National Identity and Question of Ethno-Religious Minorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Study of Azeris and Baluchs

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **"National Identity and Question of Ethno-Religious Minorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Study of Azeris and Baluchs"** submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

VINOD KUMAR

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

02 March 2022

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INTRODUCTION

The nation is a community comprised of diverse elements which can include language, culture, religion and race. It is defined as a political community in which people share a common territory, common culture, and common historical past and also a common struggle for independence (in case of third world countries). According to Ernest Renan, a nation is a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those one is prepared to make in the future. However, state is a political entity with clearly defined territorial borders; the nation is more fluidly-defined at their most basic by a sense of belonging to a community, and posing a sense of separatedness. National identity is a very complicated and a multi-dimensional concept. Complicated nature of nation and national identity has produced different perspectives. According to Gilroy, national identity is a melting pot which has the assimilating character by depending on the notion of citizenship and patriotism.[1] Anderson asserts that national identity is imagined and constructed.[2] National identity is one among many possible, and often coexisting and overlapping identities such as religious, tribal, linguistic, geographical and others.

The Iranian nation

Iran's glorious history, its ancient civilization, empires, particularly Persian culture and Shia religion from Safavid dynasty are basic components of the Iranian national identity. Although Iran has been invaded by many empires, the new society which emerged after each conquest remained uniquely Iranian. Many great personalities have come from Azerbaijani descent like Shah Ismail I, Shah Abbas the Great, Nadir Shah Afshar and Mohammed Shah Qajar, they adjusted themselves into Iranian culture, but did not **impose Turkish culture on Iran**. After the collapse of Sassanian Empire, Iranian culture, symbols of national identity adapted and flourished within a new Islamic civilization. The remains of ancient buildings, bridges, rock carvings, and

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[1] Dahbour Omar (2002), "National Identity: An Argument for the Strict Definition", *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 16 (1): 18.
[2] Anderson, Benedict (2015), *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Jaipur India: Rawat Publication, 3.

other archaeological heritages proved as history text books which teach Iranians about the glories of their land.

The most vital factor in the formation of Iranian national identity is the Persian language. According to the nationalist discourse, the Persian language has preserved the cultural independence, and the authentic national identity of the Iranian people. Along with the Persian identification, the links with religion grew increasingly stronger after the Safavids proclaimed *Shi'ite* Islam as the state religion. Safavids (1501-1736), *Shi'a* religion has been one of the binding factors for the majority of the Iranian people. The current Islamic Republic has drawn its strength from an effective use of religious vocabulary and symbols which have been the intrinsic values Iranian society before revolution.

Agha Mohammad Khan founded Qajar dynasty in 1779, which lasted until he was overthrown by the Pahlavi in 1925. In the beginning of the nineteenth century colonial interference by Britain and Russia began in Iran. Due to growing European power, Iran could maintain only its precarious and nominal independence. This colonial exploitation by Britain and Russia led to the social discontent and feeling of nationalism among Iranians. With the weakening position of Iran during the Qajar period, western influences in Iran, the social concern for autonomy was articulated in the form of massive movements; for instance, tobacco movement of 1891 and constitutional movement in 1905 which were previously unknown in Iranian history.

Although Qajar rule came to an end in 1925, western interference in Iran was continuing even in Pahlavi dynasty. In 1941 Mohammed Reza Shah was forced to abdicate by the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran. His son Mohammed Shah came to power and supported allied forces in war. Following the war, Iran struggled for renewed national autonomy, first against the Soviet Union then against the British and their oil interests. In 1953 democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran Mossadeq attempted to nationalise the oil and increase the share of revenues reverting to Iran. This movement had been crushed by the coup d'état backed by the US and UK. Eventually Iran came under the influence of the US. Shah has been seen as a mere puppet of the US till the revolution.

Pahlavi abruptly followed the westernisation with authoritarian rule. The newly created institutions were influenced by the West. Westernisation process led by Shah created a major gap between theory and practice, which was not bridged then or later. Iranians saw these attempts as threat to Iranian culture and its identity. Pahlavi established a unified armed force and highlights both the state building and the nation building process. The army was used to create and maintain domestic order, neutralizing the power of other ethnic groups. Reza Shah Pahlavi, in order to build a strong unified nation, curtailed minorities' cultural and linguistic rights and imposed Persian language in school curriculum in the linguistic minority areas. In order to homogenise or Persianise other ethnic groups, coercive measures such as population dislocation and sedenterization has been undertaken by the Shah.

Nation state emerged out of modernity. In Iran the modern tools through state efforts tried to make a new strong nation state. Administrative reforms during the Qajar rule, emergence of new nationalist intelligentsia in the beginning of twentieth century, role of western values, Reza Shah's nationalist campaign, western interference, and eventually emergence of new Islamic revolutionary class have shaped the nature of the present Iranian nation.

During the Qajar period and intervention of the Britain and Russia, several administrative and military reforms took place. Moreover, first time printing machine was established in Iran under the Qajar rule in 19th century. Colonial effects and development of modern means of communication paved the way for a nationalist intelligentsia at the end of the 19th century. In the emergence of the Iranian nationalism, the role of clergy and religious intellectuals was instrumental. Idea of self and others in the Iranian nationalist movement was seen in opposition to British and Russian interference in the Iranian political and economic affairs. From Tobacco movement to constitutional revolution, Iran witnessed a rising nationalist intelligentsia.

Theorists on nationalism emphasise the role of modern bureaucracy and state authority in the formation of nation-state. Reza Shah's period has been the time of nation building with absolute use of state authority and the modern bureaucracy. His national policies, and development of the modern communication and building of roads, railway tracks penetrated the nationalism where it was absent earlier. Before

Reza Shah, as Eric Hobsbawm suggest, the Persian empire was a fief. Even during the age of colonialism in 19th century most of the Khans of local provinces dealing directly with the colonial authorities, and central government had very less interference in the local governing system. There was an absence of strong central authority, communication, and direct connection with Tehran.

Monarchy led by Reza Shah Pahlavi was overthrown by Iranian revolution in 1979 with participation of different social and ideological groups, and ultimately power came into the hands of religious group that built the foundation of Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian national identity finds a different shape where religion has a significant effect on minorities. Religion surpassed the language in the nationalist discourse. However, the Constitution (Article 19) of the Islamic Republic of Iran says that the people of Iran, regardless of ethnic and tribal origins, enjoy equal rights; colour, race, and language will not be causes for privilege. Moreover, article 13 of the constitution says that Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian Iranians are the only recognised religious minorities.

Minorities in Iran

In different societies and countries minority can be designated by various distinct identities. It can be of religious, ethnic, linguistic and other characters. The term 'minority', as has been used by the United Nation Human Rights, refers to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Iran is a heterogeneous society and majority of the nationals are Persian. It has approximately 80 million populations, and is geographically, ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse. The official religion is Islam and the Twelver Jafari School. Majority of the population is Persian-speaking, which constitutes more than 60 per cent of the total population. In terms of ethnicity, through the history of Iran various ethnic groups have lived in geographically distinct regions and provinces. Although there are many distinct linguistic and ethnic groups in Islamic Republic of Iran, very few of them have been recognised as minorities and ethnic groups. These ethnic groups are: Azeris with 24 per cent (around 19 million) of the total population, the Turkic speaking Shi'a in the north-western province of Azerbaijan, the Kurds constitute 7 per cent, the Arabs of Khuzestan are 3 per cent; and the Baluch of South-eastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan with 1-2 (around 1.5 million) per cent and Mazandaranis about 5 per cent.

Remaining 10 per cent represents other minorities. While some minority groups have been well integrated with fewer problems, most of them are facing problems from the beginning of the formation of the modern nation state in Iran. Since the time of revolution, Iran's minorities have faced war, uneven development, and regional disparity.

Different minority groups are facing different problems due to their distinct religious, geographical and linguistic characteristics in Iran. Kurdish region has been a challenge for national integrity for Iran for a long time. Azeris are well integrated in Iranian society, and historically have contributed in the nation building. Arabs and Baluch follow Sunni religious belief, face discrimination and underdevelopment. Baluch are one of the least integrated ethnic minorities, posing a serious threat to Iranian national integration. However, demand for regional autonomy and cultural freedom and decentralization of power have been core in the ethnic movements by different ethnic minority groups.

As in the core ethnic composition of the Iranian society, 'Persian' has been in the dominant position throughout the history of Iran. Iran's minority policies are highly guided by the security view Islamic Republic of Iran, although gained the religious flavoured over the Iranian national identity, its ethnic policies towards minorities in praxis has been similar to that of Reza Shah Pahlavi. These religious and ethnic minorities under the Islamic Republic are not able to meet their genuine demands, which a minority expects for its better place in the society. Minority and majority have negative and positive connotations respectively. Minority always designates subordination, low status and powerlessness. Contrary to the minority, majority always constitutes a group of people with power, high status and dominance in the society. Persian-*Shi'ite* core of the society dominates the entire Iran, and has upper hand in Iranian national identity. Minority groups are in the periphery and are subordinate. Nature of the Iranian state structurally discriminates its religious and ethnic groups. Minority groups face socio-economic, political and cultural discrimination; economic centres are situated mainly in Persian dominated areas such as Tehran.

Azeri and Baluch Ethnic Minorities

This study mainly focuses on the Azeri and Baluch ethnic minorities. These two ethnic minorities are altogether different in their nature, and have been treated differently by the Iranian state. Azeris constitute 24 per cent of the total population of the country. They are located in north-western province and speak 'Azeri'. Majority of the Azeris follow *Shia* Islam which is the binding commonality between majority Persian nationals. Azeris historically have been in many dominant political positions. For instance, in medieval period they were dominating various dynasties and at present they are holding many top political and military positions in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the contemporary Iran Azeris are dominating the higher administrative and ministerial positions in the Iranian political system. Even contemporary Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei belongs to Azeri ethnic identity.

Economically Azeris are occupying various business centres, commerce and trade. Along with their religious similarity with majority Persians, their historical background, political movements and economic conditions make them able to equate themselves with Persians. Due to these conditions Azeris are in better position to bargain with the state. Moreover, Azeris ethnic movement have intensified after the 1990 which Iranian state is dealing consciously. However, being a different ethnic identity, sometime Azeri people feel discriminated and humiliated because of some stigma among the Persians. Persians use the term '*Tork*' in reference to Azeris. This prejudice and derogatory use of Azeri ethnic identity sometime has been manifested in the controversies. While Azeris have some issues regarding cultural freedom, autonomy, and discrimination, there is minimal threat to Iranian integrity from the Azeris.

On the other hand, Baluchs are fewer in number among the ethnic minorities, and they constitute around 1-2 per cent of the total population in Iran. They live in Sistan and Baluchistan provinces of Iran. Sistan and Baluchistan share border with Pakistani Baluchistan. Baluchs speak Baluchi language closely related to Persian. Baluch nationalism intensified during the colonial period. Independence of Pakistan and forceful annexation of Qelat gave birth to several militant groups in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Baluch nationalists identify themselves with a particular territory called Baluchistan divided among Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. The demands of Baluch

nationalists and militant groups based in Iran have not been the same. Some of the militant groups like Baluch Liberation Front (BLF) claim separate nation from Iran while other groups demand cultural rights and autonomy like the Jandullah.

Baluchs in Iran have been suffering from racist and ethnic persecution and the combination of religious difference has led to their being harshly victimised by successive Iranian governments. Baluchs have been demanding a key role in Provincial administration of Baluchistan to central government. Except recent years, more than 95 per cent provincial authorities have been from other parts of the country. While some administrative posts have been given to Baluch in recent times, higher offices such as Chancellery, Governorship and Ministership are still out of their reach. Article 15 of the Constitutions says that official documents, texts and text books be in Persian language. Due to this provision, non-Persian background students face serious problems in getting enrolled in higher education. In 2003-2004 there were 20,448 Baluch students enrolled in various universities in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan.

Most of the heavy industries are located in the Persian and Azeri populated areas. Baluch provinces have lowest number of big industries and other economic resources. Strategic location of the Baluch region, as its border is surrounded with Baluchistan of Pakistan where Baluch nationalist movement is on its peak always, attracts suspicion from Iranian authorities for any positive development in the Baluch provinces. Here Iranian national security concern is significant to understand the negligence of the provinces, which directly served the purpose of the migration of the locals to other non-Baluchi provinces. Lack of development along with cultural and religious repression has stimulated popular support for insurgency in Iran.

There are numerous factors which have contributed in shaping the nature of minority state relations in Iran. The relation between Persian majority and other ethno-religious minorities can be understood through different theoretical frameworks. Core-periphery model and security views are significant to understand the development of relations between majority and minority relations in Iran. The construction of *mellat* and *qowm* categories in the popular discourse of Iran has shaped the notion of 'nation' and 'ethnicity'. It has also influenced demographic and economic policies of Iran regarding the minority regions of the country. Iran has been highly concerned with security in its peripheral regions.

Here security view is important to understand the relations between Persian-core and non-Persian periphery. The security view implies that security is the state's primary concern in ethnic minority regions.[3] Sanam Moradi argued that "economically, the security view has made the state reluctant in investment and developing minority regions".[4] Therefore, peripheral regions face perpetual underdevelopment and widespread disparity compared to Persian dominated core regions. This demographic underdevelopment inflicts the out-migration from ethnic minority periphery to the more developed core.[5] Such situation is created intentionally by the state in order to population mingling and potential demographic change.

Alongside the development of nationalism in Iran, rise of ethnic nationalism is also a modern phenomenon. These two processes in Iran are intertwined. As theorists on nationalism suggest, the ethnic nationalism began with sense of internal colonialism. Michael Hechter suggests that the industrialisation in the core and uneven development in the periphery led to the nationalist feeling among the peripheral groups.[6] Ethnic assertion and movement in Iran can be understood through this economic perspective. However, there are other factors which contribute in the rise of ethnic nationalism. Rise of Azeri and Baluch nationalism are the phenomenon of the twentieth century. Both the group have developed their nationalist narratives to claim their distinct identity in Iran. There are ethnicists who have developed a distinct historical narrative and claimed their different historical past. As ethnicity is a modern conception, its importance is significant in the domain of modern nation state.

Iran is considered to be a stable nation in the region with the composition of different ethnic and religious minorities in its territory. There are several problems of ethnic minorities, and challenges for Iranian nation state. The discourse on national identity of Iran is also fluid, and has been changing over a period of time. Language, religion and historical past have been the major binding factors of the large territory and diverse people. During the Pahlavi dynasty language remained the sole factor in the promotion of homogenisation of the nation, and secularism was seen as sign of

[3] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 147
[4] Moradi, Sanam (2014), *Mellat and Qowm: A Political Geography of 'Nation' and 'Ethnicity' in Iran,* M. A. Thesis, London: Oxford, 2.
[5] ibid, 2.
[6] ibid, 2.

modernisation. However, Iranian revolution and Islamic Republic of Iran brought religion as the core of the Iranian identity. Accordingly, the dichotomy of self and others has been defined with changing values of nation. Although there are research works available on nation and nationalist discourse about Iran, there is a need to examine the discourse on national identity by foregrounding the minority-state relations.

Iranian nation is dominated by the Persian nationals; Azeri, the largest ethnic minority is well integrated and has better space in economy, society, polity and administration. No doubt Azeris have been loyal to Iran for a long time, and even after Independence of Azerbaijan from USSR in 1991, Azeris of Iran did not pose a serious threat to Iran. Azeris are ethnically different to majority Persian nationals but religiously they follow same religious belief. The difference between Persians and Azeris is ethnic in character and not religious. Majority of the Azeris embrace *Shia* Islam. However, there are many other ethnic minority groups residing in the periphery, marginalised in some sense or other, excluded from the mainstream of Iran, and least integrated. Baluch ethnic minority group is religiously as well as ethnically different to the majority Persian nationals. They are fewer in number, but Baluch ethnic problem sometime manifest into insurgencies. Baluch have been demanding for 'separate Baluchistan' since independence of Pakistan. Some Baluch nationalist groups from Pakistan to Iran and Afghanistan have aspirations for a greater independent Baluchistan. Although some works on Baluch and Baluch nationalism are available, there is not enough work on Iranian Baluch focussing on the discourse of nation and nationalism.

In this study following questions are investigated-

- What are the elements which determine Iranian national identity? How have language and religion played (are playing) a significant role in shaping and reshaping of Iranian national identity?

- What are the ethnic problems in Iran, and how is Iran dealing with them?

- How does Azeri ethnic minority pose a lesser threat to Iranian nation than Baluch? Are Azeris more loyal to Iranian nation because of their economic development, political representation and religious belief?

- Are economic underdevelopment, political under-representation and socio-religious discrimination of Baluch main reasons of conflicts between the Iranian state and Baluch?

Two hypotheses which are tested in this study are –

- While Azeris are a minority ethnic group in Persian dominated Iran, their *Shia* religious belief is a major factor for their better politico-economic conditions in the Islamic Republic.

- Ethnic and religious differences are the major reasons for the marginalisation and discrimination of Baluch in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Nation, nationality, nationalism are difficult to define separately as these are interconnected terms.[7] However, a state is a political entity with clearly defined territorial borders; the nation is more fluidly-defined at their most basic by a sense of belonging to a community, and posing a sense of separatedness. The nation is often defined as a community comprised of distinguishing elements which can include language, culture, religion or race.[8] Obviously, nation comprises some sorts of group identity, an account of the specific nature of national identity is required if political claim on behalf of nations are to be made.[9] However, Dahbour emphasised that national identities must be defined as broadly as possible, in order to avoid the implications that nations need to be exclusionary or discriminatory. According to Benedict Anderson, "nation is imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.[10] It is imagined because the members of the nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. It is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible,

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[7] Anderson, Benedict (2015), *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Jaipur India: Rawat Publication, 3.
[8] Inac, Husamettin (2013), "The Construction of National Identity in Modern Time: Theoretical perspective", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3 (11): 230.

[9] Dahbour Omar (2002), "National Identity: An Argument for the Strict Definition", *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 16 (1): 18.
[10] Anderson, Benedict (2015), *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Jaipur India: Rawat Publication, 3.

over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings".[11]

However, even there are no agreement among the historians about the definition of national identity and nationality. Walker Connor argues that if a nation is understood in what he calls its "pristine" sense, it is simply a "group of people who believe they are ancestrally related".[12] ilbert has given a different but a nonspecific definition, which highlights what he considers to be the inextricable connection of national identities with nationalism as political ideology. He defines "a nation is a group which has… a right to independent statehood by virtue of being the kind of group it is".[13]

Joshua A. Fishman clearly demarcated the distinction between nation, nationalism and nationality. He defined nation and state as similar. The nation is defined as a "politico-geographic entity" with clearly established boundaries and is more commonly referred to as the state, country or polity.[14] Nationality is the socio-cultural entity- essentially at the level of authenticity and solidarity of group behaviours and group values. The socio-cultural integration is essential for nation building. Nationalism is the driving and organizing dynamic in this nationality into nation building process.

