

The Effect of Ethnic Policies of the Islamic Republic on the Divergence Process of Ethnic Groups in Golestan Province

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Abstract: Ethnic politics is a set of strategies for governments to regulate relations at three levels of ethnic, inter-ethnic and ethnic groups and government. The aim of this study is to identify the ethnic policies on the divergence process of ethnic groups in Golestan province. In terms of purpose, applied and quantitative in terms of the nature of data and in terms of data collection method, it is a descriptive-survey research. The statistical population of the study includes an 18-year-old population living in Golestan province, the number of which is about 1250,000 according to the 2016 census. The sample size was determined based on Cochran formula of 384 subjects and the subjects were studied in cluster sampling as available samples. The data obtaining tool was a researcher-made questionnaire whose validity was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha based on the agreement of the reviewers and its reliability. Data analysis was performed by SPSS26 software. The findings of T-test test showed that the mean score of total divergence of respondents out of 30 scores in four dimensions of emotional feeling of ethnic belongings, ethnic cultural belonging, commitment to ethnic gathering and ethnic political identity was more than 17, which is more than the assumed average score of 15 and this indicates that the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have contributed to the divergence of ethnic groups toward national identity. Therefore, designing and implementing ethnic policies focused on strengthening integration, solidarity, unity and national unity in Golestan province is a fundamental necessity.

Keywords: Ethnic policies, divergence, Golestan province

Introduction

Ethnicity and ethnic groups, especially the issue of national identity, national unity, convergence and divergence of ethnicities are important issues that governments face in Polyatnik or Multinationals countries. For this reason, governments have used a variety of policies and patterns in the past, of which ethnic policies, pluralism, cloning and ethnic preference politics are among the most important. According to social scientists, one of the important variables affecting the ethnic communities of each country is the approaches, methods and methods of governments and governments in regulating their interactions and relations (from different dimensions) with ethnicities and managing the policies and procedures that have dominated these interactions. The importance and position of this variable in explaining and analyzing ethnic issues is such that many scholars and researchers consider the relationships between the government, ethnicities and the type and method of this relationship as the main factor in preventing ethnic divergence and vice versa as the main factor for strengthening and coherence of national solidarity.

Divergence is the feeling of potential or actual separation of ethnicities with all or part of the constituent elements (Alipour, 2011). Divergence is defined as a lack of cohesion and agreement between political groups and actors within a political unit to achieve a specific goal (Golverdi, 2012). Politically divergence means the lack of unity within a political unit (Jowkar, Bakhshayeshi Ardestani and partners., 2020:511). If we think of society as a collective composed of individuals, social institutions and their communication network based on interests and interests, the divergence in its natural state implies the boundaries of disagreement between individuals, groups and institutions. All

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differences between groups and ethnicities within society that are rooted in their conflicting assessments are manifestations of divergence. Divergence can exist in two active and passive forms. Passive divergence in the event of a rare common interest, which is equal to the exclusion of one group or other groups, will be deactivated and activated during the process known as social mobilization (Barzegar, Lotfi and partners., 2019: 436). Ethnic divergence can manifest itself in many indicators and components, the most important of which are a strong emotional sense of belonging to ethnicity, strong cultural belonging, high ethnic commitment, and a focus on ethnic political identity. Ethnic politics, which is a set of strategies for governments to regulate relations at three levels of ethnic, inter-ethnic and inter-ethnic and inter-ethnic and government (Maqsoodi and Darbandi, 2012:155), if appropriately regulated, can be determined by regulating relations between ethnic groups and the government and explaining the mutual rights and obligations of each of them, as well as clarifying the executive methods of achieving national unity and solidarity. It beats and prevents divergence. These policies should determine their positions in different social, cultural, political and economic spheres. The special task of ethnic politics is to regulate the relations between the national community and ethnic communities, and the two indicators of "nature of the state" and "demographic composition" of each country are the most important determinants of it in any political system (Mottaghi and partners, 2017: 822). The ethnic policy-making system in Iran has always been considered by the regime because of the country's enjoyment of ethnic diversity, especially after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. During the last four decades, the Islamic Republic has applied several ethnic policies such as cloning model, pluralism model and unity model in plurality, which is essential to understand the effects of these policies on ethnic divergence. In the meantime, the study of the impact of ethnic policies in Golestan province as one of the provinces that includes the rainbow of ethnicities, so that it covers 16 out of 24 ethnic groups living in the country. As a remarkable example of ethnic groups, it can open a clear vision for ethnic and national studies and pave the way for strengthening appropriate and effective ethnic policymaking in order to achieve greater national consensus of ethnic groups. Golestan province, based on the results of the general census of population and housing in 2016 with a population of 1868,000, as the 14th most populous province of the country, is 2.33 percent of the total population of Iran. The ethnic composition of Golestan province shows that of the total population mentioned about 35% of the mentioned population is Persians, 33% turkmen, 15.5% Sistani, 4.5% Baluchis, 5% Kurds and the rest turks Qizilbash, Azeri and Kazakhs and ... make up.

