# Investigating Factors Influencing Ethnic Solidarity among Young People in Azeri Areas of Khalkhal

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*Abstract*
The present study was conducted to investigate the factors influencing ethnic solidarity among young people (18-30 years) in the Azeri regions of Khalkhal. Theoretical framework was presented using the theories Emile Durkheim, Ted Robert Gurr, George Homans, Anthony Giddens and others. The research method was survey, face validity was used and reliability was obtained by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (for dependent variable 0.85 and independent variable 0.87). The statistical population of the present study was all youths from Khalkhal, aged 18-30, who are estimated to be 22636 according to the latest statistics. Regarding the characteristics of the statistical population and its high population, 380 individuals were selected as the sample size using Cochran formula and multistage cluster sampling. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data using SPSS software. Findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between the dependent variable of the ethnic solidarity and the independent variables of media use ($r = 0.493$), use of foreign media ($r = -0.554$), religiosity dimension ($r = 0.631$), religious ritual dimension ($R = 0.732$), emotional dimension of religiosity ($r = 0.643$), religious consequence dimension ($r = 0.534$), relative deprivation feeling ($r = 0.631$), western lifestyle tendency ($r = 0.554$), and the level of social cohesion ($r = 0.657$). Also, the results of multivariate regression showed that the independent variables entered in the equation accounted for 62% of the dependent variable changes.

**Keywords:** ethnic solidarity, relative deprivation feeling, western lifestyle and social cohesion.

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**Statement of the Problem**

Definitions of nation and ethnicity have been put forward by sociologists, all of whom emphasize identities such as language, land, history, customs, and so on. Ethnic social science encyclopedia refers to a group of people who belong to a culture, language, custom and are thus recognized. In another definition, Parsons refers to minorities and ethnic groups as a set of kinship membership whose members derive their origin from a common ancestor or from common ancestors who all belonged to a particular ethnic group. Anthony Smith enumerates six characteristics of a tribe: the collective name, the myth of common ancestry, the common history, the common culture among members of an ethnic group, which distinguishes them from other groups, and links them to a particular land and a kind of solidarity (Omen, 1378, p.44).

Ethnic solidarity is one of the most fundamental and a universal concept that has a background as long as history if we accept Durkheim's assertion that society is the principle and that the individual is defined in society and interacts with it. Early humans also existed in tribes, and as history evolved, many indicators influenced ethnic solidarity. Solidarity, however, is one of the most central issues for scholars, especially sociologists.

Durkheim speaks of two kinds of solidarity in his book *The division of labor in society*, a mechanical solidarity which is based on the similarities in which collective conscience resembles the conscience of individual members of society, and organic solidarity, based on differences and division of labor. According to Durkheim, in contemporary societies we see different collective identities that are interconnected through civil religion and form a single whole (Durkheim, 1969: 92). Thus a minority group is a group whose unique cultural characteristics appear to be different from those that are recognized as the dominant group in society. In anthropology, the term can refer to groups classified by ethnicity, race, gender, or sexual orientation (Fukuhi, 2011). Ignoring the problem of the formation and intensification of ethnic identity can be a major challenge for the existence of a country at the macro level. For example, every society as a system for unified movement requires social cohesion. Therefore, one must take care of the factors that prevent social cohesion and ultimately lead to crisis. At the micro level, in areas where people are of different ethnicities, the crisis can take the form of violence and can be a serious challenge.

In sum, the formation and highlighting of ethnic identity by any ethnicity can be a social problem for the following reasons:

A) Ethnicities are mainly cultural characteristics that distinguish one group from another. Some of these features are: language, race, kinship, religion, etc. In none of these characteristics is the trait of humanity considered, so the prominence of ethnic identity can cover and ignore the trait of humanity.

