Ethnic Challenges in Iran: A Case Study of Ardabil[1]

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Abstract

One of the problems of an international community like Iran is the ethnic group and the challenges that in many cases have jeopardized many countries and led to the collapse of political systems. The aim of the present study is to find the reasons and causes for these challenges and ethnic crises in Iran with the emphasis on ethnic studies in Ardabil as a case study. This study attempts to provide the appropriate guidelines for the management of ethnic diversity and appropriate policy to respect the characteristics, values, and cultures of the ethnic groups and thus creating solidarity and enhancing national integrity. This paper focuses on the current crises, especially the crises that occurred due to the insults of a state newspaper against Turkish citizens of Azerbaijan in 2005. So, the main question of this study addresses the causes of this challenge in Ardabil province and whether these factors were constant or have changed as the time is passed.

The findings of this study show that the ethnic, social, and other kinds of insults against ethnic groups had a significant role in creating ethnic challenges in the destruction of national solidarity for 99 %, the ethnic discrimination and injustice against ethnic groups for 97%, the role of multiculturalism and respect for ethnic groups' cultures in national solidarity for 89%, and finally discrimination in government economic investment in Ardabil comparing with central provinces of the country for 85%.

The results obtained in this study indicate that the role of internal factors comparing with the external counterparts on ethnic crisis in Ardabil province is very notable.

Key words: Iran; Ardabil province; Conflict; Crisis; Ethnic groups; National solidarity

INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity, ethnic rights, and ethnic claims are consequences of the modernity and the New World Order, the order that has been unable to solve thousands of conflicts and the ethnic or minorities' contest around the world. Ethnicity has fought for paving its way in the community and has had the bloodshed and destruction in the aftermath.

Following the collapse of the bipolar system, the 1990s era witnessed the sudden ethnic-racial conflicts more than before. If up to that time the ethnicities were mostly repressed by autocratic and communalistic governments and governmental socialism, the new forms of competition between the groups would have emerged due to the decline of ideological conflicts between east and west camps and the end of the cold war. Now, ethnicity is an independent framework in which music, food, art, literature, and dressing are significant; ethnic identity has changed to an independent variable in domestic, regional,

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[1]Ardabil Province is located in northwest of Iran and it is one of the provinces of Azerbaijan region in the country. This province has a common borderline with Azerbaijan Republic for 285 kilometers. Form mineral resources, agriculture and other perspectives, it is one of the rich areas in the country. In spite of its sufficient potentials for development, it is considered as an underdeveloped area in the country.

and international policies.

Many scholars of international relations think that with the decline of the Soviet Union in 1991, and decomposing the multiethnic group countries such as Czech Republic into two republics and also the former Yugoslavia into six republics, ethnicity has increasingly been notified as the recent manifestations of identity policy (Ghavam, 2005, p.246). With the spread of ethnic conflicts and increasing importance in international politics during the 1980s and 1990s we witnessed a growing interest in the issue of ethnicity and nationalism in the various branches of the social sciences. In this respect, the Middle East has attracted many researchers of ethnicity affairs and nationalism due to its diverse religious, linguistic, and racial ethnicity (Edwards, 2003, p.220).

The Middle East countries, which have experienced conquest attacks, colonization, immigration, etc. during the history, have formed the boundaries of their land not on the basis of various ethnic groups but on the basis of occupation and colonialism at different courses of history. Since long, Iran, as part of a Middle East country, has been a country with various ethnic groups, and rich cultures and ways of living, religion, and language. The examinations of the social and political history and the changes that occurred in the country indicate that the relationship between tribes and the government, especially in the modern history of Iran has faced many ups and downs. Although the central governments sought to create a unified and powerful country by the domination on the other tribes, the attacks of other governments[2] and huge historic migrations[3] in the past have caused Iran to be converted to history events crossway and led to formation of different ethnic groups with various languages and traditions (Maghsodi, 2001).

In different periods some groups handled the power in Iran; Turkish and Persians have often been the rulers of the country. Up until Qajar rule, the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the government had not been governing in the country, but as Pahlavi rule was empowered the attempt was made for dominating the culture and language of the government in the country. In this new system in which one of the ethnic groups handles the sovereignty of the government the ethnic characteristics of the dominant group dominate on the country; in contrast, the attempts of the other ethnic group in preserving its culture, language, economy, and other aspects of identity would face the country with different challenges. In such situation, the families that are limited and underprivileged from dissemination of their culture and community in various forms, they would announce their discomforts apparently or latently. The presence of ethnic discriminations, which took practical form by Pahlavi nationalistic government,

led to some ethnic problems in the country. Since in the new system all the ethnic groups should accept all the cultural and linguistic factors of the ruling group, this issue would undermine the other ethnic groups' identity. In such situations, the other groups, especially in recent decades, have been asking equal rights and respect for their religious, linguistic, and cultural features.

