (Surah al-Mu'minin, verse 52).
2	The Principles of Religion	The most important common principles among Muslims (Shiite and Sunni) are faith in Almighty Allah who, from the perspective of the Quran, is the most important and lasting factor in the guidance and unity of Muslims. The second act of unity and solidarity between the Muslims is the principle of faith in the resurrection and the Day of Resurrection. Imam Khomeini, among the elements and components of unity and solidarity (material and spiritual), has especially emphasized the principles of common belief such as monotheism, resurrection, prophecy ... , human nature, love and affection, brotherhood and fraternity ... (Jamshidi, 2012: 166).
3	Worship Acts	The Muslims of the world, whether Shiite or Sunni, have commonalities in most of the acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, Hajj, jihad, zakat, etc. They say their prayers at a single time, with a common language, and towards a common place (facing the holy valley of Kaaba) They with the same intention, and fast at a common period of time. They go to Hajj in a common season, and pay Zakat similarly (Basiri, 2015: →). In fact, the Kaaba is the cradle of unity and dignity, and the symbol of monotheism and spirituality and Hajj, is a collective movement and practice, and the cause of the unity of the Islamic Ummah.
4	Islamic Festivals	The most important Islamic festivals, common among the Muslims, are Qurban, Fitr, Mab'ath and, of course, the Eid of Ghadir Khum, which is currently considered by the Shiites. Since the common customs (such as Eid prayer, unity, slaughter, charity, piety, etc.) in these festivals, exist among Muslims, these festivals, considered as Muslim symbols, have always been the cause of sincerity and unity among them. Imam Ali (pbuh) considers the prophetic mission of Holy Prophet to be a great blessing that is bestowed on the people and, in the light of its greatness and customs, it has united the nation.
5	Culture of Expectation	The Holly Prophet says: "the greatest of worships is expectation of <i>Faraj</i> ". Therefore, the culture of expectation is another unifying factor among Muslims. The expectation of the promised in divine religions is regarded as innate matter, and it has been mentioned in <i>Zabur</i> of David, in the <i>Old Testament and the New Testament</i> of Moses and Jesus, and in Zoroastrianism, in the Divine Book of the Hindus, in the beliefs of the Buddhists and other religions, for this reason (innateness) and it has been also promised in the Holy Quran (Davoodpoor, 2009: 39).

In spite of the difference in the Islamic religions and Muslim intellectual groups, it is necessary to emphasize commonality in order to create unity and convergence and form a single nation, and to refrain from prejudices and insistence on the diverging factors. Therefore, the principle of faith in the unique God is the first principle of every heavenly religion, and the principle of faith in resurrection and the Day of Resurrection as the second principle, along with the unifying factors, such as the Holy Quran, prayer, fasting, jihad, Hajj, Islamic festivals and etc., are the most important symbolic principles of Islam, belief in which, as a symbol of being a Muslim, at any time, is the end to the monotony and the struggle between various political, social, cultural and other tastes.

### **B) The Unifying Role of Islamic Characters and Figures**

The use of political, cultural-religious, scientific, and etc., role models and myths, has played an effective role in unity, convergence and solidarity among different nations. Different countries, using images and effigies of their myths and leaders in public places and textbooks, are trying to inject some kind of national solidarity and integration into their society. Accordingly, the most intense symbolism measures were taken by the Soviet Union, through manipulating and capturing the cultural image of the areas under her possession, clearly to consolidate the power of communist regimes by the symbol of the Red Star of Communism and the numerous statues of Lenin and other Russian leaders on Buildings and public places (Jones, 2007: 227). The most important of these common characters are shown in Table 2.