B) Each ethnicity is a subsystem within a system. Each system also has a central system. If sovereignty is the central system of a country, ethnicity is subsystem. The relationship between the subsystem and the central system should be a positive one. Now, if much of the sovereignty is of a particular ethnicity, the intensification of ethnic identity is one of the factors that prevent the creation of a positive relationship

(Nawah, 2007). Because members of a dominant group in a society may feel that the minority group threatens their privileged economic position and authority. On the other hand, members of the minority group may also feel that the majority are impeding their economic and social progress (Bruce Cohen, 2007, p. 265).

C) Different ethnicities that are said to be in the center of a subsystem must also have a positive relationship with each other; here, too, enhancing ethnic identity is a disruptive factor in creating and maintaining a positive relationship. This is especially important in a city or region composed of several ethnic groups. Ethnic intensification can disrupt these relationships where people have daily contact and relationship.

D) Enhancing ethnic identity is known as ethnocentrism. "Ethnic identity" can become the source of ethnic conflict and impede community solidarity and social cohesion at the community level if it becomes an extremist ethnicity and a sense of superiority and dominance over other ethnicities (Abdullahi, 2001, p. 354). Extreme Ethnocentrism causes people in the group to be prejudiced against other groups. Studies show that those who are prejudiced against one group are often biased against many other groups (Bruce Cohen, 2006, p. 410).

E) Ethnocentrism makes it possible for any ethnic group that has the power to discriminate between different individuals and to prevent their free and equal enjoyment of social benefits (Ibid, 266).

F) The intensification of ethnic identities makes other ethnicities more sensitive. Other ethnicities and minorities may also respond in different ways to domination and discrimination, including separation, voluntary separation etc.

According to the above mentioned concepts, the question that this study seeks to answer is what factors influence the tendency towards ethnic solidarity among the citizens of the Azeri regions of Khalkhal?

### Literature Review
There have been many debates in the field of ethnic solidarity by social scholars. The following are some of these theories:

### Emile Durkheim
According to Durkheim, the social order is relatively stable based on a kind of social consensus, and emotional attachments form the basis of pre-rational social consensus. Although the foundations of social consensus are emotional associations, they are analytically the very constituent elements of interaction and emotion. In this way, it may be said that the interactive field in which people's positive emotions toward each other are shaped, will pave the way to form "we", and at the same time it will bring consensus to "we". Durkheim describes the emotion that emerges in the interaction field as the collective emotion. In his view, deep collective emotions often arise during collective ceremonies, thereby enhancing and consolidating the social cohesion, resulting in a collective conscience that promotes social conscience in society (Chalabi, 1993, p. 23).

Durkheim's concept of collective conscience is close to the concept of social cohesion we seek. Durkheim defines the collective or general conscience as such and

defines its boundaries as "the set of beliefs and feelings shared by the average person in a single society which constitutes a particular system that has its own life; this system can be called collective or general conscience" (Durkheim, 1969, p. 92).

Durkheim speaks of two kinds of mechanical and organic solidarity in his book *The division of labor in society*. Mechanical solidarity derives from similarity, in which collective conscience coincides with the individual conscience of each member of society. In contrast to mechanical solidarity, it is organic solidarity that is nurtured not by the similarities of individuals but by their differences. This kind of solidarity comes from the division of social work. According to Durkheim, in organic solidarity, collective conscience and collective identity are flexible against group identities and collective conscience; because in these societies, it is pointless to speak of a kind of collective identity that is consistent with the identity of all individuals and groups in society. In contemporary societies, we are witnessing different collective identities that are interconnected through civil religion and form a single whole. Durkheim sees the guilds as the source of the different identities of individuals in contemporary societies (ibid., p. 94).

### Ted Robert Gurrr & Homans

By proposing the theory of relative deprivation, Ted Robert Gurr explains that inequality and the deep gap between minorities and the majority create pressure between groups, and ethnic disputes arise about the extent to which these groups share national resources. Gurr believes that even the response and the type of minority response are greatly influenced by the degree of perceived deprivation by groups. He believes in the ethnic link between government policy, ethnic deprivation, and levels of ethnic conflict, and credits democratic governments with reforming strong relationships in controlling ethnic protests and violence. He uses a three-dimensional classification of welfare values, values related to power and interpersonal values that can be termed economics, politics and culture, and believes that their deprivation stimulates the tendency for ethnic identity and exacerbates the ethnic divide.