Ardabil, as a part of Azerbaijan region that was improved to province in 1992, is one of the provinces rich in mineral resources and agricultural production comparing with the other provinces in the country. Its mineral materials are being used in big factories of Iran like Kerman Copper Company and its agricultural productions are exported across the country and even abroad. However, this province is considered as one of the underprivileged areas in the country (Bahrami, 2005, p.42–43). In addition, imposing some limitations against Turkish people of Iran including the lack of teaching at schools and universities in their mother tongue and other factors could make conflicts and crises in ethnic communications between Azerbaijan people and Iran government. Among such cases is the gathering which occurred in 1999 to 2005 in July 1-2 in Babak Castle and the climax of the event was in 2003 which about 1.5 million people from Azerbaijan provinces and Turkish people in the region including Tehran gathered together in the Castle. About 200,000 people were attended from Ardabil (interviewing with activists).

The million-people protest of Azerbaijan in 2006, which was resulted in an official government newspaper insulting to the culture and language of this region, caused a three-month protest and riot in which Ardabil province as a part of Azerbaijan region was involved in this crisis.

This paper tries to explore and identify the roots of ethnic conflicts and crises in Ardabil, the attempt of Turkish-speaking people for preserving their ethnic identity, the effective factors and issues on crises and conflicts of this group with the central government that lead to damage to the national security and ethnic groups' solidarity, and then offer guidelines and strategies for interaction and cooperation of ethnic groups with the government and enhancing solidarity.

1. THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

The concept of ethnicity has been subject to a continuous change over the time and it has taken a developmental course. At first, ethnic group had a religious concept and it referred to non-Christian groups that had not been yet inclined to Christianity. Then, this word got a racial meaning and lost its original religious sense. But once again in ethnic studies we are witnessing the evolution

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[2] Such as Alexander, Arabs, Mongolia and other attacks
[3] The migration of 3 ethnic groups of Pars, Part, and Mad circa 3000 years ago, According to historical documents Azerbaijan was anciently named as Atropatekan and Turkish people were living in this region.

of the meaning of ethnic groups. At this stage, the racial and religious concepts of ethnic groups are waned and they take the cultural sense suggesting that the concept of ethnicity is expanded and racial, linguistic, and religious groups are included. In this sense, all the groups that are different in terms of language, religion, color of skin, and race are considered as ethnic groups (Ahmadi, 1999, p.30).

Each of sociologists, political science theorists, geographers, and social psychologists has investigated the ethnic challenges from different aspects. For instance, to explain the ethnic crises sociologists have mainly emphasized on the structural aspects of society, monopolization of major social opportunities, unequal and unfair distribution of opportunities, and social discriminations. Theorists of political science have emphasized on the role of elites and opinion and ethnic leaders in creating solidarity and ethnic identity and political aspects of ethnic crises; they also have notified the political participation, legitimacy of political system, and ethnic interests. For example, Anthony Smith believes that the root and origin of ethnocentrism and the formation of ethnic separatist movements are in the result of the community need and tendency for acquiring and endorsing its own ethnic identity (Salehi Amiri, 2006, p.80–87).

Geographers consider geopolitical territory of any nation, state geometry, rugged topography, altitudes, and natural stresses which obstacle communications among different parts of the country, as well as environmental differences and their impact on the national and ethnic identity and solidarity. They also investigate the ethnic groups' attitudes towards their own and others' nationality and ethnicity and how the ethnocentric or nationalistic feelings would emerge among people and groups in different situations. According to social psychologists, the study of ethnic challenges and trends has its own origin. By focusing on the interactions between individuals and small groups they are looking for the ways that make people, groups, and nations closer together (above, p.95–106). For example, John Dollard in his "pugnacity failure theory" considers the challenge of racial and ethnic opposition as the result of competitions among different groups over scarce resources such as wealth, power, and official position. According to him, the group that wins the competition and opposition is the dominant and the other contenders are called the minorities (above, p.92–93).

The Identity Crisis Theory (the main pattern of Gostave Lebon's psychological analysis of social movements of inseparability spirit) leads us to conclude that the ethnic mobilization and organizing ethnic movements are due to the identity gap which is created between the center and periphery as a result of ratified polices from the center. The gap between the center and periphery is identity-concerned when the bonding with the government is at odds with ethnic ties and individual feels that bonding with the government is at odds with his ethnic identity. In such a situation the ethnic groups would gather together to defend their ethnic identity and would participate in the movements and activities that are formed by the name of ethnicity. With regard to the fact that demanding the revival of ethnic identity is less negotiable, the related movements can easily lead to the opposition with entire political system and target it to change (Torabi, 2011).