Language is a significant part of national consciousness and nationalism. However, some of the very features of language that give it this power under some circumstances, may under other circumstances, become major sources of disintegration and internal conflict within a national system[15]. While the development of a national language may be highly conducive to the creation and strengthening of national identity, the deliberate use of the language for the purposes of national

[11] Anderson, Benedict (2015), *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Jaipur India: Rawat Publication, 15.
[12] Cannor, Walker (1994), *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding,* Princeton N.J: Princeton University Press, xi
[13] Dahbour Omar (2002), "National Identity: An Argument for the Strict Definition", *Public Affairs Quarterly*, 16 (1): 19.
[14] Fishman, A Joshua (1973), *Language and Nationalism; Two Integrative Essays,* New York: Newbury House Publishers, 39-40.
[15] Kelman, H.C. (1997), "Nationalism, Patriotism and National Identity: Social-Psychological Dimensions", (ed.) in D. Bar-Tal and E. Staub, *Nelson Hall Series in Psychology. Patriotism: In the Lives of Individuals and Nations,* Washington: Nelson Hall Publishers, 21.

identity may at least in a multi-ethnic state have more disruptive than unifying consequences.[16]

Most of the countries carry the diversity of social, cultural, ethnic and religious identities. In third world countries most of the nations are facing problems of the nation buildings. Sometime these identities led to the movement of self-determination with demands for separate nation. It might be on the basis of religious, regional, and ethno-linguistic identities many nations accommodate this diversity politically and build a strong nation some failed resulted into formation of new nations. Every nation is an ongoing and always unfinished project and in the process of being built.[17] Rupert Emersion in his book "From Empire to Nation" argued that "a community of people who feel that they belong together in the double sense that they share deeply significant elements of common heritage and that they have a common destiny for the future. In the contemporary world, the nation is for great portions of mankind is the community with which men most intense and most unconditionally identified themselves, however deeply they may differ among themselves on other issues".[18]

Furthermore, he stated that nation made up of diverse ethnic groups, loyalty to the nation does not override all other competing loyalties. He observes, "Family, tribe, locality, religion conscience, economic interest and a host of other appeals may at any given time and place prevail over national allegiance for particular individuals or groups".[19] This is the challenge of ensuring political, socio-cultural and economic security amongst its citizens therefore national allegiance takes precedence over all other claims which may be made upon them when they are confronted by alternative choices of allegiance.[20] It is necessary for nation concerned people to have a will to live together- "to have done great things together and the will to do more, these are the essential condition for a people…the existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite".[21]

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[16] ibid, 21.
[17] Schmidt, Peter, and Quandt, Markus (2018), "National Identity, Nationalism and Attitudes towards Migrants in Comparative Perspective", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology,* 59 (5-6): 355-61.
[18] Emersion, Rupert (1956), *From Empire to Nation: The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African People,* USA: Harvard University Press, 95.
[19] ibid, 97.
[20] ibid, 97.
[21] Kamenka, Eugene (1976), *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea,* London: Edward Arnold Publisher, 10.

Contemporary world is witnessing the rise of identities, ethnic conflicts, ethnic cleansing, and other socio-political problems surrounding these identities. In fact, history of human being has been the history of movement and migration. Human history has been revolving around the migration and settlement. Human civilisations, empires, and kingdoms appear and disappear. These political entities could not bind human being into a particular territory in its present sense. The legality, ownership, advancement, development, concrete identities of the groups were not well defined and substantial unlike today's world. Contemporary world is divided among the nations with well-defined and well policed borders. It has confined human beings into a national being where migration and movement have several terms and conditions.

Nature and origin of the nation-state system have been the subjective matter of interpretation and conceptualisation. Some historians and scholars believed that nation has existed since time immemorial and is natural and given, while others have argued that it has deep roots in existing ethnic character of the groups, and still others believe that it has to do with modern developments in the society. Regarding the origin and development of the nation-state system there has been the majorly three approaches: modernist approach, primordial approach, and ethno-symbolic approach.

Modernist conception of nation and nationalism is mainly supported by Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, Elie Kedourie, Walker Cannor, David Laitin, John Breuilly, and Michael Hechter. These Scholars see the rise of nationalism with the rise of modern state. Modernist approach emphasised on the modernity of the nation. Nations are the product of the modern economic development, institutional, technological and scientific advancement. Karl Marx in his *'Communist Manifesto'* (1848) seems very close to the modernist argument. For Marx it was capitalist mode of production which has led to the foundation of nation-state system as the bourgeoisie gradually did away with the scattered state of the population, of means of production, and property. The process of capitalism has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in few hands. Marx argued that "the necessary consequences of this was political centralisation, independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with

one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, on frontier and one customs-tariff'.[22]

However, John Breuilly accepts the existence of nations and national sentiment in the pre-modern period, but he restricts nationalism to the modern period and envisaged that it is the outcome of the development of the modern-state and of the international state system.[23] He emphasises on the significance of political aspects to the emergence of nation and nationalism. For him, "in all its history, modern state has shaped the nationalist politics and has been central to the making of nationalism.[24] Regarding the origin of the nation and nationalism, Benedict Anderson in his *'Imagined Community'* argues that the nation is new, modern phenomenon. During the 17th and 18th century world has gone through the demise of old forms of political bodies that were shaped by sacred language, dynastic power, and sense of historical temporality shaped by cosmology. He has given immense importance to the modern capitalist developments in the origin of nation-state system. According to him "material conditions and rationalist perception of 'homogenous empty time' created the structures where individual could conceptualise themselves as part of an 'imagined community'.[25] For him the imagined community is finite with limited boundaries, sovereign power, and a community of fraternal, horizontal comradeship. For Anderson role of print capitalism is very instrumental to spread the nationalism among the community. The emergence of print-capitalism had led to the rise of technological mass production of newspapers, novels in vernacular print language through which individual could think and relate themselves to others in different ways. It has connected one individual to another individual to form a concept of imagined community.

Anderson's study is not Eurocentric. He tried to give a broader analysis of the rise of nationalism across the world. Among his four model of rise of nation and nationalism, he deals with emergence of nationalism in colonial countries. His fourth model of nationalism developed out of colonial context, institutions of education, bureaucracy,

[22] Marx, Karl, and Engels F. (1996), *The Communist Manifesto,* Beijing: Foreign Languages Peking, 36.

[23] Llobera, R. Josep (1999), *Recent Theories of Nationalism*, Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 19.

[24] ibid, 19

[25] Anderson, Benedict (2015), *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Jaipur India: Rawat Publication, 16.

and movement. Anderson emphasises the role of colonial context, role of the census, map, and museum to provide the 'grammar' of nationalism. These tools provided abstract quantifications of people, symbolic demarcation of political space, and the genealogical conception of history and heritages. In the colonial countries of Asia and Africa, the administrative, educated and bilingual intelligentsia came to identify as colonial nation.[26] Through this colonial process, the experiences of travel and educational context, local intelligentsia gained power and created an imagined community of nationals.

Culture has been a significant determinant of a nation and its identity. Earnest Gellner's emphasis on the essentially modern origins of nations utilises a particular perspective towards culture. He argues that the institutionalisation of cultural norms shared over a large geographical area, and the dissemination of national ideologies, can only occur in modern, mass societies. The central authorities in the process of nation building reinforce the cultural homogeneity through the regional and local authority.[27] Furthermore, Gellner argues that "homogenous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation occurs in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitutes very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identified".[28] Another prominent scholar Eric Hobsbawm had given importance of culture to determine national identity by arguing that "the identification of historical process whereby national elites try to construct culturally a national lineage is undoubtedly valuable".[29] The (re)stating of ceremonies, and attempts to encode selective cultural forms and practices as evidence of primeval traditions, remains an important themes and persists in contemporary cultural constructions of national identity".[30] In his analysis of national identity, Hobsbawm emphasis on the role of national elite is very significant.[31] Anderson's understanding of nation is that nations emerge out of context of social and cultural experiences which are imaginatively conceived.[32]

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[26] ibid, 16.

[27] Edensor, Tim (2002), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life,* UK: Berg Publisher, 2.

[28] Gellner, Ernest (1997), *Nationalism,* New York: New York University Press, 55.

[29] Hobsbawm, Eric (1992), *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780 Programme, Myth Reality,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 135

[30] Edensor, Tim (2002), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life,* UK: Berg Publisher, 14.

[31] Hobsbawm, Eric (1992), *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780 Programme, Myth Reality,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 142

[32] ibid, 143.

The modern theorists of the nation and nationalism have produced several theories to analyse the origin of nation and rise of nationalism. Michael Hechter's theory of *Internal colonialism* and Immanuel Wallerstein's *World System* and Core-periphery model seem well suited to analyse the nation and nationality question in Iran. According to Wallerstein the unequal development within the state aggravates the economic dependency. While taking the case of United Kingdom, Hechter (Qtd in Llobera: 1999) argued that "industrialization aggravated an already existing situation of economic dependency and inequality of the Celtic fringe (Scotland, Wales and Ireland) vis-à-vis England, and this manifested itself first in differential political behaviour and later in ethnonational movements".[33] He believes what he calls a national culture is not a national culture but the culture of the core which dominates over the others. Industrialisation has created such a cultural boundary on the basis of division of the labour which determines the social and cultural status of the core and periphery. Through this stratification, the dominant group monopolises social positions which holds the high prestige in the society and the members of the peripheral culture are involved in the social role which considered inferior. He argued that "the further industrialization advanced in its uneven way, the internal differences became more accentuated; ethno-nationalism emerged as a response to a situation of perceived dependence and exploitation".[34] The intra-state core-periphery process determines the relations of the core-dominant community and subordinate nationalities of the periphery.

Through this analysis of core and periphery, it can be argued that in Iran, nation basically constituted with Persian core and other nationalities as periphery. Definitely the disparity between the Persian *Shia* and other nationalities exists in a way that Persians remain always in a dominant position and other ethnic-and religious minorities in the position of subordination. Sanam Moradi argued that this duality of nation and ethnicity promotes the Persian *Shi'ite* core and marginalises non-Persian and none-*Shi'ite* ethnic areas.[35] However, the nature and demands of the ethnic movements are politically more free and autonomous political system, better economic conditions in the periphery, educational and cultural rights of the non-

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[33] Llobera, R. Josep (1999), *Recent Theories of Nationalism*, Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 4.

[34] ibid, 4

[35] Moradi, Sanam (2014), *Mellat and Qowm: A Political Geography of 'Nation' and 'Ethnicity' in Iran,* M. A. Thesis, London: Oxford, 1.

Persians. This alienation and negligence give the sense of being different and therefore peripheral nationalities not fully committed to the Iranian nation, and even potentially threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.[36] The lack of the appreciation and recognition of the cultural rights of the ethnic minorities alienate these nationalities from the state, and distance them from the Persian core.

Contrary to the modernist approach, primordial or traditional approach understands the existence of the nation as natural and given. Primordialists believe that in all society there is existence of certain primordial, irrational attachments which are based on blood, race, language, religion, region, etc.[37] This approach holds that group attachment and identity especially in pre-modern and traditional societies, are natural, perhaps even biological.[38] Primordialists much emphasised on the traditional and pre-modern characters of the group identity which are significant markers of the national identity. Clifford Greertz (qtd. in Llobera, 2009) argued that identity is ineffable and yet coercive ties, which are the result of a long process of crystallisation.[39] According to this approach, ethnic identity is deep rooted in the historical experiences of the human beings. Third world states are deeply contained with the primordial realities which are the ethnic groups and communities.[40] Primordialists hold the position that ethnic bonds are natural and fixed by the experiences which human beings receive through their family and surrounding groups. These ethnic and identity groups are the fundamental character of a nation.

The primordial approach has several criticisms due to its pre-modern essentialization. It has failed to give a proper analysis of the changing world system. It is not able to analyse the origins, change and dissolution of the ethnic groups. In the modern world, through a scientific and capitalist development, different societies have gone through the fundamental changes. Complexity of the ethnic groups, through migration, inter-ethnic relations, and effects of new developments are untouched by the primordialists.

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[36] ibid, 1
[37] Llobera, R. Josep (1999), *Recent Theories of Nationalism*, Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 1.
[38] Allahar L. Anton (2001), "The Politics of Ethnic Identity Construction", *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research,* 1 (3)**: 201.**
[39] Llobera, R. Josep (1999), *Recent Theories of Nationalism*, Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 1.
[40] ibid, 1.

Scholar like Anthony Smith has emphasised on 'ethnicity' for defining national identity. According to him the nations are founded on, and emerge out of, pre-existing 'ethnies' and ethnic communities or group – which shape the nation.[41] Smith's study on nation is based upon Barth's notion of ethnicity as a mode of distinguishing self from others, an ascription integral to the formation of boundaries. Ethnic symbols provide evidence which distinguishes 'us' from 'them'.[42] Myths, Memories, values, traditions, and symbols, as powerful differentiators and reminders of the unique culture and fate of the ethnic communities, are fundamental to his analysis of national identity.[43]

Nationalism is the nation-level socio-cultural dynamics integral for nation building. As a consequence, identity formation, which hinges on culture, is an integral part of nationalism. Smith linked three dimensions together when he says that "we cannot understand nations and nationalism simply as an ideology and movement, must be closely related to national identity, a multidimensional concept, and extended to include a specific language, sentiments and symbolism".[44]

Defining Ethnicity

Unlike theories on nationalism, ethnicity too has been variously approached by theorists. Anthony D. Smith argued about ethnicity as "an ethnic group has been defined in general terms as a group with 'shared ancestry myths histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity".[45] Rishikeshav Regmi (2003), in his article *Ethnicity and Identity* emphasised that for the formation of ethnic identity there should be a combination of certain feature of common descent, a socially relevant culture or physical characteristics, and a set of attitude and behaviours.[46] In this process of ethnic formation common descent may be real or alleged, it is not necessary that there actually be a common racial origin. Cultural manifestation and characters like distinctive beliefs, institutions, practices

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[41] Edensor, Tim (2002), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life,* UK: Berg Publisher, 8.
[42] ibid, 8.
[43] Guibernau, Montserrat (2004), "Anthony D. Smith on Nations and National Identity: A Critical Assessment", *Nation and Nationalism*, 10 (1/2): 126.

[44] Smith, D. Anthony (1991), *National Identity,* London: Penguin Books, 7.
[45] Smith, D. Anthony (1986), *Ethnic Origins of Nations,* London: Oxford, 32.
[46] Regmi, Rishikeshav (2003), "Ethnicity and Identity", *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology,* 8 (viii): 1-11.

and language often form the bases of identity. While the physical and racial characters are not necessary, in some cases these features provide the foundation of ethnic identities. Regmi suggests that in order to consolidate ethnic identity members of that group must share the group behaviour, patterns, feeling and meaning[47]. Moreover, they should perceive that they share common destiny and are different to others.[48]

Eriksen emphasises upon the modernity of ethnicity. According to him ethnicity is a modern conception which has emerged with interdependence and interconnection with different community.[49] Ethnicity is the product of the contact and not of isolation. Ethnicity cannot exist in isolation. Idea of isolated ethnic group is meaningless. It is an aspect of relationship, not a cultural property of an isolated group. If any society constitutes wholly mono-ethnic character, effectively there is no ethnic, since there is nobody to communicate cultural difference.[50]

Since the ethnicity is relational, it may be attributed to several causes. Sometimes ethnicity attributes in response to the cultural arrogance of the dominant group in a country. In some case it emerged in response to the domination and exploitation of the group in power. Discrimination and prejudice cause and fuelled the rise of ethnicity. It may be alleged or real, not necessarily always real. Threat of cultural erosion, ethnic group may feel threat of the erosion of their culture and identity. Economic aspect or resources competition in the process of unequal development some groups may organise themselves on ethnic bases and fight their battles for equity and distributive justice. These causes have their roots in modern development which have created such an environment where most of the communities cannot remain in isolation.[51]

Ethnic identity is subject to change and it varies according to time and space. Chicago school in its research (qtd in Eriksen) investigated that the ethnic relations are fluid and negotiable[52]. Their importance varies situationally. The claims of primordiality, cultural roots, ethnic identities can be consciously manipulated and invested in

[47] ibid, 3
[48] ibid, 2-3.
[49] Eriksen, Hylland, Thomas (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* London: Pluto Press, 30.
[50] ibid, 32.
[51] Regmi, Rishikeshav (2003), "Ethnicity and Identity", *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology,* 8 (viii): 6.
[52] Eriksen, Hylland, Thomas (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* London: Pluto Press, 20

economic competition in modern society[53]. In a society individual possess various identities, but it is empirical question when and how ethnic identity becomes most relevant one.[54] Eriksen argued that "ethnicity can be of varying importance in social situation and it is often up to the agents themselves to decides upon its significance".[55]

As it has been mentioned that ethnicity becomes important when there is resource competition and threat against boundaries. Ethnic groups reassert their identities and claim their differences. However, there are various theories of ethnicity and nation. But the identity process theory can give a better analysis of ethnic dynamics in the groups in contemporary world. Identity Process Theory (IPT) says that structure of identity should be conceptualised in terms of its content and values. In a particular structure this process contains two universal processes, first is assimilation and accommodation process and second is evaluation process. In the first process assimilation and accommodation process refers to the absorption of new information in the identity structure and adjustment which takes place in order to become a part of the structure. The evaluation process confers meaning of the content of identity.[56]

It is important to differentiate ethnic identity with other identities to understand its importance in the modern nation state. Ethnic and tribal identities have some differences, as ethnicity is a modern conception which has emerged with relations to other communities and carries certain modern features. Tribes, on the other hand, signify the isolated, independent from main-stream society, and live with primitive way of life. Their life and culture guided by the traditional tribal laws are dependent upon the traditional and agrarian economy. In a nutshell, ethnicity emerged in relation to other communities while tribe constitutes an independent identity.

Nation and ethnic community are different because of their political conception and its relationship to the state. Nation and nationalism hold political and territorial boundaries. A nationalist always aims those political boundaries should be coterminous to the cultural boundaries but ethnic groups do not necessarily command

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[53] ibid, 30
[54] ibid, 31.
[55] ibid, 32.
[56] Jaspal, Rusi and Cinnirella, Macro (2011), "The Construction of Ethnic Identity: Insight from Identity Process Theory", *Ethnicity,* 12 (5): 506.

and demand over state.[57] Another difference between nation and other identities is concerning scale. Nation-states are such a social system operating on a vast scale.

Vernacularization and standardisation of a language is an important aspect of nationalist movements. A shared language becomes powerful symbol of cultural unity as well as convenient tool in the administration of nation state.[58] Different to other identities, what is peculiar to the nation is its relation with state. With the help of the power of the state, nation can be invented where they do not exist.[59]

The nation and nationalist ideology appear not always fully but partly as symbolic tools for the ruling group. Jean Paul Sartre suggests that the nation is the imagination of the well organised dominant community. While scholars claim that nations may have profound roots in earlier ethnic communities or ethnies, it would be misleading to claim that there is unbroken continuity from the per-modern or cultural communities to modern national communities. Although during the nationalist campaign Reza Shah of Iran heavily used Persian vocabulary, symbols, culture and claimed the great legacy of the Persian past, he himself was very much influenced and oriented towards the western values and used western methods to build Iran as a strong nation state. This duality of values signifies that for the ruling elites, nation and nationalist ideology is not fully but partially a symbolic tool to maintain their rule.

The notion of shared origin and ancestry usually become significant. Interpretation of history therefore becomes significant for the ideologues who are seeking to justify, to strength to maintain their ethnic identities.[60] Over the history writing anthropologist stress that it is not a product of the past but a response to the requirement of the present.[61] Eriksen argued that not only the historical interpretation but also the social factor of identity process determines and maintains the ethnic identity. He stresses that "Ethnic identities tend to attain their greatest importance in situation of flux, change and resource competition".[62]

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[57] ibid, 6.
[58] Eriksen, Hylland, Thomas (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* London: Pluto Press, 103.
[59] ibid, 103
[60] ibid, 59.
[61] ibid, 72.
[62] ibid, 100.

Being a Minority

Minority and majority terms are relational; each cannot exist in the absence of the other. These terms have to do with numbers, powers and domination. Bases of minority and majority can be based on religion, region, ethnic and other social categorisations. Minority Right Group defines ethnic minority as "an ethnic minority can be defined as group which is numerically inferior to the rest of the population in a society, which is politically non-dominant and which being produced as an ethnic category".[63] This twin concept of minority and majority are relative and relational, and their relationship is contingent in a specific given boundary system.

The term minority and majority are not merely numerical but also denote positive and negative social conditions and treatment. In the conceptualisation of the minority and majority groups, Viviane Seyranian, Hazel Atuel and William D. Crano (2008) have analysed eight dimensions of minority and majority groups which include: power, number, distinctiveness, social category, disposition, group context, and being the source or target of behaviour.[64] It is defined that 'minority' groups often reflect and denote negatively stigmatized, ostracised, oppressed and outcast individual or group (Blanz, Mummendey, and Otten 1995, qtd. in Seyranian, Atuel and Crano, 2008). Moscovici defined minority groups as counter-normative groups.[65] On the other hand, 'majority' group denotes positively valued and high-status group in a particular society.