Homans, on the other hand, believes that if distributive justice (proportionality between cost and reward) is observed, consensus and empathy will emerge. Otherwise, the individual will feel deprived and discriminated, so they do not pay attention to social norms, reject collective values and patterns, and become individualistic. In other words, if a person does not get the reward he or she is expecting, or gets punished, he or she will become angry and likely to exhibit aggressive behavior (Ritzer, 1995, p. 455). As such, Homans emphasizes that creating discrimination and social inequality widens the gap between the discriminator and the discriminated, paying more possible costs to the target community. This is more explicit in Dahrendorf's theories. Dahrendorf does not see the essential factor of social contradictions in the unjust distribution of their means of production and ownership as Marx believes. He sees the root cause of the contradiction, in the unequal distribution of power, so there are always individuals and groups in societies that are subject to this authority. As such, society is divided into two dominant and dominated groups. This creates a conflict of interest between a stakeholder group that seeks to maintain

the status quo, and an oppressed group who tries to disrupt and reverse this situation. This discrimination widens the gap between these groups. According to Dahrendorf, the intensity of the conflict between these groups is reduced in the following cases: the ability to promote subordinate groups to stakeholder groups, the opportunity to access wealth, credit and culture appropriately for all without discrimination, and the class structure of society should be open enough about the possibility of social mobility. Otherwise, the intensity of the contradictions will allow the collapse and transformation of the structure.

### Anthony Giddens

Answering the question of how people experience the modern situation, Giddens argues that in the modern era the "self" is a project to be designed and no longer shaped by its traditions and habits. This provides the ground for feeling empty and creating serious doubts, but it also allows for the planning and lifestyle choices (ibid, p. 27). For Giddens, lifestyles are behaviors that have become the norm in everyday life, flowing into dressing, eating, ways of living, and environments for meeting others. Such behaviors reflect social personal-group identities (Fazeli, 2003, p.83). For Giddens, the less the influence of tradition and the more everyday life is being rebuilt by the interplay of domestic and global factors, the more people are forced to choose their lifestyles among different choices. Thus, because of the openness of today's social life, and also because of the proliferation of areas of practice and the variety of "references", lifestyle choices become increasingly important in the construction of personal identity and daily activity (Giddens, 1999, p. 21). According to Giddens' theories, it can be stated that the change in individuals' identities is the result of changes within society by today's institutions. It depends on how much people can extract information from technical and non-technical sources, from technicians, consultants, etc.; and to what extent they can obtain their desired information through advertising by organizations or through study and apply it in their personal lives and change their personal identities. In fact, our identity is shaped by our lifestyles, so we always change our identities based on our lifestyle and we have to re-evaluate our personal identity. In fact, identity is constantly changing throughout life. No one has a fixed identity; identity is fluid and constantly evolving.

### Peter Berger

Contemporary sociologist, Peter Berger, in *The homeless mind*: *Renewal and consciousness*, examines the effects of the development of modern communication and bureaucratic technologies and their effects on individual life through anomalies, alienation, self-loathing, bewilderment, and the homelessness of mind and identity.

He regards modern urbanization and the mass media as two distinct modern developments that have shaped a person's identity. He believes that urbanization of consciousness has accelerated with the development of new mass media. New cognitive and normative definitions of reality in the city are rapidly spreading through the mass media, radio, television, and cinema. Communicating with the media means engaging in constant urbanization of consciousness. Multiplicity is inherent in this

process. Everywhere, the person is bombarded with various information through various media. This process "opens the mind" through the information. However, this process, for the same reason, undermines the integrity and acceptability of the 'home world', in many cases, this multiplicity even traverses the processes of early socialization, that is, the processes that fundamentally shape the individual and his / her mental world in childhood. This change has increasingly affected the lives of people in modern society. As a result, such people are experiencing a multiplicity of living worlds not just in adulthood, but from the very beginning of their childhood social experience. It can be argued that these people have never had a single, unchallenged "home world". This multiplicity manifests itself in different ways in people's daily lives. One of the consequences is the different paths one must take to choose one. In fact, one's life plan in a new society is greatly affected by these multiplicities. Berger considers the life plan as the primary source of one's identity. The program is usually open-ended and defined in an indefinable manner (Berger et al., 2008, pp. 75-81).