Torabi (2011), quoting form Deutsch and Wiener[4], explained ethnic movements using the concept of identity crisis and he considers them as movement explanatory variable which are mostly violent and system elusion. They believe that adhering to the past common holistic religion history and culture can make a kind of bond and solidarity that creates an independent identity in front of other gatherings. If the political system threatens this identity, the ethnic group will organize his often-violent movement for reviving the identity.

Cultural Theory focuses on cultural issues related to the ethnic crises. The "Culture" book, which is one of the important theoretical documents of UNESCO's cultural explanation in different aspects of cultural diversity, identifies the conditions of achieving culturally plural society and peace in the national level as follows:

1st. Different cultural gatherings wouldn't involve in practical or impractical discrimination for handling the equal opportunities to flourish.

2nd. Social justice would be assured as the equal access to political power in the minority communities.

3rd. Government agencies, especially the military, police, and judiciary must be protected from ethnic and religious tension.

4th. Fear of cultural differences should be disappeared and all the different parties should be welcomed (Jafari, 2009, p.45).

Investigations of UNESCO documents show that at the end of the decades of cultural development, cultural diversity is not just a tool to achieve UNESCO's goals but it has developed itself up to one of the main goals and aspirations of UNESCO. Therefore, in the new literature, cultural diversity is an intrinsic and universal value that can sustain the other universal values such as peace and steady development. Jafari, quoting from Biho Parkeh, while distinguishing the "various community" and "plural community" explains that although variety exists in the nature of most communities and countries, it does not necessarily refer to the plurality of that community. Cultural diversity is optimal when it flows in normative plurality frameworks. It is only in this case that while having the benefits of "variety" it can be prevented from becoming "conflict" and "community disintegration".

Parkeh believes that "plurality" is a common concept that in one hand guarantees the variety and on the other

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[4] Of the theorists of political relations

hand protects the community unity. He believes that "community should establish the unity from plurality through encouraging cultural gatherings to create the national plural culture which is the reflection of these gatherings. Since different communities have contributed to the creation of a common culture, they are able to have sympathy with them and it can be expected to have a sense of belonging and pride towards them." Parkeh explains that if "cultural diversity" is not considered hereunder "cultural plurality", it will not only lose the potential value but also its utility function because in this case we would have a kind of "blind and purposeless cultural mismatch" that might be accompanied by "cultural relativism" and would prevent any affirmative and dynamic actions.

The "racial" or ethnic minority groups take different forms in relation with the majority of the community in which they live in. Some communities consider themselves as "multicultural" and some others as mono-cultural. Multiculturalists believe that acknowledging cultural differences through offering distinguished multiethnic citizenship rights would contribute to total solidarity while the assimilation and absorption models would lead to the deprivation of those who are not consistent with the dominant culture. The result of the reasoning of those who reject the assimilation and absorption models of immigrants based on their contribution for racism is that the multicultural communities do not need multicultural citizenship rights. In many countries, particularly New World countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as well as northern European countries such as Great Britain, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland, the assimilation and absorption model has virtually been replaced with multiculturalism (Kit-Nash, 2009, p.213–214).

Will Kymlicka, as one of the leading advocates of multiculturalism, argues that this is the culture (traditions, history, and language) that gives sense to the options and makes them understandable, clear, and desirable to us. Therefore, cultural differences must be acknowledged and protected as free speech. Kymlicka analyzes two kinds of multiculturalism each of which is different issue regarding the group distinct rights in liberal democracies. He calls this kind as "multi-nationalism". Multinational communities contain the minorities that established some rules for their own under different circumstances in the past, but later on, they had been absorbed in a single state either voluntarily or through federation or conquer. He argues that the United States is of this type and consists of American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Hawaii and the others. These groups typically ask for the benefits of creating various autonomous governments as an independent nation. For example, "Quebec" in Canada has such a situation where it gets the benefit of state-wide authority on language, culture, education, and migration via the federal authority division (above, p.214–217).