Considering that today geopolitical developments and geopolitical confrontations in the surrounding area of Iran, the issue of national convergence and divergence of ethnic groups has become an important issue in the field of national security and considering the definition and application of numerous ethnic policies by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the main issue of this research is recognizing the effects of ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the process of national divergence of ethnic groups living in Golestan province in the dimensions of emotional belonging. Extreme ethnicity, strong cultural belonging, high ethnic commitment and a focus on ethnic political identity.

Research Objectives

Main objective: To understand the impact of ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the national divergence of Golestan ethnic groups

Sub-objectives

1. Recognizing the impact of ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran on increasing the sense of emotional belonging to ethnicity.
2. Recognizing the impact of ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran on increasing the sense of belonging to ethnic culture.
3. Recognizing the impact of ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran on increasing commitment to ethnic communities.
4. Recognizing the Impact of Ethnic Policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Increasing Commitment to Ethnic Identity

Research hypotheses

Main hypothesis: The ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have increased the national divergence of Golestan ethnic groups.

Sub-assumptions

1. Have the ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran led to an increase in the emotional sense of belonging of Golestan tribes to ethnicity?
1. Have the ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran led to an increase in the emotional sense of belonging of Golestan tribes to ethnicity?
2. Have the ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran led to an increase in the sense of belonging to ethnic culture among ethnic groups living in Golestan.
3. Have the ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran led to an increase in commitment to ethnic gatherings among the ethnic groups of Golestan?

Theoretical Foundations

Ethnic policy making

Ethnic policy-making is a set of policies through which interactions and relations between ethnic groups, the government and the ruling body can, on the one hand, regulate and regulate relations between ethnic groups and the body of national society on the other hand, and change in accordance with other existing macro policies. Today, in political and social literature, three main models of ethnic policy-making have been discussed:

1. Interactive or convergent pattern that in this model, public participation or participation of ethnicities is important.
2. Cloning model which aims at the biological, cultural, social and psychological composition of distinct and individual groups in order to create a society without ethnic differences.
3. The model of ethnic pluralism, which is emphasized in the model of ethnic pluralism while emphasizing diversity and group differences, also focuses on the existence of a common economic political structure that binds different ethnic groups together.

Ethnic Policies of the Islamic Republic: Iran's ethnic politics after the Islamic revolution, based on the emphasis of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, should have been based on adopting a strategy of egalitarian pluralism, but studies show that these policies in different periods of state rule, based on the integration of voluntary and involuntary cloning patterns, along with a kind of cultural pluralism in some areas where ethnic demands are in conflict with the ideological demands of the political system. It hasn't, but it has been. Since its establishment, the Islamic Republic has adopted different strategies in the field of ethnic policies, in other words, the ethnic policy-making of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the last four decades has been based on a set of scattered approaches, often without long-term and strategic perspectives. So that at some point it is completely uncertain and incoherent and unplanned, and at some point with the change of governments and changes in the type of government's view, we are witnessing the implementation of different policies. For example, considering the differences in the discourse of the three reformist, fundamentalist and moderate governments, the type of ethnic policy-making has been proportionate to the importance of domestic and foreign issues. Accordingly, in the reformist government after May 22, we see the creation of a political open space in Iran, mainly focused on pluralism focused on parties, the press, the circulation of elites and localism, which reinforced the pattern of pluralism and the distribution of power at the social and political level. And on this basis, we are witnessing the implementation of the policy of concentration and granting authority to the regions in the form of the Islamic Council of The City and the Village and creating a political open space for ethnic activities.

Considering the shift of the government from the discourse bases of reformism to fundamentalism in 2005, a kind of transformation in ethnic policy-making based on external threats and the need to strengthen the national mood against ethnic pluralism, the index of cloning in the government's agenda was placed in various dimensions. In this context, the emphasis on national interests as an integrated Iran, strengthening the spirit of ideological idealism against ethnic and regional pluralism has been considered as the driver of the aggregation of forces in order to confront foreign enemies and to strengthen the spirit of Islamism against the ethnic-linguistic spirit. In 2013, in accordance with the change of government from the discourse of fundamentalism to moderation, we see the establishment of a moderation government with a policy of tolerance and the creation of a peaceful platform in the region. In addition to based legal views and emphasis on citizenship rights on its agenda, this political view emphasizes local, linguistic and ethnic rights alongside Iranian nationalism. Therefore, the model of unity in plurality is more in line with the ethnic policy-making of this government.