**Table 2: the common Islamic Characters and Figures in spiritual and belief culture of Islam**

Row	Title	Explanation
1	The Holy Prophet	All Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (PBUH) is the last prophet and messenger of God, and no prophets have neither come, nor will come, after him. One of the strategies of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was to deny racism, ethnocentrism and undue discriminations, in order to realize the unity of the Islamic Ummah; the Supreme Leader, in a meeting with the guests attending the Islamic Unity Conference in 2008, stated: "The presence of the prophet (pbuh) has been the greatest reason for unity in all Islamic periods, and today also it can continue to be, because the beliefs of all Muslims in this sacred being, are accompanied with affection and love, and therefore, his excellency, is the axis and center of the affections and beliefs of all Muslims, and this axial role is one of the causes of the closeness of the hearts of Muslims and the proximity of Islamic sects.
2	Prophet's Inmates	Among other factors that can be the axis of this unity, which all Muslims can agree on, is following the Prophet's inmates. Imam Ali (pbuh) remained silent for 25 years regarding the incident of Ghadir and proclamation of the succession of the Prophet (pbuh), to preserve Islam and the unity of the Muslims. Some religious scholars believe that the first founder of the approximation of religions is Ali (pbuh), because while he was the most deserved person in the succession of the Prophet, due to the interests of Islam, he treated the caliphs with tolerance and did not hesitate to help them. The believe in the promised and the apocalyptic savior, who is the last Imam of the Prophet's Inmates, is considered a symbol of Muslim unity according to the order of the Qur'an and the Prophet.
3	Other Harbingers of Unity	Seyed Jamaleddin Asad Abadi is one of the religious reformers and is one of the ideologists of the establishment of the Islamic government. He also set out a number of ways to unite besides the government. Among the unifying solutions provided by Seyyed Jamal, were the denial of sectarianism and racism, the creation of various organizations (the population of <i>Orwah</i> in India), and extensive treaties in various countries ( <i>Orwah al-Vosqa</i> in Paris), the creation of Islamic Council in Mecca by Ulama, Alliance of Ottoman States, Iran and Afghanistan and etc. According to Motahhari, Seyyed Jamal is among the reformists like Abdeh, Kawakebi, Iqbal, and etc. Among Shiite and Sunni Muslims, he is considered as one of the pioneers of the awakening and pride, and harbinger of the unity of the Muslim Ummah. Imam Khomeini is one of the leaders of the unity of the Islamic world. His strategic plan for realizing the "political unity of the Islamic world" can be regarded as strategic, in the form of a political theory called "unity". Michel Foucault believed that there was no other factor in the consolidation and mobilization of such masses and people except religious beliefs and the existence of a person like Imam Khomeini. He recalls Imam Khomeini, as the holy saint in Paris, and believes that he has a personal and emotional connection with the people as a charismatic leader, and says that the character of the Imam is comparable to the myths (Foucault, 2003: 14).
4	Islamic Noble Men	Islamic scholars and myths have been able to create and discover many of the cultural and valuable treasures that are available to us today. Through their love and reliance on Islamic culture and mysticism, they endured great difficulties and obstacles to achieve their sacred goals. These Islamic characters have played a significant role in promoting the global level of Islamic culture and civilization, and now many of them are recognized as role models, not only among the Muslims, but also, their works and their scientific character are considered valuable in foreign cultures, and their name and memory always lead to the persistence and unity of Muslims. The most important of these Islamic characters are Avicenna, Farabi, Razi, Khaje Abdullah Ansari, Ibn Haytham, Abourihan, and etc.