Berger defines identity as "the actual experience of the individual about himself or herself in a particular social situation. In other words, identity is the way in which people define themselves. Identity in this sense is part of a given structure of consciousness and is thus a phenomenological descriptive function." Berger considers modern identity to have four characteristics:1- The modern identity is clearly open, 2- the modern identity is clearly distinct, 3- the modern identity is speculative, and finally 4- the modern identity is clearly individualized. On reflective identity, he argues, a changing society forces one to rethink and make a variety of decisions. Rethinking not only focuses on the external world, but also enters the individual's mind and becomes a subject of consciousness in the process of rethinking on the world and the individual himself (Ibid, pp.86-84).

**Studies Related to Ethnic Identity**

Khojastehnejad, Hajiani, Salehi and Amiri (2017) conducted a study to measure the degree of national solidarity between Azeri and Turkmen ethnicities. In this study, national solidarity indices and factors affecting national solidarity are investigated. Different and important aspects of the national solidarity debate are: emotions and cultural bonds, national commitments, social relationships and interactions, participation and cooperation, adherence to values, and community control over the individual (political system). Ethnicity and its relation to national solidarity have also been examined along with national solidarity debate. Thus, national solidarity in Tabriz and Gonbadkavus has been measured between the Azeri and Turkmen ethnicities. The method used in this study is survey and the sample population is 384 people using Cochran method. According to the results of the study, the correlation and ethnocentrism of the Azeris is high, so that the average correlation between Azeris is 3.51 and their ethnocentrism is 4.01. Also, among the Turkmen ethnicity, national solidarity with a mean of 3.92 and ethnocentrism with a mean of 4.13 are high. In comparison, the national solidarity of the Turkmens is greater, and thus their ethnocentrism is greater than that of the Azeris. Bosouravi (2011) also conducted a study called "*Ethnic solidarity and the determinants of ethnic identity*". This paper

examines the determinants of ethnic identity using large sample surveys (approximately 30,000 respondents) representing the seven capitals of West African countries. A small model of ethnic identification by investing in ethnic capital shows that individuals are initially deprived of social human capital resort to ethnicity. The experimental results are consistent with this simple theory. First, education decreases ethnic happiness. Second, ethnic identification is greater for unemployed or unofficial illiterate workers looking for new or better jobs, and is further enhanced by the share of the ethnic group in the labor market. Third, ethnic identity is higher among immigrants and increases with the share of the ethnic group of working immigrants. Group solidarity enhances ethnic identity for disadvantaged people from other means of moving forward.

Based on the results of previous studies and existing literature, the following hypotheses have been put forward:

- According to Berger, there is a relationship between the amount of domestic media use and the amount of ethnic solidarity.

- According to Berger, there is a relationship between the use of foreign media and the amount of ethnic solidarity.

- According to Durkheim, there is a relationship between the degree of religiosity and the degree of ethnic solidarity.

- According to Ted Robert Gurr and Homans, there is a relationship between the degree of relative deprivation and the degree of ethnic solidarity.

- According to Giddens, there is a relationship between the level of Western lifestyle and ethnic solidarity.

- According to Durkheim, there is a relationship between social cohesion and ethnic solidarity.

### Theoretical and Operational Definitions of Variables
### Religiosity

*Theoretical definition:* According to Durkheim, religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is, things that are regarded as incompatible with other things; these beliefs and practices unite all those who practice them in a single ethical community (Delaney, 2008, p. 152).

*Operational definition*: Religious variables were measured using the Glock and Stark model operating indices, including belief, ritual, affective and consequential dimensions, using a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale.