Kymlicka calls the second type of multiculturalism as

"multi-ethnicity". Those communities where migration has happened are of these types. Multiethnic societies are the societies in which immigrants participate in public institutions of the dominant culture, but in some ways they maintain their distinctive customs, religion, language, dressings, and food etc. United States here is a good example. Immigrants are expected to adapt with the English-speaking institutions in public domain, and although they have been treated with equality and moderation in private domain, the expression of different cultural heritage has been encouraged since 1970s. Kymlicka argues that these groups as a nation do not need such a wide diverse group rights. Their main aim is to be absorbed in the multicultural society of which they have been part of it and get the benefit of the same and equal citizenship rights. In his opinion, minority groups in a multiethnic community enjoy the common rights of citizenship but they should enjoy some distinct and special rights in order to free themselves from the problems and discomforts that are caused by their mismatch with the dominant culture (above, p.217–219).

Kymlicka argues that in spite of the fear that the advocates of assimilation have, the special citizenship rights never lead to the community disintegration, and rather it enables the minorities to fully participate in a multicultural community. In addition, it is a scarce happening that the ethnic minority groups ask for exerting "internal limitations" and enjoying jurisdictions of imposing cultural norms on their members. Kymlicka notes that the claim of participation in political process based on cultural difference is not synonymous with asking for autonomy or group distinct rights. Rather, participation right in political processes would give the opportunity to minorities to utter their beliefs to others, that is, the belief that would have systematically been neglected if minorities couldn't enjoy these rights and opportunities (above, p.220).

2. AZERBAIJAN IDENTITY

Azerbaijan as a wide region that consists of several provinces is located in northwest of Iran. It has a common borderline with Turkey in the west and Armenia and Azerbaijan Republic in the north and now it is divided into four provinces, namely East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, Ardabil, and Zanjan. The estimation of Azeri people of Iran who speak Turkish is not an easy job because they are settled across Iran and integrated with the other ethnic groups of the country in a way that determining a geographical border between Azeri people and the others is very difficult (Ahmadi. 1999, p.121). Due to the avoidance of census organization of the country from presenting official numbers of ethnic groups in public census, different estimations about ethnic population have been offered. However, Aboutalebi (1999, p.125) states that the numbers of Azeri people in Iran are more than the

"dominant ethnic group" and this group is considered as one of the most important and largest ethnic groups in Iran.

From cultural and linguistic perspective, the inhabitants of this region are different from the other ethnic groups of Iran and although they appreciate the culture and official language (Farsi) of the country, they have never neglected their own language and culture (Heyat, 2001, p.391–392). Turkish language, along with Farsi and sometimes alone, was one of the official languages of the ruling governments of the country in different periods of time. The climax of Turkish language as the official language was in Safavi and Qajar dynasties in which it was considered as the language of aristocracy and nobility (Baharli, 2007).

Before the establishment of the modern government in Iran, the differentiation between state men and the ethnic people was not easy because clan leaders and ethnic people were present in the state government and they were dependent to each other. But by beginning the modernization in Iran that had begun in Qajar era and intensified in Constitutional revolution, especially in Pahlavi era (Khosravi, 1998), made a strong ethnic turbulent in the country relying on the three principles of secularism, industrialization in center, and dependence of foreigners (Assarian Nejad, 2004).

Beginning the events and discussing ethnicities and their demands in the current century date back to Azerbaijan Democratic Party. In December 12, 1945, the relationship between Azerbaijan and Tehran was stopped and at the same time the autonomous government of Azerbaijan was established by Pishevari in Tabriz. Abrogating Farsi and distributing Turkish language to all part of Azerbaijan as an official language, autonomy of Azerbaijan, the right for creating national government and national ruling in Azerbaijan were some of the resolutions of Democrat Party (Afshar Sistani, 2000, p.527).

The sovereignty of the Persian culture and language project in Iran along with economical ignorance of the non-Persian areas, which had been started since Reza Khan Era, was also continued to Pahlavi II Era. Quoting from Foran Johan, the writer of fragile resistance book, "suppression of ethnic groups by Pahlavi led to the political awareness of many other ethnic groups and urged them to explore their migration way, culture, traditions, customs, and language, The ethnic minorities in a sense made a real alliance against Farsi-making regime" (Foran, 2002, 30–31).

Turkish-speaking people of Azerbaijan continued their pressure to get more independency and authority from the central government during Mossadegh nationalistic policies in 1951-1952 and later the years of economic reformulation controlled by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. After the downfall of the Pahlavi dynasty, Turkish-speaking people of Azerbaijan found themselves at odds with the new government policies and opposed with Farsi-speaking revolutionary authorities' access to Azerbaijan

local government. Therewith and following an article by Sadegh Khalkhali entitled as "the enemies must be out of excuses", some unrests were occurred in 2006 in Tabriz over the constitutions and autonomy issues (Veeks, 2004, p.25–26).