Status, power and group members, independently or in combination have a strong impact on group members, intergroup behaviour and perceptions. In most of the cases majority or high-status group are found to be more discriminatory and less parity oriented, but in case of the minority or low status group, it seems less in their group behaviour. Itesh Sachdev and Richard Y. Bourhis (1991) in their study found out that "high status group members were consensually expected to, and did report higher levels of own group identification, than low status group members. High status group members felt more comfortable, satisfied and happy about their own group

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[63] Eriksen, Hylland, Thomas (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* London: Pluto Press, 121.
[64] Seyranian, Viviane, Atuel, Hazel and Crano D. William (2008), "Dimensions of Minority and Majority Groups", *Group Process and Intergroup Relations,* 11 (1): 22.
[65] ibid, 21.

membership than did low group members".[66] Majority or privilege groups have the tendency to protect their status and privilege. In most of the cases, minority rest in receiving end and majority always enjoys the high social status with numerous privileges.

Modern world is witnessing the rise of ethnic and other identity conflicts and tensions. In third world countries, nation building and ethnic aspirations have been seen in the contradictions. Most of the countries are facing the challenges of the ethnic tensions and conflicts. As it has been mentioned, it arises due to several socio-economic, political and cultural factors. Being a minority, an ethnic group receives differential treatment by the majority rule, it causes disenchantment among the groups which lead to the ethnic assertion. Ethnicity is seen as much as a device as a focus for group mobilization of an ethnic group through select use of ethnic symbols for social, cultural, political and economic purposes.[67] Third world countries are confronting with establishing political, social and economic institution as well as building a cohesive nationalism by accommodating the diverse and heterogeneous population within the states. These countries have been reluctant to accommodate the legitimate aspirations of the minority groups. Rajshree Jetly (2004) argued that "the majority groups have tended to see minorities' demands for preserving a distinct way of life and claims for genuine autonomy as potential bids for secessionism and have generally suppressed these demands with brutal force".[68] This contradiction between states and ethnicities has led to the serious ethnic division and conflict in most of the developing world.

Since most of the established nations are multi-ethnic, the relations between majority nationalism and minority aspirations are main hurdle for a coherent nationalism. Domination of the majority ethnic group over the state who holds the main stake in the imagination of the nation always tend to homogenise the rest of the subordinate ethnic and other minority identities through coercive and non-coercive methods. The dominant ethnic groups uphold the ethnic ideologies. These ideologies often designed

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[66] Sachdev, Itesh, and Bourhis, Y. Richard (1991), "Power and Status Differentials in Minority and Majority Group Relations", *European Journal of Social Phycology*, 21 (1) 1-24.
[67] Phadnis, Urmila (1990), *Ethnicity and Nation-Building in South Asia,* New Delhi Sage Publication, 16.
[68] Jetly, Rajshree (2004), "Baluch Ethnicity and Nationalism 1971-81: An Assessment", *Asian Ethnicity,* 5 (1): 7.

on the basis of dominant and subordinate relationships. In the most of the cases, subordinate groups find themselves at the receiving end and are denied social and economic equality as well as freedom in equal measures.[69] In the approaches of nationalism, assimilation and cultural pluralism is guided by ideological content. Majority nationalist mainstream always try to absorb the sub- and micro (minority) nationalism. The aim of assimilation is to homogenise all groups, relegating ethnic identities to a merely symbolic status. Majority culture try to establish itself, while consciously abiding the erosion of any other cultures.

The present study comprises six chapters including introduction and conclusion. The second chapter of study deals with formation of Iran as modern nation state. It presents the historical trajectory of Iran in which it has been analysed how political continuity, cultural heritage of Iran, religion, language have been foundational elements for Iranian national identity. Moreover, in the advent of modernity, especially through colonial interventions, Iran witnessed the emergence of nationalism. Especially in 19th century military reforms, administrative reforms, educational reforms and establishment of printing press paved the way for rising national self-consciousness among Iranians. These developments had profound impact on society, a new urban educated middle class and modern intelligentsia emerged with new aspirations, who played a crucial role in the rise of nationalism in Iran. How nineteenth and early twentieth century Russian and British interventions in Iranian politics and economy responded by the national self-consciousness. It reflected in the tobacco movement of 1891-92 and later in constitutional revolution of 1905 to 1911.

Developments of communication and transportation infrastructures; long routes, highways, railway tracks have facilitated central authorities to access the control over the remote areas, before these developments in Iran it was difficult for the central authorities to penetrated in the remote areas of Iran. These developments have helped to control the lawlessness in tribal areas and reduced the local authorities of the local tribal leaders, Sardars and Ilkhans.

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[69] Regmi, Rishikeshav (2003), "Ethnicity and Identity", *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology,* 8 (viii): 1-11.

In order to highlight the nation-building process in Iran, role of Pahlavi regime has been critically analysed. Reza Shah's reform policies, whether educational, administrative and restructuring society through provincial policies, ordering tribes aimed to established Iran as a strong modern-nation state. It was during Pahlavi regime how a centralised authority constructed while using coercive state apparatus. In order to do away with local and regional identity and to construct a strong Persian-centric national identity, policies, measures and plans were taken by the Pahlavi's have been discussed in detail. His modernisation and secularization policies and its consequences have been analysed and also the causes of Iranian revolution have been highlighted. Following the Iranian revolution, a new national identity of Iran emerged in which religion was placed in the core of Iranian national identity. How Persian ethnic nationalism in Iran became secondary and religion became important aspect of Iranian national identity in Islamic Republic of Iran.

Third chapter deals with relations of minorities with state of Iran in general and with Islamic Republic in particular. It has given a detailed modern historical trajectory of minorities state relations in Iran. Further, some important question regarding minorities has been analysed. It deals with problems that minorities are facing for being different groups in the Persian-*Shia* dominated Iran. It mainly focuses on the question; How have language and religion played (are playing) a significant role to determine the national identity of Iran and its relation with ethno-religious minorities? In which it has been analysed that how a Persian-*Shi'a* majority population have been in dominant and high-status position and other ethno-religious groups remained in periphery, negatively stigmatised, discriminated and ostracised. And another question; what are the ethno-religious problems in Iran and how Iran is dealing with them. Different ethnic groups have several different problems and methods to fight and express them, but almost each groups have some similar demands such as respect and recognition of plurality of culture, autonomy of the provinces or decentralisation of power, and protections of basic human rights. In this regard chapter also focuses on different ethnic movements and organisations from moderate to radical their demands and aspirations from the state, and how central authority is responding to their voices? In order to understand the state-minority relations in Islamic Republic of Iran the various constitutional provision related to ethnic and religious minorities have been

analysed. Moreover, to find out the socio-economic condition of minority groups data related to poverty, education, employment, have been analysed.

Fourth chapter of the study mainly focuses on Azeri ethnic minorities. At first it describes the elements of Azeris identity and how Azeri identity have evolved over a period of time? In shaping and reshaping the Azeri identity the role of History, language, modern developments, Azeri intelligentsia have been extensively analysed. It has been attempted to find out the causes and factors responsible for the rise of Azeri nationalism in Islamic Republic of Iran. How the ethnic policies of Pahlavi Shah and Islamic Republic have been responded from the ethnic nationalist and what are their demands and aspirations have been discussed in details. In order to find out the similarity and differences in terms of status in the society between majority Persians and minority Azeris data on employment, education, poverty rate, and level of industrialisation based on region have been analysed.

It deals with Azeris' political and economic conditions and explores the reasons behind their status in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This chapter also explores Azeris' position in Iranian nation. Moreover, it analyses how Azeris are being treated by the state as well as analyses the Azeri's sense of belongingness to Iranian nation and threat of Azeri nationalism for Iranian State? Manifestation of Azeri nationalism in different forms such as demonstration, protests, environmental nationalism, sport nationalism has been central theme of the chapter. Azeri nationalist movement, and actors in the forms of activists, intelligentsia, organisations and their role have been highlighted.

Moreover, there are some expressions of separatism from a group of Azeri nationalists and a cross-border connection between Iranian and Azeris of the Republic of Azerbaijan who aspire for integration of north and south Azerbaijan, although there is minimal support from the side of Iranian Azeris. The political dynamics of Iran and in its surrounding countries such as North Azerbaijan and Turkey have given impetus to Azeris of Iran to rediscover their 'Tork' identity as source of pride. Among the Azeri nationalists the demands of cultural, linguistic, economic and political rights are more prominent which have gained a new energy in Iranian politics since 1990.

Fifth chapter deals with Baluch issues in relations to Iran by analyzing the condition of Baluchs, particularly keeping their ethnic and religious identity at center. First; it has given brief profile of Baluchs, after that Baluch ethnic identity and its formations, in which their common territory, Baluchi language, history, myths, heroes have been analyzed. It gives a detailed account that how Baluch ethnic identity have formed. After that it arrives at the trajectory of Baluch history in which a comprehensive historical detail has been presented in order to understand the present Baluch ethnic nationalism. In relation to Iran first it gives a general account of Baluchs and then discusses the rise of Baluch nationalism in Iran. In order to understand the manifestation of Baluch nationalism in contemporary Iran the rise of various Baluch ethno-nationalism organizations, their activities, aspirations and demands have been discussed in detail. Along with it give information that how Iranian state have been responding to these demands and aspirations of Baluchs. It discusses the socio-economic and political situations of Baluchs in Iran. In order to understand their socio-economic condition in Iran data on poverty, literacy, unemployment, industrialization in the region have been analyzed.

How their identity of 'Baluch' has been shaped and what kind of relations have been developed with the central authority of Iran? Moreover, it also deals with ethnic and religious contradiction with Iranian state. In this regard the Baluch movement and their struggle for nationality rights have been discussed, as well as the separatist movement of Baluchs. Chapter examines how *Shi'ism* since the Iranian revolution became an official religion, and being a different religious and ethnic identity group how the Baluchs' socio-economic and particularly the political condition has been shaped? Since ethnic minorities in general and Baluchs in particular have been placed under the *Shi'a* regime after 1979, how the relations between majority and minority, both religious and ethnic, becomes significant domain of investigation. Islamic laws, ethnic superiority and dominations of Persians are in contradiction with the *Sunni*-Baluchs of Iran. On the basis of these differences, it has been analyzed how Baluchs are associating themselves with the idea of Iran, as well as their complexity of sense of belongingness with multiple identities.

CHAPTER: 2

FORMATION OF IRAN AS A MODERN NATION-STATE

Although, the two terms - Iran and Persia have been used to designate the same country, these two terms are not synonymous in true sense. When the Aryan migrated from the Aral Sea to below the Caspian Sea, they designated the new region as Iran, which means "homeland of the Aryans".[1] The term 'Fars' is an Arabicised form of *Parsa,* which referred both to the land and people of the Persia, and also to its capital, Persepolis.[2] Achaemenid dynasty ruled over the northeast region of the Persian Gulf and it was called Parsa. Although, Achaemenid Empire was called Iran, the region and palace name got transferred to the province within the empire as Pars or Fars, therefore, people from other lands called the country Persia. Furthermore, it was in the time of Sassanian rule, the empire was named as *Iranshahr*. It is since 1935, Shah Pahlavi government appealed to all the foreign countries to use the term Iran for his country term Iran for the sake of consistency.[3] History of the nomenclature of the country sometimes known as Iran, Persia, *Iranshahr* and again Iran.

In terms of territory, present Iran comprises with 628,000 square miles of West Asian land, it remained much smaller in compare to its past history.[4] Iran is located between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. It shares border with Turkey and Iraq to the West, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the North, Afghanistan and Pakistan to the East. Geographically Iran is diverse; at one side it is with high mountains, and another side it contains a large desert as well as fertile land too. It is also among one of the most oil producing countries.

Historically Iran has been country with diverse people and cultures. Iranian society can be divided at various levels; ethnicity, religion, tribes, and region. The Iranians speak diverse languages-Persian such as Kurdish, Gilaki, Mazandarani, Luri, Tat and Talish.[5] Moreover, there are also Turkic languages such as Azeri, Turkmen, and

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[1] Wilber, N. Donald (1958), *Iran Past and Present,* USA: Princeton University Press, I.
[2] Dandamaev, M.A. (1989), *A Political History of Achaemenid Empire,* Translated by Vogelsang, W.J, Leiden: E. J. Brill.
[3] Wilber, N. Donald (1958), *Iran Past and Present,* USA: Princeton University Press, I.
[4] Fisher W. B. (1968), "Physical Geography", in W.B. Fisher (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3.
[5] Bayat, Kaveh (2005), "The Ethnic Question in Iran", *Middle East Report,* 42.

sematic languages such as Arabic, Hebrew and Assyrian. Likewise, people profess many different religious beliefs, including the dominant *Shi'a* Islam, but also *Sunni* Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Mandaean religion, and Baha'ism.[6] Throughout the history of Iran, different ethnic, linguistic or cultural groups have been living in geographically distinct regions and provinces.[7] These are the Azeris, the Turkic speaking *Shi'a* in the north-western province of Azerbaijan; the *Sunni* Turkmen of north-eastern Iran, the Kurds; the Arabs of Khuzestan; and the Baluchs of south-eastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan.[8] Politically dominant group Persians holds its demographic majority. According to recent data, the Persian speakers constitute more than 60 per cent, Azeris speakers are 24 per cent; the Kurds make up 7 per cent; about 5 per cent are Mazandarani people; Arabs take 3 per cent, and remaining 10 per cent represent other minorities.[9]

Most of the West Asian societies are comprised of diverse ethnic, religious, tribal and linguistic groups. Iran is one of them, carrying these diversities and able to maintain its unity and identity, and it has preserved and maintained the continuity of socio-political and cultural life as a singular political entity.[10] In fact, in comparison to other diverse and plural states in the region, Iran is relatively more stable as a nation.

Historically, it is evident that the core national identity of Iran has been constituted by the different identity groups. In this regard, Ahmadi argues that "there has been mass mobilization of different religious and ethnic groups for a national cause, either defending Iran as whole from external threats or promoting the condition of the nation through internal political upheavals".[11] Ahmadi calls this Mass mobilisation as national identity dynamics. Multi-ethnic participation or different identity groups' participation in the national events and causes promotes the common goals and common aspirations which constitute the core national identity of Iran. However, there have been many external expeditions on Iran (Persia) in the history, and it has

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[6] Bayat, Kaveh (2005), "The Ethnic Question in Iran", *Middle East Report,* 42 and Amanolahi, Sekandar (2005) "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran & the Caucasus,* 39-40.
[7] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 211.
[8] Bayat, Kaveh (2005), "The Ethnic Question in Iran", *Middle East Report,* 42.
[9] Bernstam, S. Michael (2011), "Considering Kurdistan: Another Way to Stop Iran", *Harvard International Review,* 13.
[10] Ahmadi, Hamid (2014), "Unity within Diversity: Foundation and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critical Middle East Studies,* 127.
[11] ibid, 127.

resisted them. The resistance across Iran against the Arabs Umayyad Caliphates in the seventh and eighth centuries was the first manifestation of such national identity dynamics.[12] Later on, the same mass mobilization occuredduring the Russians and Ottomans occupation following the end of Safavid rule in 1772.[13]

How has Iran become a Nation irrespective of its diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities? What are the factors which bring together so many diverse people within one political entity? How Iranian national identity has been formed? And what are the elements which constitute Iran as a modern nnation-state?

The idea of nation and nationalism are the modern concept that initially developed in Europe and spread across the globe. Nation-building is the modern project. Each country has its different socio-cultural and economic dynamics; therefore, the natures of the nations are not similar. The history, myths, and culture played a decisive role to determine the character of a nation. In Iran during Qajar and more importantly during Pahlavi dynasty had been focused upon discoveries of their ancient past, not just only to take historical account out of that, but to use it as a tool of state-building and to consolidate the national identity. While explaining the process of Iranian nation-building Ali Ahmad Ansari illustrated it is the interplay of rise and demise of mythology and history.[14] Never this relationship (myth and history) was more significant than during the late nineteenth century. It was majorly determined for the search of national origins and roots. In Iranian academia, one can observe the interplay between academics or scholarship and the agendas of the government which are with aims of creating a new image of the modern nation-state. The discoveries of philological, archaeological, religious, and historical sources in Iran, (during Qajar and Pahlavi rule) have built and strengthened the concept of a modern nation-state. No nation is perfect in its sense; every nation is in the process of becoming. Moreover, scholars argue that 'nation is the daily plebiscite'. Iranian nation-state which has experienced colonialism, comprised of land of diverse people, weak political institutions, and diverse ideological faction, is going with same process and imagination of becoming a nation-state.

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[12] ibid, 127
[13] ibid, 127
[14] Ansari, M. Ali (2012), *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

The Basic Elements of Iranian National Identity

Political Continuity or Heritage of Iran

The political institutions such as state, monarchy, and others developed in different periods of times. The mythology of Iran, and the land (the concept of Iran *Zamin*) have been unavoidable factors to maintain its independence, as well as to bring together the different ethnic and religious groups under one political identity.[15] Iran holds a glorious past of ancient civilization, empires, and a rich history with remains of ancient symbols in the form of buildings, rocks, and bridges.[16] Iranian national identity is comprised of both; *Shi'a* Islam and their pre-Islamic history, especially the Sassanids, Achaemenids, and Parthians.[17] In the process of shaping Iranian modern territorial image, the role of empire is significant. Iran has existed as an independent state for more than twenty-five centuries. In the region, only Egypt has a history of being a unified nation but Iran retains the stronger ties to an imperial and pre-Islamic past.[18]

The Persian-Achaemenian dynasty gave Iran its first period of glory as a World Empire. The ruler of this dynasty traced their ancestry to Achaemenes, of whom little is known except that his son Theipses held the kingdom of Anshan under the Median suzerainty until his death in 640 B.C. He extended territory under his control towards southwest adding to his realm the formerly Elamite region of the Parsis (Fars). On his death, his territory was divided between his sons, Cyrus I and Ariaramnes, respectively. They were ruling the western area (Anshan) and eastern territory of Parsis. Cyrus united the Medes and Persians. Around 559 B.C., Cyrus's son Cambyses was ruling as a vassal of the Medes, reunited the two regions and Cyrus built a great Empire.[19] It was considered to be the first world power built by the Persian Kings. Numerous countries and diverse people were living in a huge area which was encompassing North-Eastern India to the East to Egypt in the west. Historically, this period was significant in terms of building socio-economic and

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[15] Ahmadi, Hamid (2014), "Unity within Diversity: Foundation and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critical Middle East Studies,* 135.
[16] Abdi, Kemayar (2001) "Nationalism, Politics, and the Development of Archaeology in Iran", *American Journal of Archaeology,* 51**.**
[17] Abrahamian, Ervand (2006), *A History of Modern Iran,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2.
[18] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 46.
[19] ibid, 151

political institutions as well as cultural traditions which have played a decisive throughout Iranian history.[20] The Achaemenid Empire found its glory again under Darius who took over the power in late sixth B.C.[21] In order to maintain political stability and order, Achaemenid Empire developed institutions like Satrap, appointing governors, and courts, and enjoyed sovereignty over a large swath of territories. Achaemenids ruled world's greatest Empire for almost two hundred years.

After the death of Alexander and the fall of Macedonia, Seleucid Empire was established in 312 B.C. under the leadership of Seleucus. It gained its paramount position under Antiochus III in 223 B.C.[22] Seleucid dynasty lasted till 63 B.C. Parni nomad tribes from central Asia founded Parthian empire, which confronted with Hellenic ruler, conquered Seleucid city Seleucia. Georgia, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Iran, Iraq, and Armenia, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine as well as some Parts of Turkey were comprising the Parthian empire. When Mithradates II took control over the empire, the Parthians began to appropriate their ancestry from both' Greeks and Achaemenians.[23] Arsacid dynasty ruled the empire which was including Iran and Mesopotamia. It lasted for more than four and half century, which records longer than their predecessors, the Achaemenids and successors Sassanians.[24]

This long-standing empire came to an end when Ardeshir a Persian, governor of 'Fars' under Parthian rule revolted against Parthian king in 224 A. D.[25] and established Sassanian dynasty which lasted till the Arab invasion in seventh century. This period is known to be a glorious history of present Iran. They envisioned and implemented the religion-political cooperation as the pillar of their polity, and to fuse the national and religious traditions in the services of a political agenda.[26] Historians claim that Sassanians restored the Iranian traditions and obliterated Greek cultural influence. During Sassanid rule, there had been centralisation of power, agricultural

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[20] Dandamaev, M.A. (1989), *A Political History of Achaemenid Empire,* Translated by Vogelsang, W.J, Leiden: E. J. Brill, p xi.