Table (1): Ethnic policy making in different governments Of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Indicators	Ethnic policy making	Discourse	Governments
Free Market, Industrialization, Economic Relation	Uncertain and non-coherent	Economic Development	The Victory of the Revolution until the Period
Political open space, parties, press, individuals	Pluralism	Reform	Reformist Government
Iranian and Islamic Ideals, Justice-Oriented, Unit	Emphasis on homogenization The Ideals of the Revolution	Fundamentalist	Fundamentalism Government
The right to citizenship, international de-escalatio	Unity in Plurality	Moderation and Development	The Government of moderation

Research Methodology

This research is a field and applied research that has been conducted by survey method. The sample size was determined based on Cochran formula of 384 subjects who were studied by cluster sampling method. The tools for obtaining information in documentary and library studies, books, academic dissertations, scientific-research papers, journals and web sites, and in field studies section had made a researcher questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure ethnic divergence in four variables: emotional belonging to ethnicity, strong cultural belonging, high ethnic commitment, and focus on ethnic political identity dimension in the form of Likert spectrum questions. Vote analysis of data was used by SPSS software. Data description was performed based on one-dimensional tables and test-T and ANOVA tests were used to test the assumptions.

Research Findings

Descriptive findings

The study was conducted on background and demographic variables in the research population including gender, marital status, employment status, education level, ethnicity, etc. It showed that out of 384 subjects, 262 (68%) were male, 122 were female equivalent (32%). The distribution of respondents in terms of marital status showed that 57 (15%) were single and 327 (85%) were married. The findings showed that 18 persons had 4% sub-diploma, 67 had 22% diploma, 45 (11%) had a master's degree, 82 (21%) had a bachelor's degree and 169 (44%) had a master's degree and finally 3 (1%) had a Ph.D. degree. Regarding the ethnicity of respondents, the results showed that out of 384 respondents, about 36% of fars, 31.3% Turkmen, 13.5% Sistani, 7.8% turk, 4.9% Kurdish, 5% Baluch And 1.6% of other ethnic groups included Kazakhs and . . . have been.

The study of the national divergence average showed that the average score of total ethnic divergence was 17.2 out of 30, which indicates that the average divergence of respondents is higher than average. The mean score of four divergence indices also showed that the mean sense of emotional belonging to ethnicity was 14.9, ethnic culture belonged 21.7 belonging to ethnic social 16 and finally the political dimension of ethnic identification was 16.3.

Table (2): Frequency distribution of samples based on mean divergence and its dimensions

Divergence (ethnic)	Sample Number	Number of questions	Minimum score	Maximum score	Total score	Average
Feeling emotionally belonging to ethnicity	384	6	1	5	30	14,9
Belonging to ethnic culture	384	6	1	5	30	21,7
Commitment to ethnic community	384	6	1	5	30	16
Political dimension of ethnic identification	384	6	1	5	30	16,3
Total	384	24	-	-	30	17,2

Inferential findings

Main hypothesis: Ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have had an impact on increasing the divergence rate of ethnic groups in Golestan province. To investigate the above hypothesis, a t_test a domain test has been used and the mean score of each component is investigated based on the amount of mediocrity defined. If the answers to all questions are too high, the maximum score based on likert spectrum will be 30 and the assumed average in t_test of a amplitude is 15.

According to the data obtained from the t_test test, it has been found that the average score of total divergence of respondents was more than 17, which is more than the average score, indicating that the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have contributed to the increase of ethnic divergence toward national identity. Also, according to the significant level less than 5% of the above hypothesis is confirmed.

Sub-assumptions

One-Sample Statistics				
Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Ethnic Divergence	383	17. 2343	10. 73444	. 54850

One-Sample Test						
Variable	Test Value = 15					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Ethnic Divergence	4. 074	382	. 000	2. 23434	1. 1559	3. 3128

1_ Ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have had an impact on increasing the dimension of emotional belonging to ethnicity in Golestan province. According to the data obtained from the t_test test, it has been found that the mean score of emotional belonging to ethnicity in the respondents' divergence index is close to the assumed average, i.e. the score of 15, and this shows that the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran in increasing the dimension of emotional belonging to the ethnicity of ethnic groups living in Golestan province have been neutral, i.e. neither had a positive effect nor a negative effect.

One-Sample Statistics				
Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Feeling emotionally belonging to ethnicity	383	14. 9243	3. 63549	. 18576

One-Sample Test						
Variable	Test Value = 15					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Feeling emotionally belonging to ethnicity	-.408	382	.684	-.07572	-.4410	.2895

The ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have increased the dimension of belonging to ethnic culture in the province.

According to the data obtained from the t_test test, it has been found that the average dimension of belonging to ethnic culture in the respondents' divergence index was 21.7, which is more than the assumed average, and this indicates that the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have an important role in increasing the dimension of belonging to ethnic culture of ethnic groups living in Golestan province.