During the war all the ethnic groups were united to protect the country against a common enemy and their demands were marginalized, but after a decade of war and revolution the ethnic intellectuals and activists started again to call on their demands which had not been met by the government. Protests and demonstrations of students on I.R.I.B.'s polls, which had been distributed in Tehran in 1995, about how to treat with Turkish people showed the students movement towards an ethnic problem for the first time; above that, this movement was introduced as a political and ethnic phenomenon in Azerbaijan cities and across the country that was a turning point for the commence of some self-awareness and ethnic identity demand movements (Rashedi, 2007, p.56). When Khatami took office in 1997, to some extent, the opportunity for freedom of expressing ideas and opinions were provided and by ratifying and enacting the councils' law the ethnic activity atmosphere was expanded. But this trend could not last for long and the newspapers were locked up one after the other and the atmosphere was closed again (interview with activists).

The most important and recent event of Azerbaijan was the incidents of June, 2006 which should be considered as the fruits of the attempts of national movement activists. Following the publication of a cartoon in the IRAN Newspaper, the official organ of the state, and the subsequent protests from Azerbaijan to Tehran and Hamedan and the way that the government dealt with this incident showed that the semi-active ethnic-linguistic gap in Iranian community had potentials to be severely activated due to the government's lack of tolerance and in dealing with the old center-periphery gap, which had been deepen by central governments since Qajar era, it could lead to wide political and social crises (Panahi, 2007, p.167–168). This cartoon ridiculed the Turkish culture and language while it is the third live language in the world in terms of syntax and grammar and it is the second rank Islamic language in the world (Jahanbakhsh, 2007, p.6) but it has not officially been recognized in Iran. According to the international ethnologue site, the total population of Turkish people in Iran is more than twenty-eight million. According to the same site, the population of Farsi-speaking people in the same year was twenty-five million. Enmity against Turkish people in Iran goes beyond the history and turns to legend and myth. The basis of Firdausi's Shahnameh was the enmity of Iranian against Turanian and in Firdausi's opinion Turanians are Turkish people. Anti-Turkism is one of the characteristics of Persian literature in which "going to Turkestan" means aberrance, coercion, and

injustice. Reza Shah and his son did not spare any effort to undermine and humiliate Turkish people. Mohammad Reza Shah even betrayed his Turkish mother who recited her poems in Turkish and he refused to print her poems (Baraheni, 2007, p.83–86). Rashedi, in his interview with Azerbaijan Students Periodical, believes that the uprising of June, 2006, is a turning point in the national history of Azerbaijan in which Azeri people's anger aroused over the insult against them by the state newspaper. According to Rashedi, the demonstrations in June, 2006 were not only the protest against the state newspaper for its insults against Turkish people but also demonstrations against insults, undermining, and discriminations that were imposed against Turkish people over eighty years in the forms of Chauvinist Opinions. The protests of June, 2006 showed the authorities of the country and the world that the people of Azerbaijan, while enduring the limitations, humiliations, insults, and economic backwardness in terms of linguistic and racial discriminations, have established their campaign on the basis of culture and civilization (Rashedi, 2008).

The people's reaction to the content printed in IRAN Newspaper contained an important message for the government emphasizing the ruling and expressing the protests for a kind of cultural, political, and economic apartheid that had caused annoyance for different ethnic groups including Turkish-speaking people and the Azerbaijanis for many years rather than controlling egregious mistakes of some stakeholders of the Newspaper. But such divisive actions were not only subsided but again they insulted the Turkish people of Azerbaijan by drawing another cartoon entitled as "Pire Pil Afkan[5]" in another magazine named as "Javan" (Young) published in November 14, 2011. It has been several times that the magazines, which claim justice and equality, insult the nations and ethnic groups in the forms of satire, cartoon, or comics. These works follow the policies of Pahlavi regime in which the main characteristics of both Pahlavi Kings were opposition against Azerbaijan. According to Baraheni (2005, p.84), "as Jalal Ale Ahmad said: these two made Azerbaijan as a colony of Tehran and in Sadegh Hedayat's terms: they created the South and Qashqai problems for slamming Tabriz in Pishevari era." It seems that ridiculing and belittling of the language and culture of Turkish people by Persians and making vulgar and offensive jokes about Turkish-speaking people are not going to end (Asgharzadeh, 2007, p.98).