[21] Olmstead A. T. (1948), *History of the Persian Empire,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 108.

[22] Campbell, C. Tyler (2014), *An Empire on the Brink of Destruction: The Stability of the Seleucid Empire Under Antiochus IV,* Honours thesis, Orlando: Burnett Honors College at University of Florida.

[23] Curtis, E. Glenn and Hooglund, Eric (2008), *Iran: A Country Study,* Washington: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 11.

[24] Pourshariati, Parvaneh (2008), *Decline and fall of the Sasanian Empire: Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran,* London: I.B. Tauris, 20.

[25] Lendering, Jona (2017), "Parthian Empire", *Iran Chamber Society,* [Online Web] Accessed on 20 December 2017 URL: http://www.iranchamber.com/history/parthians/parthians.php.

[26] Pourshariati, Parvaneh (2008), *Decline and fall of the Sasanian Empire: Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran,* London: I.B. Tauris, 33.

development, technological improvements, and ambitious urban planning. They declared Zoroastrianism as their state religion. Sassanid rulers designated themselves with the title of *Shahanshah* (King of Kings). He was sovereign over numerous petty rulers, known as *Shardars.*[27] This dynasty bound a huge territory with different ethnic and tribal groups and ruled the region from 224 A.D to 632 A.D.

Eventually, the rise of Islam in Arab and their expansion led to the end of Sassanid Empire. In 637, Arab forces occupied the capital of Ctesiphon, and in 641-42 A.D. they defeated the Sassanian army at Nahavand. Material and social bankruptcy of the Sassanian rulers became easy prey for the Arab invasions; native population easily cooperated with Islamic power because they had nothing to lose by cooperating with them.[28] The Arabs who defeated Sassanian Empire were not having only aim to conquer the territory but also to spread the new religion 'Islam' among the people of conquered region. However, Islam came with certain advantages in Iran, therefore the conversion of Iranian masses was high in urban areas but it could not get much pace among the rural areas and peasantry/agricultural labour class. Iran could not become a fully Muslim society until the ninth century A.D.[29]

However, Iranians were gradually entered into the new religious community, but Arabs did not destroy the Iranian political institutions and culture. Arab rulers continued with the Sassanian coinage system. they adopted Sassanian administrative institutions as the office of *vizier*, minister (*divan)*, and a bureau or register for controlling state revenue and expenditure.[30] They also appropriated Iranian trapping and court ceremonial practices of Sassanian monarchy. After the conquest it was the Iranian population that captured the most of the administrative positions. Later, these Iranians mastered in the Islamic learning and they immensely contributed to the significant branches of Islamic learning, including philology, philosophy, literature, history, geography, jurisprudence, medicine, and science.[31] Although, in 696, Arabic language was made as language of the court, but Persian remained as a language of

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[27] Curtis, E. Glenn and Hooglund, Eric (2008), *Iran: A Country Study,* Washington: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 11.

[28] ibid, 13

[29] History of Iran: The Arab Conquest, *Iran Chamber Society* [Online Web] Accessed on 22 December 2017 URL: http://www.iranchamber.com/history/islamic_conquest/islamic_conquest.php.

[30] Curtis, E. Glenn and Hooglund, Eric (2008), *Iran: A Country Study,* Washington: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 13.

[31] ibid, 14

the masses. Arab's victory over the Sassanians marks a significant turning point in Iranian history. There have been many instances in Iranian history when foreigners invaded an entire country and ruled over, but these events had brought only a change of rulers but barely touched the lives of most Iranians, who continued an unchanging identity in the countryside.[32]

The unified Islamic State broke down during the ninth and tenth centuries, and local powers started to revolt, first at the periphery then at the centre. The Samanids had brought many Turkish soldiers from central Asia on the north-eastern frontier of Iran-*zamin*. The Seljuk Turks were a tribe of *Sunni* Muslim Turkomans from central Asia. These Turks overthrew the Samanid and Ghaznavid rulers in north-eastern Iran in mid of the eleventh century.[33] With the beginning of the Seljuq (Turk) conquest, there were continuing Turkish immigrations in the Iran which continued even in later dynasties of Iran. These migrations had a profound impact on the course of Iranian history. This migration made the complex ethnic mosaic of the country. It led to the introduction of new Turkish-speaking nomadic tribes into the Iranian ethnic mosaic and Turkification of about one-fourth of the Iranian population.[34] These migrations did not disturb the basic fabrics of settled life in the region when they appeared in Iran, and these Turks became the part of an existing Islamic culture composed of Iranian elements.[35]

Mongol invasions reached northeastern area of Iran in the early thirteenth century and by 1250 they captured all of Iran except Kerman, Fars, Lorestan and some isolated strongholds.[36] Civil strife and internal resistance against Mongols from 1335 to 1380 weakened the central authority. Turkic conqueror Tamerlane (*Timur*) who draw his ancestry from the family of Genghis Khan, destroyed many Iranian cities and undid most of the progress Mongol ruler Ghazan had achieved.[37] Tamerlane's son Shahrokh Shah (1405-47) made an integrated Iranian Empire for a short period of time with great trouble.

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[32] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 63.
[33] ibid, 67
[34] ibid, 67
[35] ibid, 68
[36] ibid, 68
[37] History of Iran: Turks and Mongols, *Iran Chamber society,* [online web] Accessed on 23 December 2017 URL: http://www.iranchamber.com/history/turks_mongols/turks_mongols.php.

Timurid state was replaced by the Safavids. According to historians, Safavids were the Turkic speaking who claimed to be descendant of Musa Kazem, the seventh Imam of *Shi'a*, but some argues a family of Kurdish ancestor migrated to Azerbaijan in eleventh century.[38] In 1501, Heider's son Isma'il defeated the Shrivanshah and *Aq Qounlu* (White Sheep), captured southern Azerbaijan, and eventually he was crowned as *Shanshah-e-Iran* at Tabriz. Furthermore, his victory over the Uzbeks extended Safavid rule to Khorasan and the former Timur state at Herat.[39]

The modern identity of Iran as a nation can be traced long back, but Safavid dynasty had a profound impact shaping the national identity of Iran. Safavid was the most significant ruling dynasty. After the Arab/Muslim conquest over Persia Safavids ruled one of the greatest empires in the history of Iran. These were the Safavids who established the Twelver school of *Shi'a* Islam as the official religion of their empire in 1501 A.D.[40] This event marked one of the most important turning points in Islamic as well as Iranian history. The history of Iran as a united, independent *Shi'a* nation began with Safavid dynasty. Safavids were controlling a vast territory stretching from Alpine region of the Caucasus Mountains to the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.[41] It was one of the "gunpowder Empires" along with Mughals and Ottoman.[42] Safavids established their base in Ardabil and were controlling all over Greater Iran.[43] *Shi'a* Islam was made as a basic foundation for Iranian national identity even though most of the population was embracing Sunni belief of Islam, but gradually belief shifted to *Shia'ism*. Limbert argues that in modern Iran the relationship between state and *Shi'ism* is complex, and modern ideas of nationalism have sometimes distorted the connection. Originally there was no inherent link between being Shia and being Iranian.[44]

The decline of Safavid dynasty began with the death of Shah Abbas. After a long political disturbance; interventions of Afghans, Ottomans, Russians, and internal

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[38] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 70.

[39] ibid, 71.

[40] ibid, 71.

 ibid, 71.

Rudi, Mathee, (2010), "Was Safavid Iran was Empire", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* 53 (1/2): 239.

[42] Safavid dynasty [online web] Accessed on 23 July 2016 URL: https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/HIST351-7.3-Safavid-Dynasty.pdf.

[43] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 70

[44] ibid, 71

revolts led to the end of Safavids rule in 1772. Agha Mohammad Khan founded the Qajar dynasty in 1979, who belonged to Qajar tribe of Turkic origin. He led the political and military campaign against Zands, which ended at Kerman with defeat and death of their last prince, Lotf Ali Khan in 1794, and in 1796 he crowned himself with the title of *Shahanshah*.[45] Although, Qajar dynasty lasted until 1925, but the years of this dynasty were not like the previous dynasties. These were the years of political weakness, humiliating military and diplomatic defeats, loss of territory and economic stagnation.[46] One important aspect of this period is spreading nationalism among the common masses in response to foreign, particularly western interference in Iranian politics. Eventually, the consequences of the First World War prepared the ground for the collapse of the Qajar dynasty.

Weak Qajar Shah was failed to manage the consequences of the War and the internal disenchantment of the people of Iran. Following the War Reza Shah Pahlavi led the coup against Qajar Shah, and in 1925 he captured power. Following the successful coup, Reza Shah tried to establish a modern western nation.[47] Without considering the local peculiar conditions of the society with authoritarian rule, he established European institutions. Pahlavi established a well-trained and unified force. He focuses on both the state-building and the nation-building. Pahlavi rule was overthrown by the Iranian revolution in 1979. There are many factors that contributed to the end of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi's rule; autocracy, forced westernisation of Iranian culture and society, and many others. With the end of Pahlavi dynasty, Iran became the Islamic Republic which transformed the Iranian national identity from language to religion.

The political continuity and the existence of the State from ancient time have been the basic foundation of the Iranian modern nation-state. Ahmadi (2014) argued that the continuity of the Iranian state is 2500 years old, as old as second to the Chinese state in its antiquity. In Iran, there was a great civilization, but it was the presence of state which has been a dominant feature throughout the history. Although several times in history, the nature of the Iranian state has been interrupted by the foreign invasion such as first by the Alexander, latter by the Arabs, but the Persian mythology,

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[45] ibid, 75
[46] ibid, 75
[47] Chehabi H. E. (1998), "The Pahlavi Period", *Iranian Studies,* 31 (3/4): 495.

historical narratives, and idea of the state, have been able to survive and it has played determining role in the emergence of the modern nation in Iran.[48] The idea of monarchy is also one of the factors which led the continuity and sustainability of the Iranian state from centuries. The importance of monarchy can be imagined by the writing of Firdousi's '*Shahnaemeh',* who had documented and glorified pre-Islamic semi-mythical ancient past to the tenth century B.C. which has important significance in the contemporary nation building process. About the significance of monarchy Ahmadi says that "the idea of monarchy was heavily influenced by Iranian historical mythologies, which not only provided a political frame of reference but an ethical guide for behaviour".[49]

In fact, Iranian state has been governed by the different ethnic and tribal groups in its different historical times. The institutions such as state and monarchy has not been ethnically based institutions. These institutions have been governed by the different ethnic and tribal groups in the different times of history, and most of them did not interrupt but they maintained Iranian culture, strengthened the territorial integrity, and preserved and propagated the formal religion.[50] Iranian state and Monarchy have been in the hands of Arabs, Turks, Turcoman (Afshars) Lurs (Zands) Mongol (Il Khanids and Timurids) and Azeris (Safavids to Qajar), Only Pahlavi dynasty was ethnically Persian. All these rulers of different dynasties have ruled as *Shahanshah* of Iran with and are committed to maintaining the integrity of the country.[51] Ali M. Sahariati a prominent Iranian Intellectual is considered the principle of monarchy (*Shahashahi*) as the unifying force even in the pre-Islamic era too. These two political institutions (state/monarchy) have integrated different tribal groups into a single political entity that is Iranian state. Whenever the state weakened, different tribal groups took over the power but the separation from Iran has not been a trend in the history up to the twentieth century.[52]

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[48] Ahmadi, Hamid (2014), "Unity within Diversity: Foundation and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critical Middle East Studies,* 49.
[49] Ansari M. Ali (2012), *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 291.
[50] Ahmadi, Hamid (2014), "Unity within Diversity: Foundation and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critical Middle East Studies,* 135.
[51] ibid, 135
[52] ibid, 136

For claiming and reclaiming a culture and group of peoples as part and parcel of a particular nation, historical claims have been major tools for every nation. Iran has been the land of civilization and glorious empires. The historical figures such as Cyrus, Darius and others becomes the source of pride for Iranians. The political continuity and consistent presence of Iranian state in the form of various empires from ancient time have provided robust foundation to Iranian national identity and it has concretized the national boundary of the Iranian land.

Cultural Heritage of Iran

Culture has been a significant determinant of a nation and its identity. The very existence of a national culture determines the life of a modern nation-state. In order to highlight the importance of culture, Ernest Gellner argues that "the institutionalisation of cultural norms shared over a large geographical area, and the dissemination of national ideologies, can only occur in modern, mass societies".[53] Furthermore, he argues that "homogenous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation occurs in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitutes very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identified".[54] Eric Hobsbawm emphasis that "the identification of historical process whereby national elites tries to construct culturally a national lineage is undoubtedly valuable. The (re)stating of ceremonies, and attempts to encode selective cultural forms and practices as evidence of primeval traditions, remains an important theme and persists in contemporary cultural constructions of national identity".[55] For the nation-building process the central authorities reinforce the cultural homogeneity through the regional and local authority.[56]

Being a great civilization in remote past of ancient antiquity Iran adhere a rich cultural continuity that shapes the national culture of a vast territory and provides a kind of commonness among the Iranian people. As nation-building is a modern project which started in Iran since late ninetieth and early twentieth centuries. It was during Reza

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[53] Edensor, Tim (2002), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, New York: Oxford Press, 3
[54] ibid, 3
[55] ibid, 14
[56] ibid, 2

Shah Pahlavi's rule, the process of nation-building intensified. Through state authorities, a specific Persian culture and cultural history have been attempted to spread across Iran.

Due to geographical vulnerability of Iran, it has been possible for foreigners to invade the country. It has led to cultural intermingling in Iran over a period of time. There has been a cultural openness and readiness to adopt foreign ways in religion, politics, and social practices. Iranians have traditionally accepted and then mastered foreign customs by giving them an Iranian form and making them a part of their own culture.[57] This tradition of adaptation of foreign ways and manners has been criticized by some of the Iranian by saying that it implies surrender to Western and foreign attempts. Limbert argued that "Iranian protected and preserved their identity as Iranians by their adaptability, and Iran has endured because of its people have been willing to their talents to new ways of life and thoughts"[58]. Iranian civilization owes its survival and greatness to the adoption of two "foreign" innovations: Islam and the Arabic alphabet. The modern Persian language, with Arabic loanwords written in Arabic script, broke the narrow limits of pre-Islamic 'Persian' to become a language of scholarship and literature. Similarly, when Turks brought their Turkish language to northern Iran in the eleventh century, Azerbaijan could become Turkish in language but remain Iranian in culture.[59] Turk rulers patronized Persian poets and artists and supported the union intelligentsia which administered their empire and collected their tax.[60] In the time of Mongol rule, it was brilliant age for Persian culture, poets, painters, historians, and calligraphers, all created tremendous works of art during the thirteenth and fourteenth century.[61] Limbert argued that the "survival of the four historical traditions; charismatic leadership, the importance of religion, the importance of justice and adoption of foreign ways preserved the foundation of national identity through periods when strong outside forces made Iranians change the form of their nation's political and social life[62]..

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[57] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 50.
[58] ibid, 51
[59] ibid, 51-52
[60] ibid, 68
[61] ibid, 69
[62] ibid, 52

One of the significant hallmarks of the Iranian national identity has been the Persian language which has been spoken by a large group of the section since ancient time.[63] Persian language has been in use since the time of Achaemenians from the sixth century B.C.E. It has acquired Iranian character, and national identity and unity of Iran and has become intertwined.[64] Moreover, Abdi says that "in recent times the Persian language has been one of the most important contexts in which Iranian nationalism has flourished". According to the nationalist discourse, it is the Persian language that has preserved the cultural independence of Iran, and has given the authentic national identity to the Iranian people.[65] Limbert argue that "Iran's heritage has survived devastating foreign invasion that would have obliterated the culture of less adaptable people".[66] When Arabs invaded in the seventh century A. D. most of the West Asian and North African regions were Arabic speaking but it was Iran that remained with Persian language. Even though following Arab Rule, Arabic became the official language of the court in 696, but Persian did not wither away it was widely spoken and used as the mass language of Iran. Even when Sassanian Empire collapsed, the Persian language and culture 'the basic foundations of Iranian nation' adapted and flourished within a new Islamic civilization.[67] Considering the importance of Iranian culture Mehrdad Mashayekhi analysed that "throughout history, Iran has witnessed waves of invasions from the outside but thanks to the rich cultural heritage, Iranian have survived such devastating experiences and each time has adapted themselves to the new conditions while preserving some aspects of their ancient civilization, most notably the Persian language".[68]

In Iran the literary culture has not been new, there are many scholars from ancient to modern Iran have been discovered by the historians. Firdowsi was one of them whose writings especially *Shahnameh* has a profound impact on Iranian literary culture. Even today, an illiterate person from Iran knows Firdowsi and many recite his poem. The *Shahnameh* has strengthened the feeling of oneness in the Iranian history.

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[63] Abdi, Kemayar (2001) "Nationalism, Politics, and the Development of Archaeology in Iran", *American Journal of Archaeology,* 52.
[64] ibid, 52
[65] Kia, Mehrdad (1998), "Persian nationalism and the campaign for language purification", [online web] Accessed on 3 August 2017 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00263209808701220. 6.
[66] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 46.
[67] ibid, 46.
[68] Ahmadi, Hamid (2014), "Unity within Diversity: Foundation and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critical Middle East Studies,* 138.

Literary works of Firdowsi, Hafiz, Sa'di, Nezami, and Rumi are not only confined to the literate or educated Iranian, but also to uneducated ones who cannot be able to sign, but they have learned to quote at length from this great literature in general discussions.[69] One of the important elements in these works is that the poets have disgraced any divisions such as factional, racial, religious, and linguistic divisions and have upheld the idea of universal human values.[70] This cultural legacy has expressed in different literary works in the form of both prose and poetry. Iranian culture has a unique and significant role in the creation of the notion and sense of the national identity among the different sections of the society. Significantly Persian language has not been just literary language but the language of writing history and education in all parts of the country even in non-Persian regions.[71] The Cultural consciousness of Iranians permits them to view themselves as one of the people deserving the respect and admiration of international society.

Along with Persian language, other aspect of Iranian culture custom, tradition, and festivals of not only post-Islamic but also the pre-Islamic celebrations of festival are valuable for the national unity of different sections of the society. An ancient celebration called 'Now Ruz' is a suitable example, it is a thirteen days' observance of the New Year. It has its 2000 years history which has acquired many traditional rituals which have been shared by all Iranians from different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds.[72] In the process a of nation's formation mythology is one of the important factors that shape and reshape the cultural and social values of a society. In Iran, the ancient Persian mythology has been produced and reproduced by the painters, writers, artists. For example, the paintings of Aghdashloo and artists Shirin Nehsat have expressed the ancient Iranian myths through their works. From prehistoric times, these are the myths through which various people make sense and try to explain for themselves the mysteries of natural phenomenon, the beginning, and end of things, their customs and value systems etc.[73] Even in contemporary Iran, these mythical elements persist deeply among the Iranians which give worldviews to an ordinary person.

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[69] ibid, 139
[70] ibid, 139
[71] ibid, 139
[72] ibid, 140
[73] Saadi-Nejad, Manya (2009), "Mythological Themes in Iranian Culture and Art: Traditional and Contemporary Perspective", *Iranian Studies,* 42 (2):231.

Reza Shah Pahlavi (1921-1941) purposely led the foundation for the cultural folklore and ethnographic studies to build a modern nation-state. The nationalist intellectuals of this time developed a categorisation of Iranian folklore materials, popular songs, proverbs, stories, custom and rituals in authentic and non-authentic. For them the cultural element which compatible with modernity is labelled as authentic and which is not labelled as non-authentic.[74] Individual intellectuals and state-sponsored studies on ethnography and folklore are in contrast. Reza Shah supported folkloristics and ethnographic activities which were facilitating his project of nation-building, while intellectuals were representing the masses. From the beginning (1921), he followed various measures to create a united, centralised and homogenous nation-state in Iran. Iranian nationalists understood the importance of historical consciousness for spreading nationalist sentiment among the different groups of the Iranian society, therefore Reza Shah in his campaign for national unity, made heavy use of the awareness of great Persian history.[75]

Creating a popular culture Reza Shah attempted to erase the local tribal and other ethnic cultures in order to form a homogenous nation. The aim of centralizing reform attempted to transform the Iranian peasants, and tribesman from a distinct identity to a modern citizen of Iran. For the purpose, he followed mandatory conscription, expanded a secular educational system as well as dress reforms to erase traces of the regional distinctiveness of these different cultural units.[76]

As Iran has been the home of ancient civilization a cultural continuity is persistent element in the Iranian national identity. Even though routinely country has been invaded by different ethnic groups in ancient and medieval times and ruled by foreign powers but Iranian has survived their cultural identity. Persian language, literature becomes the hallmark of Iranian identity and it has produced high mass culture.