### C) The Unifying Role of Islamic Sites

The place is part of the geographic space and, in fact, forms the basis of social relations. Each location has a unique identity regarding its features, functions, and history. Meanwhile, some places have found a symbolic identity due to their specific characteristics or the special history and events that have occurred in them. And this symbolic manifestation and identity becomes so persistent in the minds and memories of the people that they are easily transmitted from generation to generation (Zarghani, 2014: 129). Symbolic links with the place can be numerous, diverse, strong and effective, but the "power of place" is granted to a place by man (Moire, 2000: 26). In different countries, different places are symbolically exhibited. These places can be a sacred place, such as a mosque, or a high-rise and visible place, such as the Eiffel Tower, or a place that has a spiritual atmosphere in its historical memory (Zarghani, 2014: 133). In Islamic lands, religious places are considered to be a manifestation of the religious identity of Muslims. The mosques and their rising trend, as a manifestation of this religious identity, reflect the Muslims love and concern for their religion. One of the symbolic places that is of particular interest to Islam and Muslims is the mosque, mentioned in the Quran (28 times) and it has named some of them. In verse 149 of Surah al-Baqarah, we have: "And wherever you come from, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. This is the truth from your Lord, and God is not heedless of what you do". All Islamic sects and religions have a common understanding about this place. Among all the centers of worship, shrines and buildings in all divine religions, it is the only place where all its elements and components are unifying, and a symbol of unity and solidarity can always be found in it. The mosque encourages people to act in a unified way, performance, and proficiency in different situations. For this reason, in Islam, it is highly recommended that believers say the prayers in the mosque, and the best mosques are the Great Mosque of Mecca, followed by the Prophet's Mosque, and then the Great Mosque of Kufa mosque, and then the Masjid Al-Aqsa, and then the Main Mosque of each city, and then the neighborhood's mosque and

then, the mosque of the bazaar (Safakish, 2011: 147). The most important of these places, which have a symbolic role for convergence and solidarity among Muslims, include the following mosques:

**Table 3: the common places in spiritual and belief culture of Islam**

Row	Title	Explanation
1	The Great Mosque of Mecca	The Great Mosque of Mecca, as the first and most important Islamic symbol, is a sign and monument of monotheism, the <i>Kaaba</i> is a symbol of Muslims, and in <i>Nahj al-Balaghah</i> , it is referred to as <i>Alam</i> , meaning a flag and an obvious sign of Islam and the cause of Muslim unity. If we look at Muslims, we will see that they say prayers five times a day to the direction of <i>Qibla</i> , with a special order. On the other hand, the <i>Qibla</i> has been the base of the divine movements and revolutions, so that Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh), Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Imam Hussein (pbuh), and in the future, Imam Mahdi (pnuh) all started moving from Kaaba, and they will. In the greatness of the kaaba, it is enough to say that Muslims are known to the <i>Fellowship of Qibla</i> . All Muslims accept the Kaaba, which is located in Mecca, as the <i>Qibla</i> of Muslims and pray towards this direction. There is no one among Shi'a and Sunni who believe in another <i>Qibla</i> .
2	The Prophet's Mosque	Another example of these places is the Prophet's Mosque. Along with the arrival of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Mecca to Medina, when the clans, tribes, and influential people, and even the ordinary and poor people of Medina society, asked him to live in their homes, to the point that it caused some kind of differentiation, the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), with a very wise and unifying decision, from the very beginning, provided the foundation of unity through choosing the house of two orphans (where the camel of the Prophet (pbuh) sat), and with the establishment of the mosque in this place, laid the foundations for the unity and solidarity of Muslims. Nowadays, this place is a unique cultural symbol which is honored by Muslims, and millions of Muslims travel there for worship and pilgrimage, every year.
3	Masjid Al-Aqsa	Al-Aqsa Mosque is another religious site for the unification of Muslims. This mosque should be described as one of the holiest Islamic places for Muslims in the world. This mosque is the first Muslim <i>qibla</i> , where during the Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) time, he prayed towards this mosque by the permission of God, and also it is the third honorable shrine of after the Great Mosque of Mecca and Prophets' Mosque in Mecca and Medina. On the occasion of the firing of this mosque by the Zionists in 1969, with the proposal of the chairman of the Organization for Islamic Culture and Communication to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, after the adoption, this day was called the day of the mosque.

#### D) The Unifying Role of Islamic Institutions and Organizations

Regional groupings and convergences have a long history in the world of politics. Some of these groups, such as CITO, CENTO, NATO and Warsaw, have a strategic nature in the bipolar world (Mujtahadzadeh, 2002: 204); some like the ECHO, NAFTA or OPEC have an economic and geo-economical nature, and some like the European Union are multi-dimensional. Therefore, today many national governments tend inevitably to create supranational institutions, and the most important of these regional integration are the EU, ASEAN, APEC, Mercosur and NAFTA, which have achieved some success in political and economic fields. The leaders of the Islamic countries have taken similar measures based on their own challenges, in the light of the global experiences, whose result is establishment of such institutions as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the OIC, the Arab League, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, the ECO, The Arab Economic Community Council, the D-8 Group and several other entities. However, due to some reasons such as intra-organizational weaknesses and some internal barriers, as well as external pressures, they have not been able to effectively achieve any success in convergence (Velayati, 2010: 163).