3. THE FINDINGS OF FIELD STUDY

Like any other social phenomenon, several factors are involved in the creation of ethnic conflicts and crises, including those of internal and external factors. But for investigating the role of each factor in creating ethnic

challenges and crises in Ardabil as a case study and the probability of the superiority of one factor over the other, it was required to design a researcher-made questionnaire and to join the appropriate scholars and experts. The results obtained from the questionnaire indicated that among the internal factors, discriminations in providing economic resources and benefits for the ethnic regions and provinces comparing with central provinces, insulting Turkish-speaking people on media and newspapers, the centralizing policies of the government against ethnic groups, ignoring the ethnic values and culture, and also the problem of education in mother tongue (Azeri Turkish) at schools were asked and correlated with external factors. We talked with the individuals of sample population including political science experts, sociologists, and experts on ethnic issues and then the data analyses were used. The questionnaire consists of closed and open ended questions. They were distributed among *500* experts. Of course, more than half of the participants didn't answer the questions and they didn't return the questionnaires back due to their conservative and security views towards ethnicity. Therefore, the data analysis was done based on 213 cases conducted in 6 months in 2011.

3.1 The Cultural, Social, and Religious Insults Against Ethnic Groups in the Loss of National Solidarity

The results of the study indicate that *80* percent of respondents believe that the cultural, social, and religious offensive activities of Iranian ethnic groups have "a very high effect" in the loss of national solidarity. In this regard, *19* percent of respondents have chosen "high" and one percent of them "low" options. According to the obtained results from this study, *99* percent of the respondents have chosen "high and very high" options. While the options of "very low", "never", and "I don't know" have not been chosen by the respondents.

Table 1
The Frequency Distribution of Religious, Social and Cultural Humiliations for Ethnics in the Loss of National Unity Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	169	80
2	High	41	19
3	Low	3	1
4	Very low	0	0
5	Never	0	0
6	Don't know	0	0
	Total	213	100

3.2 The Role of Discrimination and Injustice in Ethnic Crisis in Iran

The survey results show that *60* percent of respondents believe that discrimination and injustice against ethnic groups have "very high" effect on ethnic crises, *37* percent

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[5] In Persian discourse it means "poor old" which applies to humiliate a person, ethnic, group and so on.

have chosen "high" and only *3* percent have chosen "low" options. According to the results of this survey, *97* percent of respondents have chosen "very high" and "high" options while no one has chosen "very low", "never", and "I don't know" options.

Table 2
The Frequency Distribution of Influence of Discrimination and Injustice in the Ethnic Crisis Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	127	60
2	High	80	37
3	Low	6	3
4	Very low	0	0
5	Never	0	0
6	Don't know	0	0
	total	213	100

3.3 Economic Inequality and a Sense of Relative Deprivation in Ethnic Communities in Leading to Ethnic Crises in Iran

The results indicate that 57 percent of respondents believe that economic inequalities and sense of relative deprivation among ethnic groups have a very high effect in leading to ethnic crises. Meanwhile, *39* percent of respondents stated that economic inequality and relative deprivation among the ethnic people have "very high" effect in leading to ethnic crises. According to the results of this study, *96* percent of the respondents have chosen "very high" and "high" options and only *4* percent of the respondents have chosen "low" option. In this study the options of "very low", "never", and "I don't know" have not been selected by the respondents.

Table 3
The Frequency Distribution of Economic Inequalities and Sense of Deprivation between Iran's Ethnics in the Crisis Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	83	39
2	High	122	57
3	Low	8	4
4	Very low	0	0
5	Never	0	0
6	Don't know	0	0
	Total	213	100

3.4 Multiculturalism and Respect for Ethnic Rights Lead to National Solidarity

The obtained results of this study indicate that *53* percent of the respondents have chosen "very high" option regarding the effect of multiculturalism and maintenance of ethnic values and rights on the national solidarity. In this regard, *36* percent of the respondents stated that the effect of multiculturalism on national solidarity is "high".

Overall, *89* percent of the respondents have chosen "high and very high" options and *6* percent of the respondents have chosen "low, very low, and never".

Table 4
The Frequency Distribution of Multiculturalism and Respect the Rights of Ethnic Solidarity and National Cohesion Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	112	53
2	High	77	36
3	Low	9	4
4	Very low	0	0
5	Never	5	2
6	Don't know	10	5
	Total	213	100

3.5 Appropriate Response of the Government and Provincial Authorities to Ethnic Challenges

The results of this study indicate that *86* percent of respondents have chosen the options of "inappropriate, very inappropriate, and never" regarding the response of the government and provincial authorities to ethnic challenges. In this regard, *7* percent of the respondents have chosen "I don't know" option and *7* percent of the respondents believe that the response of the authorities against the ethnic challenges were appropriate (appropriate and very appropriate).