Religion

However, nationalism in the western countries came with values of democracy, equality, and secularism etc. The appearance of nationalism was directly related to the

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[74] Vejdani, Farzin (2012), "Appropriating the Masses: Folklore Studies, Ethnography, and Interwar Iranian Nationalism", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 4 (3): 507.
[75] Cottam, Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 27.
[76] Vejdani, Farzin (2012), "Appropriating the Masses: Folklore Studies, Ethnography, and Interwar Iranian Nationalism", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 4 (3): 514.

decline in clerical power and the diversification of religious sect.[77] In West, nationalism is an inherently secular movement that brings together members of many different religious sects in a common loyalty. However, Iranian nationalism although inspired by the West, it shaped in an Iranian particularism where religion played an inevitable role. In Islam every aspect of life is subject to religious principles, the two-sword concept does not exist in Islamic society. Brown argued that in Iran the sense of common religion was very strong, prior to nineteenth-century no one has suspected that loyalty towards the religion and the state of Iran were two different loyalties.[78] However, Reza Shah attempted for a secular and modern nation with dictatorial rule but that project could not succeed, and the presence of clergy groups and their influence in the society has been profound since the establishment of Safavid dynasty.

State and religion have been closely connected to each other since Achaemenid rule in Iran, the space of religion in politics was not only confined to the time of Safavid rule. During the Achaemenians, kings were associating themselves with the Iranian God Ahura Mazda who was also the God of their numerous subject peoples. Zoroastrianism during the Sassanian dynasty became a state religion. Safavids embraced *Shi'a* Islam and also declared *Shi'ism* as state religion at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[79] As soon as Safavid empire came into existence, it acquired a Persian character. Role of *Shi'ism* proved to determine on three levels. First, it became a socio-religious system that penetrated in most areas of urban and village life. Third as a legal system, and lastly it became a theoretical background for most of the intellectual activities.[80] Due to the religious presence in every aspect of life in Iranian society, *Shi'ite* clergy got an upper hand or a degree of independence, and their role in the state affairs was also increased.[81] The present Islamic Republic of Iran has drawn its strength from effective use of religious vocabulary and symbols familiar

[77] Cottam, Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 135.

[78] Browne, G. Edward (2012), *A Literary History of Persia,* London: Routledge, 14

[79] Ahmadi, Hamid (2014), "Unity within Diversity: Foundation and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critical Middle East Studies,* 140.

[80] Abrahamian, Ervand (2006), *A History of Modern Iran,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 199.

[81] Chehabi, H. E. (1991), "Religion and Politics in Iran: How Theocratic is the Islamic Republic", *American Academy Arts and Sciences,* 69.

to the majority of Iranians, who had resisted the Pahlavi's attempt to transform them into citizens of a secular state.[82]

In the twentieth-century Iran, the role of religion, particularly Islam has become controversial in the strengthening and weakening of Iranian national identity. Since the establishment of Islamic Republic, the debate or controversy over the relation between Islam and Iran, religion and nationality, is continuing and deepening.[83] There are two extreme and one realistic view on the relationship between religion and nation in Iran. The first view emphasises and upholds the pre-Islamic history and gives importance to the Iranian national identity. This view excludes any role of Islam. One of the prominent nationalists Fath Ali Akhond Zadeh upholds this view of Iranian nationalism. Contrary to this view scholars such as Ali Muhammed Naqvi and Reza Daravi emphasised Iranian identity in its Islamic context. These scholars reject the role of ancient Iranian history, culture, and tradition in the formation of Iranian identity. Third views which mediate both of these by the Ali Shariati. He upholds both factors (Pre-Islamic and Islamic) in shaping and reshaping the Iranian national identity. These scholars shaped the mutual relationship between Iranian culture and religion, especially *Shi'ism*.[84] However, there are different views over the Islamic and pre-Islamic era and their impact on Iranian national identity, but it is visible that Iran's pre-Islamic history, culture, and tradition are alive in Islamic Iran, and Islam in Iran has gained different flavour with indigenous Iranian cultural practices. Pre-Islamic celebration Now Ruz has important Islamic Characteristics claimed by *ulema* such as Majlesi, who mentioned that "Ali the first Shia Imam was born during Now Ruz, and the Prophet Muhammed appointed him as his successor on Now Ruz".[85] Moreover, *Shi'a* Islam became a political weapon to defend Iranianness and to maintain its identity in the time of Arab and Turk expeditions.

Following the Sassanid dynasty, as soon as Islam covered the country *Shi'a* Islam was embraced and declared as state religion, essentially with intention to revive the Iranian culture in order to maintain its distinctive national identity.[86] Safavids and

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[82] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 48.
[83] Ahmadi, Hamid (2014), "Unity within Diversity: Foundation and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critical Middle East Studies,* 140.
[84] ibid, 141.
[85] ibid, 142.
[86] Mojtahed-Zadeh, Pirouz (2007), "Iran: An Old Civilization and a New Nation State", *Focus on Geography*, 49 (4): 26.

successive regimes of the Iran including had patronised Muharram with aim to cement the relationship between state and its subjects, and to preserve and propagate a different identity of Iran against the neighbouring *Sunni* world; Ottoman, Uzbeks, Pashtuns.[87]

Over the relationship between Iranian Pre-Islamic religious (Zoroastrian) culture and *Shi'ism* Bamdadan draw an analogy from Neitzsche. As Neitzsche believed that the Christianity is a metamorphosis of Judaism. Bamdadan argues that the *Shi'ism* and *Sufi'ism* are the metamorphosis of Zoroastrianism into Islam.[88] Bamdadan is not only scholar who came to this conclusion that *Shi'ism* has conglomerated with major principle of pre-Islamic Iranian religious culture. James Darnester analysed that "the *Shi'a* doctrine of Mahdism is an Islamic adaptation of the pre-Islamic religious belief in divine grace".[89] Ashura (pre-Islamic), and Muharram are celebrated in the same month. *Shi'a* of Iran celebrates and observes the Karbala, Ashura, and Muharram as similar as traditional Catholics commemorate Christ's Easter Passion at Mount Calvary.[90]

The meaning of Iranism and *Shi'ism* has been transformed in contemporary Iran. The two intertwining terms have facilitated a national consciousness among the Iranian masses. With the outbreak of Iranian revolution, *Shi'ism* transformed into a highly politicised doctrine, it became radical and revolutionary ideology rather than just a conservative religion. The massage of Muharram was interpreted with an aim to fight for social justice and to bring political revolution. Slogans were formed as "Make Every Month Muharram, Every Day Ashura, and Every Place Karbala".[91] The revolutionary ideologue of *Shi'ism* in Islamic Republic of Iran interpreted *Shi'ism* and war of Karbala according to their ideology in contemporary Iran, although a group of conservative clerics did not associate themselves with this interpretation of *Shi'ism*.[92]

The Iranian nation, soon after the revolution became an Islamic Republic where religion became a guiding principle of the state and newly adopted constitution is based on the Sharia. In the constitution-making process, an assembly was constituted

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[87] Abrahamian, Ervand (2006), *A History of Modern Iran,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 5.
[88] ibid, 5
[89] ibid, 5
[90] ibid, 5.
[91] ibid, 5.
[92] ibid, 7.

through the election, where majority of the member was from the clerical background. In August 1979, in his inaugural message in this assembly, Ayatollah Khomeini said that he expected it to create "a hundred percent Islamic constitution".[93] In 1971 Khomeini had drafted a new Islamic government system for Iran which is known as *Vilayat-e-Faqih* (Jurisprudence of Clerics). In an interview, Khomeini declared that government expert would be responsible for the basic functioning of the state, but it would be supervised by a *Faqih*. The true parliament would not be important, even though some sort of assembly would be facilitating to the government, and the requirement of the laws will be accomplished by Islam.[94]

The omnipresence of religion in Iranian society from ancient time has developed a different kind of nation and national identity to the West. Secularism has not triumphed the in Iranian model of nationalism but religion itself became a weapon against imperialism which consolidated Iranian society into a nation. In a conflict of civilizations in the contemporary world, Iran is the example of surviving with Islamic ideology, keeping religion as the integral part of politics, and resisting cultural imperialism of secular western democracies. In present Iran, as an Islamic Republic, Iran manifests its national identity with *Shi'a* identity. So, religion (*Shi'ism*) is triumphed over the language (*Persian*) in the construction of the Iranian national identity, after the Iranian revolution in 1979. Analysing the role of religion Ali M Ansari (2012) argued that "*Shi'ism* which had become the state religion under the Safavids (1501-1736) had undergone a number of permutations, and whereas the *ulemas* had gained in profile and strength under the patronage of the Safavids, the faith as practiced is now generally understood as having been considerably more eclectic than previously appreciated".[95] Furthermore, he argued it relations to religious identity "as is true of other forms of identity, are often shaped by competition, and as will be shown the development of a clearly identifiable religious narrative was the product not only of the politicised *ulema*, but also of their opponents who sought to ascribe all ills to the pervasiveness of Islam".[96] *Shi'ism* has been politicised in modern Iran in order to resist the external forces and to consolidate

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[93] Chehabi, H. E. (1991), "Religion and Politics in Iran: How Theocratic is the Islamic Republic", *American Academy Arts and Sciences,* 76.
[94] ibid, 75.
[95] Ansari M. Ali (2012), *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 29.
[96] ibid, 29.

internal society. Analysing the modern world in the contradictions of modernity with traditionalism, Ernest Gellner argues that "it is the curious, supremely important fact that, of all the great traditional belief systems, Islam alone, far from weakening, has become an increasingly powerful social and political mobilising force".[97] After the revolution *Shi'ism* became one of the significant forces of political and social mobilisation and other ideological groups have a minimal scope to alter the politics.

From the ancient Achaemenid dynasty to the contemporary Islamic Republic, religion has been playing a pivotal role to determine the identity of the people in the country as well as it has brought together to the different ethnic and linguistic groups of the country, for instances Azeris, groups of Kurds and some other ethnic communities. These groups are different to the Persian in terms of language but similar in case of religious belief. So, in shaping and reshaping the national identity of Iran religion has been inevitable. Historian's claim that Safavid adopted *Shi'ism* as state religion instead of *Sunni* Islam in order to maintain and preserve and maintain the distinctive identity of Persian empire since Ottoman and Arab empires were dominated by *Sunni Islam* in order to avoid the cultural and religious influence of these giant empires, Safavids chose to *Shi'ism*.[98] Long standing struggle and war with Ottoman empire motivated Safavid to create a more cohesive identity to counter the ottoman threat.[99]

Emergence of Nationalism in Modern Iran

In the modern Iranian history, construction and re-construction of the Iranian national identity has been a recurrent theme where political mobilisation has been a major tool.[100] The process of the formation of nation-state came with modernity, particularly influenced by the Western nation-state in the nineteenth century. The process, what Anderson says, the communication system particularly print media has been instrumental for the pervasiveness of nationalism among the people of a defined territory. Despite having different overriding identities of the different people in a country, print media connects them and provides a political imagination about their

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[97] The foreword notes of Ernest Gellner, (ed.) in Said Amir Arjomand, (1984), *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Iran,* London: The Macmillan Press Ltd. ix.

[98] Keddie, R. Nikki and Richard, Yann (2003), *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution,* Yale: Yale University Press, 11.

[99] ibid, 11

[100] Keyman, Fuat, E. and Yilmaz Suhnaz (2006), "Modernity and Nationalism: Turkey and Iran in Comparative Perspective", (ed.) in Delanty Gerard and Krishan Kumar, *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism,* Sage Publication Ltd. 431.

country and, inspire for a common goal. The process of modernisation entered in Iran with modern technology and this modernisation process gave birth to the ideas for a society called a modern nation-state. In the turn of the nineteenth century, Iranian intellectuals brought a new conception of their society and territory, that was the imagination of 'nation'. In this time when nationalism was the significant discourse in Western politics and academic writings, number of Iranian intellectuals observing this phenomenon, however, particularly from royal background. These western educated and western-inspired local intellectuals prepared a vocabulary and language for Iranian nationalism. Through which they sought to formulate a modern Iran with a strong state.[101] Even though the nationalism and its influence began from the 1815, but it was confined to a small nationalist group of educated and conscious elites, but majority of the illiterate common Iranians were not aware of this term till 1950.

Iranian society represents the best example of the contradiction between modernity and traditionalism, but change and evolution are inevitable. However, the modern ideas of the west have been opposed by the Iranian clerical group, the knowledge of Quran has been supreme for them and human rationality is not beyond this sacred knowledge given by the Mohammed. Even though the Clerical group was against the modern idea of nationalism but political dynamics, changing world of outside made them an ardent nationalist with their own style.

Reformation and Emergence of Nationalism during Qajar Rule

Symptoms of modernity appeared in Iran in the first half of the nineteenth century. The beginning of modern nation-state in Iran can be seen as a response against imperialism and defence to the neighbours. State-led reforms during the Qajar rule was having a primary aim to modernise Iranian military forces which created the conditions for the evolution of Iranian national consciousness and Iranian nationalism. Modernity with its instrument such as science, technology, rationalism, and the nature of interactions with outside world are the driving forces of nationalism and imagination for the modern nation in Iran. Through the modern tools of investigations and discipline which were developed in European countries, Iranian remote past was being brought to Iranians. Nationalism requires the elaboration of a real or invented

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[101] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini*, USA: Palgrave Macmillan Press.

remote past. The archaeological data are manipulated for nationalists' purposes. These archaeological developments began since nineteenth and twentieth century for the nation-building process, and the roots were extended back into the mists of the pre-historic past.

Philip L. Kohl (1998) argues that "each emergent nation-state had to construct its own national identity, which required the active forgetting or misremembering and the rediscovery or inventing of one's past. Myths of national origin had to be elaborated from a variety of sources, including the materials remains found within the state's demarcated territorial border".[102] According to the theorist of nationalism, nation is an objective, durable phenomenon, the origin of which can be traced back to remote antiquity.[103] Iranian nationalists clearly understand the importance of historical consciousness in spreading a nationalist sentiment. Especially Reza Shah heavily used the awareness of the great history in his campaign to strengthen national unity.[104] The discoveries of historical, religious, philological, and archaeological sources in Iran (during Qajar and Pahlavi rule) have built and strengthened the concept of modern nation-state. Ansari argued that, they were European intellectuals by whom Iranian history have been explored during the second half of the nineteenth century. Given the importance of history to identity, especially in the development of a distinctive national identity, the notion that Iranian had been devoid of any historical consciousness of their pre-Islamic past, this in effect was a myth of the most profound political consciousness for the future development of nationalist narratives.[105] Modern Historiography connected to the present inhabitants of Iranian people to Iran's pre-Islamic past, while philology emphasised the distinction of the Persian language from Arabs and Turkic neighbours. Especially, during the Reza Shah, when these developments took place, ethnic nationalism triumphed over civic nationalism. Reza Shah emphasised more on Persian identity, and Aryan race of Iranian people to consolidate Iranian identity. The myth of Persian decadence was to be rationalised in the nineteenth century through the application of new methods and the development of new discipline of scholarship. This myth was articulated in two distinct but related ways. One process, the more durable in terms of perceptions, witnessed the active

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[102] Kohl, L. Philip (1998), "Nationalism and Archaeology: On the Constructions of Nations and the Reconstructions of the Remote Past", *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 27 (): 224.
[103] ibid, 225.
[104] ibid, 225.
[105] ibid, 17

production of mythologies through the medium of literature. The other, reflected the rationalization of myth into potent ideology, providing a scientific explanation and solution to the problem of Iranian decay.[106]

In Iran first printing press was established in 1819. As we go by the logic of Anderson, then it proved to be a cornerstone in the development of Iranian nationalism. The printing press was played a crucial role in the development of the Iranian nation-state; it accelerated the production of Journals periodicals and books, most significantly Iranian were introduced with western values of constitution, democracy, and rule of law etc. Printing press made them aware about their country, politics, international environment, colonial interventions, and ruler's despotism and weakness. Western values inspired them for rule of law, constitution, and democracy.

The history of twentieth-century Iran under Qajar rule was not fortunate. These were the year of political weakness, humiliating military and diplomatic defeats, loss of territory, economic stagnation[107] and conflicts across Iran. On one hand Iran was facing war and threats from the Russia, Ottoman Empire, and Britain, on the other hand internal conflicts of different groups, and these conflicts were innumerable between clan versus clan, tribe versus tribe, tribe against the village, tribe against town, town against village, village against village, village against town, town against town.[108] Among these different social and communal groups, a sense of regional and communal belongingness was enough strong which often haunts to the national integration. State apparatus and government was failed to instil a deep feeling of loyalty or patriotism among the different identity groups of the Iranian country.[109] Qajar dynasty rule was despotic, decentralized in nature with government system. Local or regional tribal leaders and Khans had immense autonomy in the regional and local affairs. These tribal leaders, landlords, and their autonomy became a major hurdle in the process of centralization of power, unity of government actions, and reconstruction of a strong state.[110]

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[106] ibid, 12.

[107] Limbert, John W. (1987), *Iran at the War with History,* London: Westview Press, 75.

[108] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 27-28.

[109] Sluglett, Peter (2014), "The Waning of Empires: The British, the Ottomans, and the Russians in the Caucasus and North Iran", *Middle East Critique,* 23 (2): 192.

[110] Farazmand, Ali (1999), "Administrative Reform in Modern Iran: An Historical Analysis", *International Journal of Public Administration,* 22 (6): 917-946.

Unlike other colonial countries such as India, Egypt and Muslim or Arab world, Iran was never officially colonised, but it shared all other aspects of the colonial experiences.[111] Russian occupation in Iran, forced Iran to sign treaties of Gulistan (1813), and Turkomanchai (1828). In response to Russia's increasing power in Iran Britain began to balance the Russian influence through developing a buffer in Afghanistan, and invaded southern Iran. Britain forced Iran to sign the treaty of Paris (1857). These treaties granted the commercial capitulations to Britain and Russia. Treaties provided these two powers almost unlimited economic rights over Iran. They were free to open commercial offices any part of the country, their merchant and traders were exempted from the high import duties and internal tariffs as well they were free from the jurisdiction of *Sharia*. These developments blunted the power of clergy, and opened Iran to trade with the European powers, foreign market and capitalism in general. Through this process Iranian economy transformed, it was connected with larger world economy. Political situation and economic transformation forced Qajar rulers for reforms. However, the reforms measures were taken in order to strengthen the power of monarchy, but it led the other development such as the emergence of middle class, intelligentsia, and an urban educated class which has been the driving force in the nationalist movement of Iran.

The first modernisation drive under the Qajar rule was led by the Abbas, the governor of Azerbaijan, who developed the *Nizam-e-Jadid* (new order) in Azerbaijan. He created a force recruiting six thousand soldiers, equipped with modern artillery updated weapons, fairly paid by the government on regular basis, well dressed, with decent accommodation, and trained by the European officers.[112] A musket plant, a cannon factory as well as a translation office for engineering and military manuals were developed by Abbas Mirza to provide the war essentials to the newly established army in Tabriz. Moreover, he opened Iran's first permanent mission in Paris and London. In order to ensure the continuity of the modernisation Iranian students were sent to study and acquire the knowledge of modern practical subjects; engineering, medicine, gun making, military science, modern languages, and typography.

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[111] Dabashi, Hamid (2008), *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire,* London: Routledge, 46.
[112] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 52.