One-Sample Statistics				
Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Belonging to ethnic culture	384	21.7969	20.97357	1.07030

One-Sample Test						
Variable	Test Value = 15					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Belonging to ethnic culture	6.350	383	.000	6.79689	4.6925	8.9013

Ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have had an impact on increasing the dimension of commitment to ethnic gathering in Golestan province.

According to the data obtained from the t_test test, it has been found that the average dimension of commitment to ethnic gathering in the respondents' divergence index is almost assumed to be close to the average and this indicates that the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have not played a particular role in increasing the dimension of commitment to ethnic communities of ethnic groups living in Golestan province.

One-Sample Statistics				
Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Commitment to ethnic community	384	15.0182	20.58408	1.05043

One-Sample Test						
Variable	Test Value = 15					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Commitment to ethnic community	.969	383	.333	1.01824	-1.0471	3.0836

Ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have had an impact on the increase of the political dimension of ethnic identification in Golestan province.

One-Sample Statistics				
Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Political dimension of ethnic identification	384	16.2344	5.04468	.25744

One-Sample Test						
Variable	Test Value = 15					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Political dimension of ethnic identification	4.795	383	.000	1.23438	.7282	1.7405

According to the data obtained from the *t*-test, it has been found that the mean score of political dimension of ethnic identification in the respondents' divergence index was 16.2, which is more than the assumed average, and this indicates that the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have an important role in increasing the political dimension of ethnic identification of ethnic groups living in Golestan province.

Discussion & Conclusion

National convergence and prevention of national divergence is one of the most important vital issues in countries, due to which its survival and durability can be achieved over time. Iran is one of the multinationals countries in which ethnic and cultural diversity necessitates ethnic politics and efficient, thoughtful and rational political management. In the meantime, the use of efficient ethnic policy in Golestan province as one of the provinces with ethnic diversity that is rainbow of Fars, Turkmen, Sistani, Baluch, Turk, Kazakh, etc. It's in its place, it's of great importance. The ethnically diverse population structure of Golestan province has caused each ethnic group to have its own characteristics, relations and social behaviors, and the cultural, social, economic and political actions of these ethnic groups are more in line with ethnic tendencies and we see the occurrence of ethnic preferences in different areas of social life. In these circumstances, essentially, the design and use of appropriate and efficient ethnic policies by the Islamic Republic could reduce the level of national divergence and increase the level of national convergence, which we seem to be seeing less in Golestan province.

The results show that the ethnic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the last 44 years have not only not affected the increase of national convergence of ethnic groups in Golestan province, but have more or less increased the national divergence of these ethnic groups. Part of this incompetence, which the results of scientific research also show, is that ethnic policy-making in Iranian society is mainly based on a set of scattered approaches, often without long-term and strategic perspectives and based on the socio-political discourses of each government, so that with the transformation of governments and consequently changing the type of government's view of society, the type of policy has been changed. Investments have changed, too. In Dr. Katouzian's words, it seems that we are faced with a pickaxe society where every government has come to office, has collapsed the foundations of the previous government's ethnic politics with a colony and built a new building in this area. Convergence or national cohesion is one of the main factors of sustainability of political and social systems and one of the main goals and areas of political socialization. And it plays an essential role in the stability of sovereign systems under the influence of a variety of factors such as shared history and geography, common language and culture, common customs and traditions, and in a general summary, geographical foundations and land sustainability, sovereignty and political structure, historical continuity and cultural foundations, which is undoubtedly sovereignty and political structure, the most important of these factors. Because political rule can strengthen the linking elements of national convergence by designing and applying a sustainable ethnic proportional policy. Since the government determines and implements rules, laws and policies, its structures provide appropriate environments for competition and conflict between groups that strive to obtain privileges, if the government, in

defined structures, organizes ethnic relations on the one hand based on the capacities of ethnic groups and on the other hand, based on scientific, ethical and human principles in the order. The work itself will undoubtedly improve and develop a sense of national convergence among ethnic groups. It should be noted that despite the lower than average convergence of ethnic groups in Golestan province and the occurrence of signs of national divergence, these ethnic groups essentially consider themselves part of Iran's historical and political geography and there are no secessionist ideas among them.

So I conclude that understanding ethnic feelings, identifying and identifying ethnic groups, and respecting their administrative, political, social, cultural and economic rights, providing them with opportunities and mechanisms of national participation, avoiding the mechanical unity of ethnicities and focusing on strategic unity, avoiding the security strategy towards ethnic groups, employing active indigenous forces through the distribution of political-administrative power in all regions of the province, establishing geographical justice and equitable distribution of the results of development projects in the province And the benefit of all residents from the blessings of development can greatly contribute to the creation of national convergence and cohesion of ethnicities, integration and the expansion of the spirit of intimacy and social trust. And strengthen the foundations of national authority and security, which, of course, the realization of this, the scientific and principled planning of policy makers and the determination of managers and it calls for executive authorities at the provincial and national levels.

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