### Mass Media

*Theoretical definition*: Mass media includes numerous communication tools such as books, periodicals, radio, television, satellites, etc., which are used by a large number of people (Mohseni, 2000, p. 227).

*Operational definition*: In this study, the mass media variable was measured with items such as: rate of use of television, satellite, radio, newspapers and so on using a five-point Likert scale.

### Western Lifestyle

*Theoretical definition:* Lifestyle is a part of life that is practically realized and encompasses the range of activities that people do in their daily lives. Therefore, the spectrum of different activities of individuals in each area of life can be the product of their lifestyle (Razavizadeh, 2007, p. 167).

Researchers have used a variety of indicators to test this concept. Kafashi et al. (2010), for example, have used indices of cultural consumption, leisure activity, body management, clothing purchase patterns, and nutrition patterns. Bashir and Afrasiabi (2012) have used indicators of the type of communication with the opposite sex, the type of coverage outside the home, the type of expression and rhetoric or conversations of the members of virtual networks (Bashir & Afrasiabi, 2012, p. 52).

*Operational definition*: In this study, in order to measure this concept, we used the indicators of cultural consumption, leisure activity, pattern of clothing purchase and type of clothing, type of communication with the opposite sex, type of expression and words or conversations of members of the virtual networks.

### The Feeling of Relative Deprivation

*Theoretical definition*: Inequality and the deep gap between minorities and the majority create and increase pressure among groups (Ritzer, 1995).

*Operational definition*: This variable in this research was measured using items such as discrimination in the provision of facilities, services, tools, and a five-point Likert scale.

### Ethnic Identity

*Theoretical definition:* Ethnic identity is a type of collective identity that refers to cultural characteristics that distinguish one ethnic group from another and create a cohesive and coherent feeling among members of one ethnic group. Ethnic identity is at a lower level than national or community identity (Ahmadloo, 2002).

*Operational definition*: Ethnic identity is a type of social identity and is a specific set of objective, mental, cultural, social, ideological, and emotional factors that manifest in one human group and distinguish it from other groups. In this kind of identity the emotional relationships of the members are greater and there is more homogeneity than general society.

### Research Methodology

The research method was survey, face validity was used and reliability was obtained by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (for dependent variable 0.85 and independent variable 0.87).

The statistical population of the present study is all youths from Khalkhal, aged 18-30, who are estimated to be 22636 according to the latest statistics. Regarding the characteristics of the statistical population and its high population, 380 individuals were selected as the sample size using Cochran formula and multistage cluster sampling. Based on multi-stage cluster sampling method, Khalkhal was divided into five geographical areas north, south, east, west and center. In the next stage, we

clustered the neighborhood and then we selected blocks as clusters and then selected several households within each block, and then, by simple random sampling, we selected the samples. Questionnaire technique was used for data collection. We used face validity to assess validity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also used to calculate the internal consistency of the measuring instrument. In this way, after preparing the indicators and designing the questionnaire, a preliminary study was carried out. This preliminary study was carried out on a sample of 30 Azeri youth in Khalkhal. After extracting the scores for each questionnaire and entering it into SPSS software, Cronbach's alpha for the variables was obtained as follows.

Table (1): Cronbach's alpha coefficient

| variables | alpha value | variables | alpha value |
|---|---|---|---|
| religious consequence dimension | 0.724 | use of domestic media | 0.861 |
| relative deprivation feeling | 0.772 | use of foreign media | 0.811 |
| western lifestyle tendency | 0.752 | religiosity dimension | 0.724 |
| the level of social cohesion | 0.834 | religious ritual dimension | 0.763 |
| ethnical correlation (dependent variable) | 0.853 | emotional dimension of religiosity | 0.785 |

### Descriptive Statistics

Survey of respondents' image shows that 64.7% of all respondents were male and had the highest percentage. Also, 35.3% of the respondents were female and had the lowest percentage. The minimum age was 18 years and the highest age was 30 years. Most respondents are in the 24-22 age range. 68.3% of the respondents were single and had the highest frequency. 31.7% of the respondents were married and had the least frequency. 52.2% of the respondents were those with a high school diploma and had the highest frequency, and 2.6% of the respondents were illiterate or with primary education and had the least frequency.