Second major reforms and modernising project were led by the Mirza Muhammed Taki Khan Farahani, known as Amir Kabir. To supply this army, and to overcome the foreign, he built fifteen new factories which were involved in the production of cannon, light arms, uniforms, epaulets, cloths, calicoes, carriages, papers, cast iron, lead, copper, sugar, and other essentials.[113] He founded the countries first official newspaper titled "newspaper of current affairs" (*Ruznameh-i Vaqah-ye Ittifaqiyeh*). Most importantly, he led the foundation of the first secular modern high school, *Dar al-Fonun* (abode of learning) in Iran. He was intended to modernise Iranian state and administration to strengthen Iran in world Politics. However, all these efforts failed because of despotic rule and royal corruption on one hand, tribalism, shortage of public revenue, and foreign interventions on the other[114], but for the national consciousness, these reforms proved significant among a literate upper class. Moreover, the establishment of telegraph lines, postal system in 1870, the improvements of old roads, facilitated communications which narrowed the distance between the urban centres.[115]

The class system in Iran has been classified by the Abrahamian Ervand considering the social and political structure of Iran. First, constitutes with the Qajar dynasty to, ministers, royal princes, *Darbaris,* princely governors, other associates of the governments, local elites consisted of a provincial aristocrat (*ashraf*), tribal chiefs (*khans*), urban administrators (*mirzas*), and state-appointed religious officials. These political elite of Qajar rule were the aristocrats and the ruling class (*tabakeh-i hakemeh*) of the country. The second class was the major middle propertied class; urban merchant, shopkeepers, and small work shop owners. These were the middle-class businessman, traders, and craftsmen who use to finance the bazar mosque, schools (*maktabs*), seminaries (*madrshehs),* and theatre (*takiyas*) and other charitable foundations (*vaqf*).[116] This middle class was closely connected to the religious *ulemas,* from high rank to lower and had family ties with them. Third class was comprised with especial wage labourers, artisans, porters, construction workers,

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[113] ibid, 54.

[114] Farazmand, Ali (1999), "Administrative Reforms in Modern Iran: An Historical Analysis", *International Journal of Public Administration.* 22 (6): 922.

[115] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 58-59.

[116] ibid, 58.

apprentices, and household servants. Finally, the fourth major class was constituted by the majority of the country who were the rural tribal people, and landless peasants.[117]

The promotion of modern education (learning from West) and the establishment of the Dar-al Fonun, introduced new knowledge which led to the new aspirations and new occupations. Therefore, a professional middle class emerged as modern intelligentsia. This educated class brought new conceptions and a great desire to modernising reforms, which combined with the *bazaris,* religious class, anti-Qajar attitude, that united against the Qajar rule.[118]

Modern means of communication such as printing press was established, modernisation of military forces and administrative system took place, education system had taken a modern form, but nationalism did not percolate in the entire country, it was confined to only an urban educated class, while rural peasantry, tribes, and religious clerics remained aloof to the light of nationalism. The pervasiveness of nationalism was not widespread across the country.

Constitutional Revolution

Bazaari system has been a centre point of Iran's commercial activities throughout the ninetieth century. When Iranian market was exposed to the foreign market, the traditional structure of Iranian economy began to lost its ground and a modern market took over the economy. Although these economic changes led the general prosperity in Iran and a twelve-fold increase in Iranian foreign trade but local economy began to vanish.[119] Local merchant and craftsmen were badly affected by these developments. Throughout this process, a new capitalist class began to rise and their aspirations for a greater share in the political process became instrumental in the rise and success of the constitutional revolution of 1905-06. Iranian commercial classes were antagonized by the manipulation of monopolies, concessions, and tariff revisions which favoured foreign enterprises. This class's interests were ruined by the imperial power. In the beginning of the 19th century, this middle class was fragmented and separated with

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[117] ibid, 33-34.
[118] ibid, 51.
[119] Nashat, Guity (1981), "From Bazaar to Market: Foreign Trade and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century", *Iranian Studies*, 14 (1/2): 53.

their own immediate gain. The same middle class after 100 years transformed into a broad nationwide force; first time conscious for their common political objectives.[120]

From the clerical class side, many Muslim religious leaders were alienated from the dynasty, because of its inability to halt the Western penetration and the challenge to traditional values and religious authority.[121] The religious establishment was the powerful instrument to attack crown control. The *ulemas,* especially learned in religious law, generally the teachers and lawgivers, their social role and status made them a rallying point for political dissidence and anti-statism. During this period there was an inherent tension between the state and the religious authorities, furthermore, it was more intensified by the reforms. *Ulemas* were not usually aligned with wealth and secular power, they were concerned about how the strengthening of the crown and great magnates in the judicial and administrative spheres limited clerical functions and deprived the ordinary populace of any recourse in economic and other disputes with landlords, aristocrats and courtiers.[122] As Qajar rule became less stable and the traditional role of *ulemas* was threatened, they turned to be a vanguard of the movement to break Qajar's absolutism. The highly respected *mujtahids* condemned Qajar's autocracy as religiously 'abhorrent'. Clergies were at the forefront of the key protests and demonstrations, in Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and other major cities of the country. The clerical class was anti-secular, but comprised an independent mouthpiece of national sentiment.

Qajar rule was not centralised, provinces were not in the actual control of the central government, and tribal chieftains were enjoying uncontrolled autonomy. In the provinces, powerful tribes, the Kurds, Bakhtiyari, Arabs, Qashqa'i and others found in the decline of Qajar authority and development of anarchical conditions the opportunity to strengthen their practical autonomy.[123] Moreover, most of the Iranians who were in the power position in the Qajar government were either in the control of Britain or Russia, and they were serving the interest of these two powers. Anglo-Russian rivalry was not only confined to a competition for economic concessions, but

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[120] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 58.
[121] Klein, Ira (1980), "Prospero"s Magic: Imperialism and Nationalism in Iran 1909-11", *Journal of Asian History,* 14 (1): 53.
[122] ibid, 54.
[123] Klein, Ira (1980), "Prospero"s Magic: Imperialism and Nationalism in Iran 1909-11", *Journal of Asian History,* 14 (1): 53.

the diplomatic missions of both the powers sought to gain influence over individual Iranians whose position could be utilized.[124] Even Qajar ruler Mohammed Ali for the survival of its despotism was dependent upon these powers, particularly on Russia. Due to the weak power of Qajar, local tribal chieftains and other local authorities were more trusted by Britain for secure and beneficial commercial activities in Iran. Many tribal and local authorities were in the hands of Britain. Apparently, the inability of the Qajar Shah to halt the disintegration and colonisation of Iran alienated much of the educated classes.

The modern intelligentsia of Iran enlightened with modern values of the West were very few, and heterogeneous in their origin; one group belongs to the royal aristocrats, most of the civil servants, army officers, and others were from the clerics and merchant class. Despite having different economic and political backgrounds, they came together with a common desire for fundamental change in Iran. This intelligentsia aimed a modern and strong nation with modern values of constitutionalism, secularism, and nationalism.[125] At the same time, they were in opposition to reactionary monarchy, conservatism of clergies, and exploitative tentacles of the imperialists. This intelligentsia failed to bring substantial political changes due to the political and social condition of the country, as well as because of its own low strength. They could form a uniform direction and there was often a temporary shift in their tactics. At one moment they found themselves to be allied with the Shah against *ulema*s, at another moment with the *ulemas* against Shah; it was during the constitutional revolution intelligentsia allied with the *ulemas* against both, Shah and the Imperial powers.[126] The impact of these intellectuals has been profound in Iranian society and especially in the constitutional revolution. Jamal Afghani' and Malkum Khan are the significant intellectuals who inspired Iranian for modern values. Among the constitutionalists Malkum Khan was one of the ardent supporters and propagators of the constitutional state in Iran. However, he could not participate in the actual constitutional revolution in 1906-11, but the revolutionaries in Tehran

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[124] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 160.

[125] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 62.

[126] ibid, 62.

acknowledged him as their mentor, reprinted his writings, and claimed his advice for revolution.[127]

However, the image of Britain was quite opposite among the liberal nationalists. Liberal nationalists believed that with the tradition of liberalism and democracy behind them, surely the British in Iran would favour the liberal faction of the Iranian politician. The image of Britain was so strong that during the 1906 revolution, constitutionalists turned to the British for support.[128] In the liberals, nationalists, constitutionalists mind Britain was the protector and promoter of democracy and constitution. Through Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907, Iran was divided into British and Russian sphere of influence and centre remained as a neutral buffer zone. Most of the Iranian including liberals realised that Britain which personifies the liberal ideals had joined hands with power that was anti-thesis of those ideals in an alliance that threatened not only the liberal cause in Iran but also the very existence of the nation.[129]

Apart from the intellectual impact of the west the common anger and humiliation from colonial intervention particularly the foreign economic inroads resulted in a rise and triumph of Iranian nationalism.[130] In response to foreign influence in Iranian politics, society and economy, a revolutionary nationalism was attempting to limit the foreign influence.[131] Social discontent and nationalism were stimulated in the late nineteenth century, particularly in 1891 tobacco movement, as resistance against Imperialism. The Qazar rulers from the reign of the Nasir-U-Din had become increasingly desperate for funds. They lacked an efficient financial system, they had sold off considerable portions of their patrimony of crown land, and they possessed a formidable appetite for spending on western luxuries.[132] King Nasser ed-Din Shah's decision of giving a concession to British on Tobacco business led the huge discontent among the people. These were the religious leaders who proved instrumental in general awakening of the masses and leading a movement against concession. Ayatollah Mirza Shirazi wrote successive letters to Shah to prohibit

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[127] ibid, 69.
[128] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 162.
[129] ibid, 164.
[130] ibid, 160.
[131] Klein, Ira (1980), "Prospero"s Magic: Imperialism and Nationalism in Iran 1909-11", *Journal of Asian History,* 14 (1): 49.
[132] ibid, 51-52.

concession. Getting no response from the Shah he issued a famous *fatwa* (edict) to prohibit the use of tobacco, which became a major national crisis.[133] In 1891 there were open protests in large cities of Iran organised by clergies. These movements came in its culmination in 1892, consequently, tobacco concession was cancelled.[134] Nasir ed-Din Shah turned out to be more politically repressive in the aftermath of the Tobacco concession movement. He forbade the opening of new schools, banned important newspapers, he fuelled the tribal rivalries and communal antagonism among different groups.[135]

In 1905, another mass movement took place against the Qajar. This time there was a universal agreement that the power of the King should be limited and that the only way to accomplish that was to create a constitution and parliament.[136] However, the long-term causes of the revolutions were structural and rooted in the political dynamics of the ninetieth century, but these were the short-term economic causes that triggered in 1904-05.[137] Finally, the economic crisis of early 1905 pushed towards the intensification of the constitutional revolution. The year witnessed huge economic crisis due to a bad harvest, heavy snows, disruption of trade caused by cholera pandemic, as well as international political upheavals, such as war between Russia and Japan and others.[138] This economic crisis resulted in public anger and demonstrations, initially, it led to the three major public protests with increasing intensity. The first protests occurred in the month of Muharram in 1905, in Tehran, which was initiated by almost two hundred shopkeepers and money lenders. The main demands of the group were; the government must reverse its present disastrous policy of helping Russian merchants, creditors, and manufacturers at the expense of the Iranian businessman. The government must protect our business, even if their products are not yet as good as those of foreign competitors.[139] Muzaffar al-Din Shah failed to meet the demands of the protesters.

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[133] Dabashi, Hamid (2008), *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire,* London: Routledge, 47.
[134] Ta'ati, Poopak (1988), "Concern for Autonomy in Twentieth Century Iran", *Civilisations,* 38 (2): 29.
[135] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 400.
[136] Ta'ati, Poopak (1988), "Concern for Autonomy in Twentieth Century Iran", *Civilisations,* 38 (2): 30.
[137] Abrahamian, Ervand (2008), *A History of Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 41.
[138] Abrahamian, Ervand (1979), "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 10 (3): 404.
[139] ibid, 404.

The second protest took place in December 2005 when two major Iranian sugar importers were harassed by the Governor of Tehran in the charge of sugar hoarding. The news of the tortures of traders spread across the *Bazaar*. It led to the sudden spark of protest people closed their shops, guild leaders began to organise meetings. *Ulemas*, merchants, students, guild leaders under the leadership of Tabatabai, and Behbehani launched a strong protest. This time they forced the government to meet their demands. Shah accepted their demands to replace the governor, to form a house of Justice, to dismiss the Naus, and to enforcement of *Sharia*.[140] It was the first time when the people heard the slogan and phrase 'Long Live the Nation of Iran' just after the victory of their protest.[141]

The third protest sparked in the summer 1906. It was because Shah failed to convey a 'House of Justice, at the same time political activists were imprisoned in large number. Guilds called another protest in support of detained preachers; secret societies mobilized the theology students. They began to gather at a police station where these leaders and preachers were prisoned. One of the protesters shot dead by the Police, which inflamed the demonstrations with high intensity. Outside the central Mosque, demonstrators were intercepted by the Cossack, in a short scuffle between police and protesters twenty-two people were killed and almost hundred people left with serious injuries.[142] *Ulemas* and clergies from different ranks under the leadership of Tabatabai, and Behbehani called for strike leaving all the judicial duties and going to holly shrine of Qom. From there they warned Shah that they would leave the country without spiritual guidance which will cause disruption in the legal transactions and judicial decisions until the Shah fulfilled his earlier promises. Finally, different committees of guild, modern intelligentsia, clergy, and others came with common opinion not only a House of Justice but also Constituent National Assembly to draft a written constitution for Iran must be there in the demands.[143]

Hamid Dabashi (2008) argued that if "the Babi movement in Iran is the last medieval insurrection in the Iranian feudal society, the constitutional revolution is the first modern revolution upon its successful formation as a nation-state".[144] in the process

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[140] ibid, 405.
[141] ibid, 405.
[142] ibid, 405.
[143] ibid, 407.
[144] Dabashi, Hamid (2008), *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire,* London: Routledge, 83.

of social reformulation revolution brought substantial changes. In the revolutions, wide spectrum of forces and classes participated. Nationalist, Islamist, and socialist ideological elements were very much visible in the course of the constitutional revolution. According to Dabashi (2008), "the constitutional revolution is the most significant development in modern Iranian history by virtue of its marking the collapse of the medieval Persian political culture and the simultaneous rise and expansion of the Iranian civil society".[145] It was the creative imagination of national modern intelligentsia that shapes the notion of Iranian nation. These intellectuals have played a significant role in theorising the idea and ideal of civil society as the social site of "the nation".[146] The inauguration of the idea of civil society was one of the significant took its foundation from constitutional revolution which is considered to be significant political development than anything else. Intellectual across the country, from diverse social origin began to conceive of themselves as the unitary spokespersons of a new national reality. The nationalisation of Iranian history, culture, and literature in particular, was an instrumental development in that critical point of time.[147]

However, the revolution got over in June 1906 but the struggle for the constitution began after that. The electorate was divided among the 156 constituencies. The Written constitution was massively curtailing the power of monarch and making parliament more powerful. Through a document known as 'fundamental laws' the national assembly was accomplished with extensive powers as "the representative of the whole people".[148] Deputies got signed of the Muzaffar al-Din Shah in 30 December in 1906. Shah advised his ministers to bypass the national assembly, governor was asked to disregard the provincial councils. On the issue of the future structure of the government Shah and National Assembly found themselves on contradiction which resulted in major conflicts. Shah considering the decline of the all-royal authority, halted to rectify the 'Supplementary Fundamental Laws' and proposed a counter-proposal which was strengthening his authority. The counter-proposal initiated the public protests across the country. Shah was forced to sign the constitution; he sends his princes to parliament to take the oath of allegiance to the

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[145] ibid, 83.
[146] ibid, 87.
[147] ibid. 87.
[148] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 89.

constitution.[149] Eventually, he ratifies the constitution in October 1907.[150] With the establishment of the constitutional government, Iranian state acquired a new concept of nation.

However, the traditional regime was collapsed and people from different social, economic, religious, ethnic, and regional background participated in the constitutional revolution and established a constitutional monarch. Although Iran experienced constitutional government, but at the same time it exposed political differences between the secular are religious intellectuals which persist even in present Iranian politics.[151] This ideological difference was very much visible in the very beginning of the parliament. The secular group of the deputies was very much intended to apply the European socio-political and economic model in Iran with strict separation of religion and government. Therefore, religious group was suspicious that secularism could undermine the role of religion in Iranian society. These differences, economic crisis, attack from the royal families paralysed the Parliament and again situation became favourable for imperial interference in Iran. The political upheaval began and it led to the civil war in Iran. Clashes between royalists and constitutionalist began in major cities of Iran such as Tabriz, Tehran and other. However, finally in 1909 constitution was being secured and a second national assembly was convened. The difference between tribal leaders or government and central government widened, and the situation worsened when many powerful tribal leaders led the warfare for greater autonomy during 1911.

Internal political upheaval and the political situation during the First World War forced intellectuals to think about a powerful government as the only available option. Iranian nationalism got a new direction when through Anglo-Iranian Treaty of 1919, Britain acquired a virtual control over the military and financial resources of Iran.[152] The elites and intellectuals during war period relied on the rise of authoritarian rulers and the rebirth of the father of the country[153]. The nationalist intelligentsia of Iran to

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[149] ibid, 91.
[150] ibid, 92.
[151] Curtis, E. Glenn and Hooglund, Eric (2008), *Iran: A Country Study,* Washington: Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, 11.
[152] Ghods, Reza, M. (1991), "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 27 (1): 35-45.
[153] Zenoozian, Samiee, Mostafa, Esfehanian, Davood, Aliyari, Hosein, and Panahi, Saleh'i, Assadallah (2016), "Archaism and Nationalism of the Principle of Political Identity of Pahlavi I", *Journal of Politics and Law,* 9 (6): 82.

look after a strong leader who could meet the original goals of the constitutionalists with consolidation and centralisation of the country[154].

The advent of printing press that was modern means of communication, industrialization and in order to facilitate countrywide trade and commerce construction of railway tracks and long roads made able to Iranian state to penetrate even in the remotest areas where earlier it was not possible. These modernisation process in Iran resulted into new development in the society. On one hand it gave the birth to a new modern intelligentsia equipped with the western knowledge which becomes instrumental in the rise of national-self-consciousness and produced a modern middle class who was aspiring for new reforms in the society and polity, and other hand economic exploitation by the imperial powers; Britain and Russia gave the common ground to fight against these outsiders. This process has led to the rise of nationalism but it was not wide spread and confined to the urban middle and upper-class Iranians.

Rise of Reza Shah and the Construction of a Nation

The constitutional revolution ended with drafting a constitution, the institution of the national assembly was adopted with idea of separation of powers, relatively decentralization of powers was in favour of the provinces. These developments could not get their actual culmination; because country was politically disunited, economically poor, technologically backward, and internationally a victim of imperialism or great power politics.[155] During this unstable period of constitutional government, all the classes of the Iranian society were exhausted by the fratricidal condition of Iran. The reformist intelligentsia followed Reza Khan, and hailed him as a stabilizing, nationalist force[156]. Aristocrats, clergies, workers, merchants, everyone exhausted and suffered from the internal political instability and party bickering. There was a general perception among the most of the Iranians that only a strong government and strong leadership only could restore political and economic stability to the nation and that would be in interests of all Iranians. In this regard an Azeri historian Ahmad Kasravi says that "the existence of many autonomous power centres

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[154] ibid, 82.

[155] Katouzian, Homayoun (1979), "Nationalist Trends in Iran, 1921-1926", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 10 (4): 533.