Table 5
The Frequency Distribution of Appropriate Responses of Central Government and Provincial Officials to the Ethnic Crisis Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very appropriate	2	1
2	Appropriate	13	6
3	Inappropriate	73	34
4	Very inappropriate	53	25
5	Never	58	27
6	Don't know	14	7
	Total	213	100

3.6 The Government Investment and Funding in Ardabil Province Compared with the Central Provinces

The obtained results of this study indicate that *48* percent of the respondents believe that government investment and funding in Ardabil province compared with central provinces are "low". Also, *22* percent of the respondents stated that government funding was "never" appropriate in Ardabil province. In this regard, *15* percent of the respondents have selected "very low" and *7* percent "I don't know" options. Overall, *85* percent of the respondents have chosen "low, very low, and never" and *8* percent of the respondents "high and very high" options.
Table 6

The Frequency Distribution of State Investigating Budget Appropriation to Ardabil Province Compared With Central Provinces Based On The Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	2	1
2	High	16	7
3	Low	103	48
4	Very low	32	15
5	Never	46	22
6	Don't know	14	7
	Total	213	100

3.7 The Role of Constitution and Not Implementing Some of Its Principles in Leading to Ethnic Crises

The results of this study indicate that *47* percent of the respondents have chosen "high" option regarding the role of not implementing some of the principles of the constitution in leading to ethnic crises. In this regard, *34* percent of them have chosen "very high" and *10* percent "low" options. Overall, *81* percent of the respondents have chosen "high and very high", *5* percent "very low", and *4* percent "I don't know" options. In this part of the survey the respondents have not chosen the "never" option.

Table 7
The Frequency Distribution of the Constitution and Non-Implementation of Its Principles Based On the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	71	34
2	High	100	47
3	Low	22	10
4	Very low	11	5
5	Never	0	0
6	Don't know	9	4
	Total	213	100

4. THE EXTERNAL FACTORS

4.1 The International Community Support of Ethnic Movements in Leading to Ethnic Crises

The findings of this survey show that *36* percent of the respondents believe that the role the international community support of ethnic movements is "high" in leading to ethnic crises in Iran. In this regard, *28* percent of the respondents stated that the role of the international community in leading to ethnic crises is "low". Also, *12* percent of the respondents believe that the role of the

international community is "very low" in leading to ethnic crises. In this regard, *11* percent of the respondents have chosen "very high", *9* percent of them "never", and *4* percent "I don't know" options.

Table 8
The Frequency Distribution of International Community in Support of Ethnic Movements to Ethnic Crisis in Iran Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	23	11
2	High	76	36
3	Low	61	28
4	Very low	26	12
5	Never	19	9
6	Don't know	8	4
	Total	213	100

4.2 The Roles of Turkey and Azerbaijan Republic in Leading to Ethnic Crises in Ardabil Province[6]

The findings of this study indicate that *33* percent of the respondents have chosen "low" option regarding the roles of Turkey and Azerbaijan Republic, which have historical, cultural, racial and other commonalities with Ardabil province, in leading to ethnic crises. In this regard, *27* percent of the respondents identified their roles as "high" and *19* percent as "very low". Also, *13* percent of the respondents stated that Turkey and Azerbaijan had "no" role in leading to ethnic crises. Overall, *65* percent of the respondents have selected "low, very low, and never" and *4* percent of them "I don't know" and the other *4* percent "very high" options.

Table 9
The Frequency Distribution of the Role of Turkey and Republic of Azerbaijan to Ethnic Crisis in Iran Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	8	4
2	High	58	27
3	Low	70	33
4	Very low	41	19
5	Never	28	13
6	Don't know	8	4
	Total	213	100

4.3 The Role of Foreign Media and Broadcasts in Leading to Ethnic Crises

The findings of this survey show that *48* percent of the respondents believe that the foreign media and their broadcasts have "high" effects in leading to ethnic crises

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[6]Perhaps the most important Azeri's' ethnocentric event in Iran is the Azeri Turkish identity demanding movement. This event is engaged with the current ideas in Azerbaijan Republic in a large scale. The national awakening movement of southern Azerbaijan (GAMUH) and the under-established organizations of Azerbaijan National Liberation Party (AMAJ) are Iranian intellectual movements cooperating with the World Azerbaijanis Congress (DOC), which is led by Baku, and Azerbaijan National Independence Party (AMIP) are following the thoughts a great deal of which is devoted to Iran Azeri.
The role of Turkey in the two Iranian ethnic groups is being investigated: one of them is about Azeri Turkish ethnic group for its cultural, linguistic, and racial commonalities and the other is for having a common borderline between Iran and Turkey Kurdish people and their cultural, linguistic, and historical commonalities and also the policies which are employed by Iran and Turkey for these ethnic groups.

and weakening the national solidarity. In this regard, *22* percent of the respondents identified the effect of foreign media as "low" while *12* percent of the respondents have chosen "very high" and *9* percent of them "very low" options. In this regard, *8* percent of the respondents didn't believe that the foreign media would have had any role in leading to ethnic crises and one percent of them have chosen the "I don't know" option. Overall, *60* percent of the respondents have chosen the "high and very high" and *39* percent of them the "low, very low, and never" options.