### Inferential Statistics

**Table 2: Results of the correlation coefficient between the variables**

| dependent variables | Pearson correlation coefficient | Significance level |
|---|---|---|
| use of domestic media | 0.493 | 0.000 |
| use of foreign media | -0.541 | 0.003 |
| religiosity dimension | 0.631 | 0.000 |
| religious ritual dimension | 0.732 | 0.000 |
| emotional dimension of religiosity | 0.643 | 0.000 |
| religious consequence dimension | 0.534 | 0.001 |
| relative deprivation feeling | -0.631 | 0.000 |
| western lifestyle tendency | -0.546 | 0.000 |
| the level of social cohesion | 0.657 | 0.000 |

### Regression Equation

The regression equation is investigated to determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination determines how much of the dependent variable is explained by the help of independent variables. Beta

coefficients can be used to compute the regression equation. Also the standardized beta coefficients are effective in determining the relative contribution of each variable to the dependent variable changes. The beta coefficient of each independent variable that was higher means that it has a greater relative share in the dependent variable changes.

**Table 3: Model summary**

| Coefficient of determination R Square | Correlation coefficient R |
|---|---|
| 0.624 | 0.797 |

According to Table (3), the multiple correlation coefficient value of the regression model is 0.797. The coefficient of determination is 0.624, i.e. 0.624 of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

**Table 4: Analysis of variance (Anova)**

| The significance level | Statistics value F |
|---|---|
| 0.000 | 60.760 |

According to Table (4), it can be seen that the significance level of the test is 0.000 less than 0.05 so that the null hypothesis is rejected and with 95% confidence it can be said that the fitted model is a good one and the regression relation is linear.

**Table 5: Regression coefficient**

| | beta coefficient | Standardized beta coefficient | Significance level |
|---|---|---|---|
| the constant value | 63.600 | - | 0.000 |
| use of domestic media | 1.730 | 0.213 | 0.004 |
| use of foreign media | -1.565 | -0.240 | 0.034 |
| religiosity | 1.545 | 0.248 | 0.007 |
| relative deprivation feeling | -0.993 | -0.156 | 0.046 |
| western lifestyle tendency | -0. 714 | -.0116 | 0.038 |
| social cohesion | 1.637 | 0.257 | 0.003 |

According to the above table, the significance level of all independent variables is less than 0.05, so they enter into the regression model.

**Conclusion**

Regarding the significant and direct relationship between the use of domestic mass media and the tendency for ethnic identity, it can be said that most of the existing mass media are available to those who use them to further promote their being Iranian and positive attitude towards ethnic identity.

The significant and direct relationship between the degree of religiosity and the tendency for ethnic identity shows that religious affiliation is involved in the construction of any kind of identity. This is especially true in transitional societies, showing a greater amount of effective communication. Rituals and principles play an important role in identifying people, their world view and the way they look.

The presence of a significant and direct relationship between social cohesion and the tendency to ethnic identity indicates that social cohesion plays a decisive role in people's tendency to ethnic identity because of participation of individuals in the local community, group participation and trust in other people, and within social groups and social capital.

The results also show that there is a significant and inverse relationship between the feeling of relative deprivation and the tendency to ethnic identity. Ted Robert Gurr proposes a three-dimensional classification that includes welfare values, power values, and interpersonal values that can be related to economics, politics, and culture. He believes that the deprivation in them stimulates the inclination of ethnic identity and exacerbates the ethnic divide.

The regression equation is investigated to determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. Beta coefficients can be used to compute the regression equation. Also the standardized beta coefficients are effective in determining the relative contribution of each variable to the dependent variable changes. The beta coefficient of each independent variable that was higher means that it has a greater relative share in the dependent variable changes. According to the results, the multiple correlation coefficient value of the regression model is 0.797. The coefficient of determination is 0.624, i.e. 0.624 of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

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