[156] Ghods, Reza, M. (1991), "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 27 (1): 37.

in Iran which had led to a complete lack of security and the virtual disintegration of the country was the chief reason that the people of Iran supported the establishment of a dictatorship as the only means of stopping the disintegration of the country and establishing security".[157]

In 1921, Qajar's monarchy has been overthrown, and Reza Khan took over the central authority.[158] From 1921 to 1926, he consolidated his power. In February 1921, he acquired the title of Army Commander. In the same year he dismissed the Sayyid Ziya who was designated as Prime Minister. He gained the control over the war ministry, and captured authority over the military. Gendarmerie was transferred to war ministry from the interior ministry. He replaced the Swedish and British officers with his colleagues from the Cossack division, and put down the gendarmerie mutinies in Tabriz and Mashad.[159] Finally, in February 1925, he became the supreme Commander-in-Chief, the title which was previously held by the Shah. In October 1925, he terminated the Qajar rule formally, and declared himself as Shah of Iran on 13 December 1925.[160]

During the Reza Shah, a new political regime gradually took shape which was modeled on western pattern but from the outward.[161] European model was followed to establish new institutions in Iran. The army was supposed to maintain domestic order, to neutralize the power of tribes with an effective monopoly on the use of legitimate force.[162] In order to centralise and maintain order over a vast territory and ethnically diverse country, Reza Shah attempted various policies regarding control over tribes, provinces, and separatist movements. Moreover, he launched several policies; educational policies to spread modern nationalism across the country, economic policies to centralise the economic activities and to abolish the regional economic autonomy which could strengthen the regional separatist movement. Through various means Reza Shah tried to develop a strong nation-state. Under his leadership, Iran

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[157] Quoted in, Ghods, Reza, M. (1991), "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 27 (1): 37.
[158] Ta'ati, Poopak (1988), "Concern for Autonomy in Twentieth Century Iran", *Civilisations,* 38 (2): 30.
[159] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 199.
[160] Amanolahi, Sekandar (2002), "Reza Shah and the Lurs: The Impact of the Modern State on Luristan", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 6 (1/2): 193-218.
[161] Chehabi H. E. (1998), "The Pahlavi Period", *Iranian Studies,* 31 (3/4): 495.
[162] ibid, 497.

was successful to win its first legal battles against the British over control of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in south, and it made some gain from an oil agreement in 1933.[163] However, Reza Shah had built modern defence forces, but its ability to face the challenges from outside world was still limited.

Provincial Policies

The time between constitutional revolution to military coup by Reza Shah in 1921 has been politically unstable. Provinces, tribal leaders, were not the under control of central government, separatist movements in many parts of Iran were prevalent. Before Reza Shah various Shaikhs, provinces, and tribal leaders were directly dealing with Imperial power; Britain and Russia independently. Moreover, Shaikh Khaz'al of Khuzestan who was claiming that the south had to become independent from the rest of Iran.[164] Three of Iran's most economically important provinces, Gilan, Azerbaijan, and Khorasan were become embroiled with serious separatist movements; oil rich Khuzestan was an autonomous, British sponsored sheikhdom; tribal and robber band activities in rest part of the country were so widespread that no areas and roads were safe.[165] During the end of 1924, he directed his efforts against Khaz'al of Mohammera and established full control over Khuzestan.[166] Reza Shah with his well-organised military force and effective bureaucracy within the short period of three years destroyed the separatist movements and securitized even the most remote areas of the country, and ensured Khuzestan was an integral part of Iran. The power of governors of the provinces was curtailed. Having subdued Gilan, he went on to defeat the separatists in Azerbaijan, Lurestan, Kurdistan, Fars, and Khorasan, and brought all these provinces under control.[167]

The nationalism of Reza Shah was not complicated, it was clear to him that the governors should be subject to rigid central control. In order to remove any possibility of their acquiring independent power, he took from them the right to collect taxes and

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[163] Mojtahed-Zadeh, Pirouz (2007), "Iran: An Old Civilization and a New Nation State", *Focus on Geography*, 49 (4): 26.
[164] Ta'ati, Poopak (1988), "Concern for Autonomy in Twentieth Century Iran", *Civilisations,* 38 (2): 37.
[165] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 98.
[166] Ta'ati, Poopak (1988), "Concern for Autonomy in Twentieth Century Iran", *Civilisations,* 38 (2): 37.
[167] Laing, Margaret (1977), *The Shah,* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 40.

did hand over this power to special financial advisor from Tehran.[168] Moreover, he revised the administration of the provinces several times for ensuring central control over provinces, and later in his reign he took the logical step of destroying the old provincial boundaries and created ten new provinces with new names. These attempts were made to destroy the local particularism, ethnic nationalism, and tribalism. As had been his purpose in ordering a new uniform national headgear and national dress, Reza Shah established new administrative units in order to erase forever of any feeling of provincial, tribal, or sectional differences[169]. These attempts were greatly welcomed by the intelligentsia from all the socio-economic background. Reformist intellectuals who led the constitutional revolution, appreciated the Reza Shah's suppression of political revolts, and they saw in him the embodiment of constitutional ideals.

Economic policies of the Reza Shah were the major factor that weakened the possibilities of the provincial autonomy. He designated the Tehran as the clearinghouse for the Iran's economy and the centre of commerce. Central government took control over foreign trade and made government monopolies of sugar, tobacco and opium industry.[170] Trans-Iranian railroad was built, which provided Tehran's access to both the Caspian and the Persian Gulf. Consequently, there was a mass exodus of merchants and other middle-class elements from provinces to Tehran. The economic policies of Reza Shah affected traditional middle class, and a wider process of centralization augured the marginalisation of the provincial town and their loss of local power and influence.[171] These reforms destroyed the traditional commercial centres, and dislocated and obstructed the commercial life of Iran. Reza Shah tried to compensate for the ill effects of the economic reforms by establishing industries in various parts of the country, but commercially provinces did not recover.[172]

[168] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 98.
[169] ibid, 99.
[170] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 99.
[171] Cronin, Stephanie (2003), "Modernity, Change and Dictatorship in Iran: The New Order and its Opponents, 1927-1929", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 39 (2): 1-36.
[172] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 99.

Ordering Tribes

Tribal life itself was organisationally self-contained. Tribal units were governed by the tribal Chiefs (Khans); they collected taxes, and together with Mullahs, carried out the functions of the courts, both civil and criminal. There was little left for the central government to do and little reason for the tribes even to think of an external authority.[173] Over a period of time there are many tribes recognised suzerainty of Shah, but actual interference in tribal affairs was rare, and most of the tribes were enjoying autonomy and left alone to the central government. Tribal responses to the central government varied directly with the strength of the central government. If government was strong and effective tribal raids and depredation would be at minimum.[174] Since the time of constitutional revolution and till Reza Shah Coup, Iran experienced a politically weak government. Due to this political upheaval most of the tribal areas became dame of the lawlessness, and tribal raiding, depredation increased across Iran, and many strong tribal leaders especially Turkomans, Bakhtiyaris, and others revolted against central government.

Reza Khan strongly believed that tribal activities must be curtailed if Iran were to become a modern nation-state. Among the various programme of Reza Shah, disciplining the tribes had more appeal for nationalists than any other policy.[175] His image as a strong leader was not only based on rhetoric alone, but also to a great extent he succeeded in establishing internal stability in Iran and it provided legitimacy from the people to his rule.[176] In order to establish a strong state and absolute power, the autonomy of tribes had to be destroyed. In order to gain complete control over the armed forces in 1921, Reza Shah assumed responsibility for internal security. he destroyed the independent contingent of Bakhtiyari tribesmen which was part of governmental armed forces. Carefully, he crushed the tribal revolts of Bakhtiyaris, Qashqais, Shahsevans and others. In 1922, he suppressed a Kurdish revolt led by a tribesman Simko who was a Shakkak Chief in Kurdistan.[177] Reza Shah strengthened his position by chastening on section of Kurdish tribe, and by bringing Gilan,

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[173] ibid, 52.
[174] ibid, 53.
[175] ibid, 59.
[176] Ghods, Reza, M. (1991), "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 27 (1): 38.
[177] ibid, 38.

Mazanderan, and Azerbaijan under Tehran's control.[178] In this course of action many tribal fighters were killed, weapons were captured and independent hostile tribal leaders were executed and brought to Tehran for forced exile.

After the withdrawal of Russia from Iran, Reza Shah got opportunity to down the Gilan revolt led by Sardar Kuchak Khan, and it was marked clear beginning of the centralisation of the authority and decline of the relative autonomy of the provinces.[179] In order to control tribal revolts and raids Reza Shah began to disarm their warriors, conscripted their youths, fuelled their rivalries, disrgarded their chiefs, confiscated their lands, and forced them into "model villages".[180] The tribal chiefs who left to be executed were brought to Tehran and put under surveillance, or otherwise removed from their tribes.[181] Even after 1926, many incidents of tribal rebellion occurred, but never again tribes were the serious challenge for Reza Shah. Other methods of Reza Shah for disciplining tribes were even more effective than military actions. Railroads, new roads and other developed system of transportation enabled the military forces to patrol the areas which were earlier inaccessible as well as to ensure the collection of taxes[182].

The tribal policy and other assimilation policies of Reza Shah had clear vision to transform the multi-ethnic empire into a unified state, and to do away with cultural plurality to establish one nation, one language, one culture and one political authority[183]. The policy of population dislocation through sedentrization and forced migration of nomadic groups had far-reaching homogenizing effects on the ethnic as well as the religious composition of the empire subjects[184]. Intellectuals and political elites also supported these policies of Reza Shah. They believed that for modernisation and modern state-building in Iran a low degree of cultural diversity and a high degree of ethnic homogeneity is an essential condition. During the twenty-year

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[178] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 60.
[179] Mojtahed-Zadeh, Pirouz (2007), "Iran: An Old Civilization and a New Nation State", *Focus on Geography*, 49 (4): 26.
[180] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 141.
[181] Ghods, Reza, M. (1991), "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 27 (1): 38.
[182] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 99.
[183] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 142.
[184] Atabaki, Touraj (2005) "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 25.

rule (1921-41), Reza Shah's Policies were inspired by intellectuals such as Kazemzadeh, Taqizadeh and Afshar. His policy of modernization through authoritarian style gradually changed Iran's traditional social as well as political setting[185]. Eliz Sansarian argues that the "Pahlavi rulers' policy on ethno-nationals and religious minorities was shaped by the goal to homogenize society and to do away with diversity to make everyone in an ethnic and religious minority into an "Iranian"".[186] Tribal lawlessness, disintegration of the provincial areas and their autonomy, and revolts of Ilakhans (Tribal Chiefs), were tackled by the Reza Shah and brought even most remote areas and diverse tribes into central control. Reza Shah's policies and actions related to disciplining tribes were received as positively by the most of the politically aware Iranians. Even those who were in opposition and critic of Reza Shah's dictatorship such as Mudarres and Mossadegh, appreciated his tribal disciplining policies, and regards it as a major contribution to the nation's internal security.[187]

Reforms and Nationalism

By controlling over the power, Reza Shah introduced a long-range of social and economic reforms to rebuild Iran as a strong and modern nation. He initiated the educational institution based on the western style with modern education system, modern economic structures with investment banks, state factories, department stores, and communication networks.[188] His long-range goal was to build Iran on the model of western developed nations. He adopted secularism, nationalism, anti-tribalism, educational development, and state capitalism to attain this goal of modern nation-state.[189] Under his leadership far reaching administrative, educational, social and economic reforms were instituted. Women were allowed to participate in public sphere, and to contribute in the modern development. Major road and communication were established, with the trans-Iranian railway between major cities and neighbouring countries; the development of mechanised agricultural method was introduced; planning for the construction of hydro-electric and irrigation dams was

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[185] ibid, 33

[186] Sansarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 5.

[187] Ghods, Reza, M. (1991), "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 27 (1): 38.

[188] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 140.

[189] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 142.

initiated; several industrial plants ranging from textile mills and sugar refineries to ferrous and non-ferrous factories were established.[190] State encouraged industrialization through ministry of industry. He imposed government monopoly over economy, raised high tariff walls, and financed modern plants. Excluding the oil plants, in 1925, there were only 20 modern industrial plants were functioning only with five large scale industrial plants. In 1941 it reached from 20 to 346, among these 146 were large-scale plants, as 37 textile mills, 8 sugar refineries, 11 matchbox making factories, 8 chemical enterprises, 2 modern glassworks, as well as 1 tobacco and 5 tea processing plants.[191] This industrial development resulted into the growth of wage earners employed in large modern factories. There were not more than 1,000 wage earners in modern industries in 1925, but it increased more than 50,000 in 1941.[192] A modern working class involved in several occupations excluding peasantry were constituted almost 170,000 workers during this period. This working class was representing only 4 percent of the total labour force, among them majority was constituted from Tehran and Tabriz.

The increasing growth in industry was able to transform the urban centre. The communal wards transformed into a new industrial, commercial, governmental residential district. These developments had changed the traditional living of a group of people who settled in urban areas, and break the traditional urban setting of the Iranians. However, the industrial development expanded, but oil industries remained under the control of distinctly a foreign company. The continued existence of imperial institutions and its interference in Iranian politics and economy such as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and the British Imperial Bank of Persia were not only a challenge for the growing sense of Iranian sovereignty but also clearly contradicted the nationalist ethos of Iran.[193]

In order to secularise Iran, Reza Shah introduces many reforms in judicial system. He assigned Davar a Swiss-educated for the task of reorganising the ministry of Justice. The traditional judges were replaced by the modern educated lawyers; modified

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[190] Gregory, Lois (1959), *The Shah and Persia,* Kent: The Orpington Press Limited, 81.
[191] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 146-147.
[192] ibid, 47.
[193] Ansari M. Ali (2012), *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 93.

version of the French Civil Code was introduced with Italian Penal Code, even though some of these statutes contradicted the Koranic canons.[194] Moreover, Reza Shah reduced the number of clergies in the national assembly. He disregarded the age-old Islamic custom and tradition. He put restriction on the performance of passion plays mourning the martyrdom of Imam Hussein.[195] Moreover, he denied permission for pilgrimage to Mecca, Medina, Najaf and Karbala for that he dined exit visas to applicants who were making the pilgrimage. Among these most dramatic steps were the takeover of all religious land and foundations by the state in 1939.[196]

The educational reforms during the Reza shah have been most impressive. Between 1925 to 1941, the yearly allocation for education increased around twelve-fold. By the end of the Reza Shah rule in 1941, more than 287,245 children were enrolled in 2,336 modern primary schools, which were run by the education ministry.[197] In the state modern secondary school, in 1925, 14,488 students were enrolled in 74 schools, but it sharply increased till 1941 to 28,194 in 110 private and 241 state secondary schools.[198] It was in 1934 Tehran university was established for higher education. During the range of Reza Shah, higher education impressively increased. In the beginning of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925, there were less than 600 students were enrolled in only six higher learning modern educational institutions of the country, in the college of medicine, agriculture, teachers' training, law, literature, and political science.[199] By 1941 the number of colleges and higher learning institutions as well as enrolment of students sharply increased; in the eleven colleges Tehran university around 3,300 students were enrolled for higher education. Moreover, the number of graduates in foreign universities sharply increased. Apart from these developments, by 1941, around 3,200 employees were taking training by the different government in technical schools, and education ministry alone was training 173,907 adults in evening literacy classes.[200] However, reform steps were taken by the government but

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[194] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 140.
[195] ibid, 141.
[196] ibid, 141.
[197] ibid, 145.
[198] ibid, 145.
[199] ibid, 145.
[200] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 145.

it was confined to the urban areas and majority of the 90 per cent population remained illiterate. These reforms were limited and not reached to the larger masses.

Majority of these students in higher education and secondary education, entered in the government services in the field of administration, academics, law, engineering or technology, medical, and science. As bureaucracy and educational facilities expanded in the country the intelligentsia also expanded in its pace. Before Reza Shah this intelligentsia had been a small stratum but during Reza Shah this intelligentsia grew significantly as 7 per cent of the total country's labour force, and transformed into a significant modern middle class. This new emerging intelligentsia had a common attitude toward social economic and political modernisation, with shared similar educational, occupational and economic background.

In the process of nation-building during the Reza Shah, the use history for this project has an instrumental role. Over the importance of history Talinn Grigor (2004) argued that "depicting the past was not only projected as sets of events and forms that could be renewed but also as a vivid collective memory that must be reawakened".[201] Moreover, the systematic, political and official use of "memory" was manipulated by the elite as an integral part of the process of modernisation and nation-building. Society for National Heritage (SNH) which was emerged during the constitutional revolution in 1906 already had a modernist project for Iran, which strengthened the Iranian nationalism that was assumed by the Reza Shah. This intelligentsia from SNH and other had major role in the process of bringing the remote past, the glory of Achaemenid and Sassanid empires. In order to develop an Iranian national identity and nationalism, Reza Shah used pre-Islamic historical past as the basis of modern Iran. The history and archaeology produced and reproduced. In 1930, Pahlavi state created cultural institutions, most notably the organisation of public instruction, and the Institute for Speeches and Sermons for historical narratives. Educational institutions professionalised a generation of historians. Glorification of historical personalities such as Rustam, Cyrus the Great, Darius and others became significant for nationalist project. In 1927, the Ministry of Education issued its own standardize primary school history curriculum, which differ from earlier version.[202]

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[201] Grigor, Talinn (2004), "Re-cultivating "Good Taste": The Early Pahlavi Modernists and their Society for National Heritage", *Iranian Studies*, 37 (1): 40.
[202] Vejdani, Farzin (2015), *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture*, California: Stanford University Press. 75

The Reza Shah's contribution to the Iranian nationalism was to provide it with a solid popular base of support. Through his reforms such as expanding commerce, education, government services, and army, a middle class emerged which was the mainstay of nationalism.[203] As state apparatus and bureaucracy expanded it led to the rise of bureaucrats and professional middle class later, they proved both system maintainers and system challengers or political intelligentsia in Iran.[204] Moreover, through these developments a modern intelligentsia imagined a nation which must be free from external interference, must be established a stable government, and robust economic system.

While crafting an autocratic style of rule, Reza Shah has a clear vision of Iran. The goal was clear to build a modern secular nation-state like Turkey. The glorification of the pre-Islamic past, promotion and emphasis on ethno-linguistic dimensions of Iranian identity were coupled with promotion of an ardently secular version of nationalism.[205] The modern intelligentsia and politicians had a vision to develop a distinct political and cultural entity based on rich history of pre-Islamic Iran, with emphasis on Persian language. Project of modernisation was accompanied with clear aim to create a common national identity. These modernisation projects had top-down bottom approach which led the uneven development. The ruling elite ignored the social aspect or they failed to understand how Iranian society will be able to cope up with rapid pace of modernisation and the version of secular nationalism. Through secular ideology political elites of Iran attempted to shape the Iranian nationalism, and disregarded the role of Islam in society. The ruling elites emphasised on pre-Islamic past, and deliberately they accentuated the differences between Aryan Iranian and the Arabs.[206] The basic objective behind these efforts were to de-emphasise Arab and Islamic influence on Iranian history.[207] During Reza Shah rule academic and archaeological development came with purpose to establish a secular and modern concept of Nationalism and transformed Iranian national identity. Persian nationalism

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[203] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 99.
[204] Farazmand, Ali (1999), "Administrative Reforms in Modern Iran: An Historical Analysis", *International Journal of Public Administration.* 22 (6): 926.
[205] Keyman, Fuat, E. and Yilmaz Suhnaz (2006), "Modernity and Nationalism: Turkey and Iran in Comparative Perspective", (ed.) in Delanty Gerard and Krishan Kumar, *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism,* Sage Publication Ltd". 431
[206] Keyman, Fuat, E. and Yilmaz Suhnaz (2006), "Modernity and Nationalism: Turkey and Iran in Comparative Perspective", (ed.) in Delanty Gerard and Krishan Kumar, *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism,* Sage Publication Ltd. 432.
[207] ibid, 32.

with the Iranian state achieved its fullest expression throughout the range of Reza Shah's rule. He attempted to converge state, monarchy and Persian nationalism into an ideological unity that could explicitly reject the cultural pluralism as anti-modern and treasonous.[208] Persian nationalism was linked with his plan of modernisation. A growing secular nationalism confined to the middle class the monarchy and the sectors dominated by foreign capital.[209]

With authoritarian power, Reza Shah initiated a number of socio-economic reforms, but without having any systematic blueprint. These attempts by Shah increased the gap between modern and traditional elites. The modern political elite admired Pahlavi defined unity of state, monarchy, and Persian nationalism.[210] Petite traditional elites viewed Iran in terms of unity of the state, with Persian nationalism and *Shi'ite* Islam. The modernisation project of Pahlavi was confined to the Urban, West oriented middle class, poor and rural societies were lagged behind.[211] Traditional and clergy groups were discontent with the Reza Shah's westernisation projects in Iran. During his time, many institutions followed the European model and many other social and cultural aspects of the European life were adopted, but since the Shah was very forceful about the application of his beliefs, his policies and reforms, unlike those of Ataturk, were very unpopular, especially among the clergy who felt alienated in the new society. For Iranians who had hitherto identified their political autonomy with their culture's continuity, Reza Shah's modernization efforts could only symbolize subjugation of the Iranian culture to that of the Europeans.[212] They perceived westernisation imposed by the Shah is corrupting Iranian society, and these efforts are threatening Islam and Iranian identity.[213]

World War II and Abdication of Reza Shah

Abdication of Reza Shah in War time in 1941 shows that, Iran which was in the path of modernisation and in the process of state and nation building, was not free from external powers and influences, and not able to defend Iran from external aggressions.