Table 10
The Frequency Distribution of the Impact of Foreign Media to Ethnic Crisis and to Weakness National Solidarity in Iran Based on the Respondents

Row	Case	Frequency	Percent
1	very high	26	12
2	High	103	48
3	low	46	22
4	very low	20	9
5	never	16	8
6	don't know	2	1
	total	213	100

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Iran is a cultural-political country which belongs to all Iranians, ethnic groups, and inhabitants and no one is superior to another. Persians, Turks, Baluchis, Turkmen, and the other ethnic groups, despite their relatively clear differences in language, customs, religion, and culture that took place over many centuries due to the profound cultural interactions between them, are interconnected and made a unified nation; they also contributed to the emergence and spread of Iranian culture and civilization with their integrity and thereby they have guaranteed their national and territorial integrity. Obviously, in such a diverse population texture, if an appropriate pattern is not used for preserving and promoting the national solidarity, the achievement of unity and maintenance of territorial integrity will be very difficult and will require a great hazardous cost. In one hand, the abovementioned pattern should guarantee the respect for various ethnic identities and on the other hand reinforce the constant national allegiances based on human dignity, truth, and honor. Based on this, we should accept that ignoring a reality named as "ethnic identity" and scarifying the effective symbols in that for national belongings are the main factors of reactions and explosions which only need a small trigger to set a huge fire in the community.

In spite of the attempts, which had been made in the past for the extension of Farsi by Turkish governors, but we can witness some of the signs of anti-Turk in Persian literature. For example "going to Turkestan" means aberrance, coercion, and injustice. Undermining and humiliating the Turkish side was remarkable in Pahlavi era but the events of Islamic Revolution and the rule of human dignity was planning to meet the wishes of ethnic and linguistic discrimination and injustice but recent incidents suggested that these hopes have been inconclusive and neglecting the ethnic groups has been remained so far. However, the incidents that have occurred in the Turkish regions indicate that the ethnic sentiments remain as fire under ash and the results of this study show that *99* percent of the respondents believe that the role of cultural, social, and other kinds of insults towards ethnic groups is highly effective (high and very high) in leading to ethnic crises. The results of this study also show that the demonstrations in June, 2006, were not only the protest against the state newspaper for its insults against Turkish people but also demonstrations against insults, undermining, and discriminations that were imposed against Turkish people over eighty years in the forms of chauvinism opinions. As such, in this study *97* percent of the respondents believe that the role of discrimination and injustice are highly effective (high, very high) in leading to ethnic crises.

The funds that are annually devoted to Ardabil province with high potentials and resources are really low compared with other central provinces. In this regard, the results of this study indicate that *96* percent of the respondents believe that the roles of economic inequalities and the relative underprivileged sense are highly effective (high, very high) in leading to ethnic crises in Iran. Also, in this research *85* percent of the respondents consider the funding in Ardabil province inappropriate (low, very low, never).

Not teaching Turkish language from primary school to higher education at university can be debatable. In this regard, the results of this study suggest that *81* percent of the respondents believe that the role of the constitution and not implementing some of its principles is highly effective (high, very high) in leading to ethnic crises. Also, in this study *89* percent of the survey respondents consider the role of multiculturalism and ethnic right respect highly effective (high, very high) in leading to national solidarity.

The crises management and the government authorities' flexibility towards them in critical situations are the main characteristics of crises control. The results of the survey indicate that *86* percent of the respondents consider the provincial and government authorities' treatment and response in ethnic challenges inappropriate (inappropriate, very inappropriate, never).

Due to the presence of many ethnic groups in its population texture, it is inevitable for Iran to employ policies in which the ethnic groups have been taken into considerations. Since most of the ethnic groups in Iran have a common borderline with the same ethnic groups in the neighbor countries, not having a scientific and especial views towards the issues of ethnicity would lead to their absorption by neighbor countries and thereby their disintegration from the center. But if the ethnic groups in Iran feel that they are being cared and their culture

and customs are being respected, they will do their best to achieve national integrity and thereby this act would absorb their ethnic people in neighbor countries into Iran.

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