**Table 4: the common organizations in the spiritual and belief culture of Islam**

Row	Title	Explanation
1	Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)	The Organization of Islamic Conference with 57 member states in four continents of the world is considered to be one of the world's leading international organizations, established in May, 1971, following the firing of Masjid Al-Aqsa by the Zionist Regime in 1969, with the aim of condemning this violence. The official focus of their gathering is a shared point of religious beliefs.
2	World Assembly of Islamic Approximation	The issue of unity and approximation of Islamic religions has long been the goal and purpose of the liberals, thinkers and reformist political and religious characters, and efforts to realize it in different ages have been faced with many ups and downs. Therefore, following the holding of the fourth Islamic Unity Conference, which was held by the Islamic Propagation Organization of Iran in 1991, with the participation of a group of Islamic thinkers in Tehran, with the order of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the World Assembly of Islamic Approximation, without any distinction as to ethnic or national attachments, was formed in order to reach the Islamic United Ummah.
3	The Inmates World Assembly	The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in his last instructions to the Ummah of Islam, ordered them to follow two precious gems, namely the Holy Quran, and his infallible inmates. Therefore, with the aim of revitalizing and expanding the pure culture and teachings of Prophet Mohammad, and protecting the Holy Quran and the tradition of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his inmates, in May of 1990, with participation of more than 300 of the scholars and thinkers of the Islamic world, especially the followers of Prophet's inmates (pbut), it was formed in Tehran.
4	Islamic Development Bank	The Islamic Development Bank is one of the major international financial-developmental institutions and one of the specialized sections of the Organization of Islamic Conference, which was founded in 1975 by 22 Islamic countries with an initial capital of 755 million Islamic dinars in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Currently, the members of the Bank include 56 countries from four continents as Asia, Africa, Europe and the United States.

5	SBOA Organization (the Media Organization)	SBOA is the name of the Organization of Islamic Conference's Broadcasting Center. Also, it is referred to as Islamic Voices Organization. Its headquarters are in Jeddah, and it was established at the Third Summit in 1972, which was held in that city.
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#### IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Western colonial countries, over the past 100 years, through reviving the spirit of nationalism among the Islamic nations, have generalized the best means of division and separation among them, to keep the Muslims, who could unite with unity of thought and reliance on religious solidarity, away from each other and exploit each one apart from the other. Therefore, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the partition in the geographical unity and integration of Islamic countries in West Asia, the emergence of national governments in a new style, the neglect of Islamic culture and civilization, and the drowning in the waves of globalization, which is heavily inspired by the proctor institutions in the West, have led to the new generations of regional leaders' negligence of Islamic teachings and cultural symbols in recent decades. However, since the sense of proximity in the field of culture leads to the proximity in other areas, the Southwest Asia's Muslim countries, as the origin of the emergence of Islam, and based on numerous common cultural affiliations, have a dignified capacity for realizing the convergence process. According to the Motahari, Islamic sects, along with the differences in theology, jurisprudence, etc., through more commonalities that exist among them, can give each other a fraternal hand against the dangerous enemies and make a single front against them. For this reason, in the process of convergence and unification of Muslim countries of the region and other Muslim countries, there should always be emphasized four types of Islamic identity-creating factors (1), common Islamic spiritual and belief teachings, 2) Islamic characters, 3) Islamic holy places, and 4) organizations and Islamic institutions, of which, Muslims have the most mutual understanding and mutual respect for them, and they should be the focus of interaction and convergence. Also they should be preserved and protected against the Western cultural invasion.

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