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[208] Helfgott, M. Leonrad (1980), "The Structural Foundations of the Minority Problem in Revolutionary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 13 (1/4): 195-214.
[209] ibid, 201.
[210] ibid, 201.
[211] ibid, 201.
[212] Ta'ati Poopak (1988), "Concern for Autonomy in Twentieth Century Iran", *Civilisations,* 38 (2): 38.
[213] Curtis, E. Glenn and Hooglund, Eric (2008), *Iran: A Country Study,* Washington: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 47.

During the War period Iran decided to remain neutral, but the presence of Germans in Iran became the issue for Britain and Soviet Union. These two allied powers demanded the expulsion of the Germans from Iran.[214] Two joint notes were sent to the Iran with demands of expulsion of the Germans from Iran in July 1941, but Reza Shah refused to meet their demands. When all the means of economic sanctions, diplomatic pressures were exhausted, Soviet Union and Britain launched military actions against Reza Shah to ensure the expulsion of Germans from Iran. This attitude of Reza Shah strengthened the belief of Allied power that he was supporting Nazi Germany. Till now already there was a general disenchantment among the Iranian massed against the Reza Shah. When Allied forces launched a military campaign, he could not find any support from the Iranian public. Moreover, he could not find full support of his own army.[215] British press in Tehran reported that a great majority of Iranian mass was against the Shah, they were ready to welcome any change. For them, war was preferable than the continuation of the Shah's regime. Through Allied powers' especially Britain and Soviet Union Reza Shah's rule was sealed.[216] Reza Shah has been abdicated and forced to Exile. The rising occupation of Britain and Russia in Tehran forced for negotiation. Eventually, Iranian government accepted the demands of allied forces and expelled all the Germans from Iran.

Besides the abdication of Shah, allied forces had some other future strategy for Iran. These two powers get control over the main transport rout from the Gulf to Soviet Union. Moreover, they divided into two parts; northern part as Soviet zone of influence and the southern part was British zone of influence, including the oil region. Even though they did not interfere in the actual administration of central authority. It was guaranteed that Iran's territorial integrity will be respected and foreign military will be withdrawn within six after the end of World War II.[217] With the support of allied powers Mohammed Reza Khan was declared as the Shah of after the abdication of his father Reza Shah. When Reza Shah took over in 1941, the legitimacy and continuity of his thrown were in question, and his followers were limited to a small

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[214] Eshraghi, F. (1984), "The Immediate Aftermath of Anglo-Soviet Occupation of Iran in August 1941", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 20 (3): 324-351.

[215] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 165.

[216] ibid, 165.

[217] Ervand, Abrahmian (2008), *A History of Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 98.

number of his father's supporters.[218] He took control over the armed forces. Mohammed Reza Shah agreed to cooperate fully with the allied power to maintain his control over the armed forces.

Mohammed Reza Shah agreed almost all the terms and condition put by the Allied power, even the internal reforms, government policies were dictated by the Allied powers and Reza Shah followed the same. Thus, invasion in 1941 started an era of interregnum that lasted till 1953. Following the war Iran had challenge to revive its national autonomy by do away with the interventions of both Soviet and Britain[219]. At this juncture Mohammed Reza Khan had nothing except the power of armed forces. He did not had control over the bureaucracy, and court patronage. This interregnum ended when the Shah with support of the U.S and U.K. engineered a coup against Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953. After this coup successfully he established his authority and revived his father's regime. These thirteen years were politically unstable and political authority was not in one place but it was scattered. The power was scattered and contested between the royal palace, the cabinet, the Parliament, and the urban masses organised first by socialist movement and then by a nationalist movement.[220] It was viewed by the many Iranian intellectuals that the Iran cannot sustain itself without support of external powers. After the collapse of traditional world power following the War, US was nascent as dominant actor in Iranian politics.

The nationalist of these time viewed foreign interference as threat for Iran. For nationalists' British interference was detrimental for the Iranian nation, conflicts could be resolved only through total destruction of the British ability to interfere.[221] Initially US was considered by the Iranian nationalists as the disinterested foreign power that will support the Iranian independence and interests. Even, Mossadegh wrote a letter to US for the support of his government. The United States gained popularity among Iranian by placing pressure on the British in support of Iran. Iranian nationalists wanted all-out help from US, but such help would clearly be interference

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[218] Theberge, Rene (1973), "Iran: Ten Years after the "White Revolution"", *Middle East Research and Information Project,* (8): 3-22.
[219] Skocpol, Theda (1982), "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution", *Theory and Society,* 11 (3): 269.
[220] Ervand, Abrahmian (2008), *A History of Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 99-100.
[221] Cottam, W. Richard (1979), *Nationalism in Iran,* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 211.

which they were opposing. America's main objective was to contained communist expansion in Iran, and the Britain was the natural ally of US in this mission.

A strong national government could harm Anglo-American economic and strategic interests. Reza Shah supported by the allied power during the war, and relied on the foreign power, without popularity and legitimacy among the people. America wanted Reza Shah to be in power with full authority. 1953 marked a significant history in the Iranian nationalist movement. In this year democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran Mossadegh attempted to nationalise oil and increase the share of revenues reverting to Iran, and which have attempted to move towards republic.[222] This movement had been crushed by the military coup backed by US and UK and Iran came under the influence of US. The role of CIA revealed behind the coup against the Mossadeqh government. Now nationalists of Iran realised America as new imperial threat which is against the Iranian national interests.

After coup, Mohammed Reza Shah consolidated his power, and placed the coup leaders in prominent position of the government. He received 145 billion dollars from US as emergency financial aid to strengthen economy, to boost up the royalists, and inject the confidence among the business community. A new secret police SAVAK (*Sazman-i Ittila'at va Amniyat-i Keshvar*) was created with technical assistance Mossad, CIA, and FBI.[223] He established dictatorship with new state mechanism. Used martial law, military tribunals to vanish all the opposition including Tudeh as well as National Front. He dismissed almost all the democratic institutions. Freedom of speech and expression of political societies, civil societies with political orientations and form of activities against the Shah were banned. Through SAVAK he expanded intelligence and informer across the Iran at every place; informers always keep watch on a lay man to government officers, and applied means of torture and execution, to deal with political dissents[224]. In these years he expanded state bureaucracy. He established eight new ministries which includes, rural affair, energy, higher education, welfare, art and culture, tourism, housing and urban construction.[225]

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[222] Fischer, M.M.J. (1979), "Protest and Revolution in Iran", *Harvard International Review,* 1 (2) 3-6.
[223] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 419.
[224] Ervand, Abrahmian (2008), *A History of Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 126.
[225] ibid, 127.

Economy was expanded after 1953. Oil dispute with Britain came to an end which helped him to ease the business. He agreed to the principle of sharing the profit equally, and signed the contract with former owner of AIOC, and eight other European and American oil companies. In 1958, one agreement signed with the Pan-American Petroleum Corporation, which in addition to Iran's 50 percent of Pan American's profit: thus, Iran was to receive 75 percent of oil revenue.[226] It was a shock for oil world and victory for Iran. Foreign capital investments were protected by the Law of Attraction and Protection of Foreign Capital Investment.[227] As a result of these agreements, the oil revenue increased drastically. It was 34 million dollars in 1954-55 and reached 437 million dollars in 1962-63.[228] This growth in Oil business made Iran the world's fourth-largest oil producer and the world's second-largest oil exporter. Moreover, in order to gain more financial aid, military support, Reza Shah used American fear of communism in Iran during Kennedy period in America.[229] Reza Shah also generated income from western and capitalist block out of these fears.

Mohammed Reza Shah followed his father to transform Iran. Rapidly he began to expand the military, bureaucracy, and court patronage system, which were the three pillars of the Pahlavi state. In the socio-economic field he followed the same model which his father began from 1921. Most significant step taken by him was a programme of national development known as 'White Revolution' which was launched in January 1963. It contained a long-range of socio-economic reforms including plans. The numbers of civil servants reached to the 304,000, and around one million white and blue collars workers. 515,000 employed under the Ministry of education and higher education together.[230]

Out of expansion and growth in the educational and industrial field flourished two modern classes; one of the urban proletariats and another salaried middle class. In between 1953-77, the number of the modern middle increased from 324,000 to 630,000, and there were nearly a million students in secondary schools, higher

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[226] Laing, Margaret (1977), *The Shah,* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 159.

[227] Gregory, Lois (1959), *The Shah and Persia,* Kent: The Orpington Press Limited, 112.

[228] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 420.

[229] Summit, R. April (2004), "For a White Revolution: John F. Kennedy and the Shah of Iran", *Middle East Journal,* 58 (4): 560-575.

[230] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 126.

education, and foreign universities who aspired to join the salaried middle class.[231] Urban working-class increased rapidly, from 30,000 in 1953 to 1.7 million in 1977. Reza Shah Pahlavi failed to win support of these urban classes. There were two immediate reasons; the coup of 1953 coup along with overthrew of then prime minister Mossadegh, civil and political organisations such as labour unions, professional associations, and all independent political parties were also destroyed. Without being replaced by other means the places and institutions of intermediate groupings, such as the village community, guilds and tribes, *zurkhaneh, khanegah,* the voluntary association, were systematically vanished by the Pahlavi.[232] The political repression was to the extent that all the associations were non-functional, except some which were working underground.

Shah's plan and policies could not able to manage the outrage of working-class against the sham of reformism. Policies and project of modernisation demeaned the role of clergy from the state affairs, and secularised the judiciary by replacing the tradition and religious judicial system with modern secular judiciary. Moreover, systematically he reduced the presence of clergies from the government offices especially from Parliament and other state institutions. Clerical class who perceived the Shah's westernisation policies as biggest threat to Islam and Iranian culture in general, and to the economic security of the Islamic intelligentsia, the *ulema* in particular[233], they became the leading power of revolution.

Through the oil business revenues grew rapidly but also corruption rampant. Economic crisis and corruption erupted into several mass protests and gathering at various place of Iran. Prime Minister Dr. Ali Amini on 12 may in 1961, in a speech addressing the economic crisis he said "every country that is run in this way inevitably end up in total chaos, with enormous bloodshed. Too much money has ended up in the wrong pockets. Too many millions of dollars have ended up in secret Swiss bank accounts or in the United States…I solemnly warn the nation: those

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[231] Irfani, Suroosh (1983), *Iran's Islamic Revolution: Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship*, London: Zed Books Ltd, 149-150.
[232] Homen, Roger (1980), "The Origins of the Iranian Revolution", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs),* 56 (4): 674.
[233] Homen, Roger (1980), "The Origins of the Iranian Revolution", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs),* 56 (4): 674.

whose interests will be damaged by his reform programme will intrigue and do everything to bring him down".[234]

In 1961, political and economic crisis was managed by the Shah with 'White Revolution' programme of agrarian reform combined with education, electoral, health, and other reforms. He approved six items for White Revolution. First, the Land Reform Law, to divide state land, religious and land owners' estate among the peasants cultivating them, with compensation for the former owners; second, the sharing of profits by workers in the industries in which they were employed; third, the nationalisation of forests, fourth, electoral reform, including the right of women to vote and to be elected; fifth, the eradication of illiteracy; sixth, the transformation of state-owned industries.[235] These reforms immediately affected the *ulemas* interests. It was double blow for *ulemas,* who did not only lose their land but faced the women enfranchisement, which they considered anti-Islamic. Not only *Ulemas,* but White Revolution was opposed by the National Front. Against the arbitrary imposition of reform policies and brutality of SAVAK, arbitrary rule of Shah and over-lordship of government officials in the town and villages, National Front placed a call for boycott of Reza Shah's six point of White Revolution.[236] Rural and tribal population subjected to economic hardship in the 1960 and 1970 due to the loss of their land and livelihood through pasture nationalization and national land reforms.[237] These reforms led to the unintended consequences.

The colonial occupation and interference of Britain, Soviet Union, and US in Iran prior and during the World War II met with a growing nationalism. Since that time there had been continued resistance against the oppressive policies of Shah and neo-colonialism of Western powers, especially Britain and US.[238] There were several protests and agitations against Reza Shah since 1953, which were resulted into violent conflicts between the mass protesters and SAVAK and other coercive apparatus of Reza Shah's state.

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[234] Laing, Margaret (1977), *the Shah,* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 162.
[235] ibid, 167.
[236] ibid, 171.
[237] Beck, Lois (1980), "Revolutionary Iran and Its Tribal Peoples", *MERIP Reports,* 87 (): 15.
[238] Theberge, Rene (1973), "Iran: Ten Years after the "White Revolution", *Middle East Research and Information Project,* (8): 3.

Rapid rise in oil revenue in 1973 enhanced economic growth but led the uneven development. The boom in oil revenue was accompanied by inflation, huge migration, and poor infrastructure and widened the income gap. Pahlavi's reform policies were confined to the urban upper class and educated, rural Iran and lower class were untouched out of economic growth, therefore his support base was confined to a small section of society who were inspired by western values. Iran's economic development was directed to the enriching of its ruling classes.[239] The economic condition, Shah's policies of modernisation, and despotic nature of government erupted into revolution in 1979.

Throughout the Pahlavi dynasty an ethnic nationalism based on Persian identity had been constructed through state authorities with dictatorial rule. Persianization of linguistic differences, homogenisation of culture, had been the basic elements for an Iranian national identity. The linguistic ethnic differences had been undermined, and through state machinery and policies; strong military force, vast bureaucracy, educational institutions, population dislocation, conscriptions, secularisation, a modern nation-state based on western values was attempted to build. The modernisation was imposed rather than evolved which yield the unintended consequences which Reza Shah failed to manage after the decades of 1960.

Throughout the range of Pahlavi dynasty state led modernisation project in order to build a uniform national identity based on Persian ethnicity had some far-reaching consequences. Project and policies of ordering tribes, their sedentrization, (forced population dislocation) building modern defence forces, industrialisation and advent of modern education system based on western model to certain extent provided a strong national identity to Iran based on Persian nationalism. In the project of building a nation the Persian language, Aryan race became major instrument to differentiate to the Arab culture, religion and history, in order to maintain pure and proud Iranian national identity. Therefore, the language and race not religion was emphasised to in the process of making Iranian identity.

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[239] Theberge, Rene (1973), "Iran: Ten Years after the "White Revolution", *Middle East Research and Information Project,* (8): 8.

Iranian Revolution and Formation of Islamic Republic of Iran

Abrahmian Ervand in his book *Iran between Two Revolution* argued that the causes of revolution were the uneven developments of Iran throughout the range of Pahlavi dynasty. Shah emphasised his modernisation project at social and economic level, but kept political modernisation behind and ruled country with autocracy. Authoritarian rule of Pahlavi vanished the links between government and the social structure. It resulted into the blocked of communication channels between the political system and the people. The gap between the ruling elites and the new social forces was blocked. Moreover, the old connection between monarchy and traditional social forces specially with *Bazaars* and religious authorities was abolished.[240] At the end in 1977, the gulf between underdeveloped political system and socio-economic structure was so therefore an immediate economic crisis was able to bring down the Pahlavi regime. However, the short-term cause of immediate outrage against the Shah was economic crisis but the long-term causes were much deeper into the very foundation of the Pahlavi regime.

A coalition emerged against the Shah which converted into Iranian revolution included largely six ideological groups.[241] Frist was the radical clergy; this group was led by Ayatollahs including Ayatollah Khomeini's close associates such as Hosein Ali Montazeri, Mohammed Reza Mahdavi-Kani, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and Ali Khomeini. Their support base was in the *bazaars,* and in some mosque and theological schools. They were uncompromising in their opposition to Shah and his programme[242]. This group fundamentally opposed to the concept of monarchy, and they attacked the Shah where he was most vulnerable: on the issue of corruption, destruction of Islam, and destroying the country with support of Western powers. Second group was the traditional clergy, in which Ayatollah Shari'at-Madari and Hassan Tabataba'i-Qomi. They were uncomfortable with the direct clerical involvement in politics. Although accepting the radical critic of Shah but this group was not against the institution of monarchy. They advocated limiting of Shah's power by enforcing the 1906 fundamental laws, which ensure the Islamic validity of laws. Third group formed with religious nationalists, which include Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani, Mehdi

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[240] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 426-427.
[241] Limbert, W. John (1987), *Iran at War with History,* Colorado, Westview Press, 107.
[242] ibid, 107.

Bazargan, and their associates. This group advocated the establishment of the Islamic Republic that would uphold democratic values. Its members agreed with the radical clergy on the issue that Islam should form the basis of new state, but they disagreed with authoritarian ideology of radical clergies. Fourth group was the association of the secular liberals, composed of National Front, Radical movement, and the National Democratic Movement of Mossadegh's grandson H. Matin Daftari.[243] Their base was the middle class, and its members uphold the idea of nationalism and constitutionalism following the Mossadegh's tradition. This group also attracted and gained support from educated women, distrusted the radical clergy because liberals believed that the members of this group would impose their own harsh, obscurantist version of Islam on the entire Iranian population.[244] Fifth ideological group was the leftist religious radicals, these radicals were the Mojahedin and their allies who advocated radical economic and social changes based on a revolutionary interpretation of Islam.[245] Members of this group opposed direct clerical rule as they believed such rule would replace pure revolutionary Islam with a reactionary and capitalist version of Islam. Sixth group was the secular radicals, a composed of Tudeh, the Fada'i and some small Marxist organisations. The members of this group sought for revolutionary change and considered religion with or without clergy, to be a reactionary force.[246] They were in support of replacing Shah with popular revolution, supported the radical clergy's extreme anti-American rhetoric. They were active at the universities, and among the national minorities, such as the Kurds, Baluchis, and Turkomans.

Ayatollah Khomeini emerged as an opposition to the Shah during 1960, before that he remained aloof from the political affairs. In 1960 he publicly opposed Reza Shah's autocratic regime, and he was arrested after preaching openly against the Shah at a *madrassa* at Qom.[247] In 1963, he emerged as a national clerical leader and lead many movements through protest and demonstration, were able to mobilise people against the oppressive and arbitrary policies of Shah. He grasped the issues which aroused greater indignation among the general population. While raging the issues corruption,

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[243] ibid, 108.
[244] ibid, 108.
[245] ibid, 108.
[246] ibid, 108.
[247] Green D. Jerrold (1982), *Revolution in Iran: The Politics of Counter-mobilization,* New York: Praeger Publishers, 131.

rigging of election, violation of the constitutional law, attack on press and political parties, independency of universities, negligence of economic need of merchants, disregard of country's Islamic belief, encouragement *gharbzadegi,* imposition of western values and disregard of Iranian culture, Oil trade with Israel and others by Pahlavi government.[248] During 1961-62, he began delivering speeches which exposed the nature of Shah's regime and the conspiracies of America and Israel to destroy Islam and plunder the wealth and resources of Islamic countries including Iran. He was recognised by Iranian and many revolutionary Muslims in other parts of the world as a great, aware, and courageous clergyman.[249]

Islamic Intellectuals such as Dr. Shariati, Taleghani and Bazargan build the bridge between Islam and modern salaried middle class. Among middle class, students and intelligentsia, emotionally and intellectually Islam became a reliable factor. Islam was redefined as revolutionary force, against despotism, imperialism and exploitation.[250] On the other side there were militant revolutionary step by the *Mujahideen-e-Khalaq* and *Fedayeen* which intensified since 1971. Till 1977, the year Iranian revolution began to unfold, SAVAK had killed 80 percent members of these groups.[251] On several times these militant groups confronted with SAVAK. In 1979, the final year of revolution, supporter of these groups demonstrated with carrying militant posters of Mojahideen Khalaq, urging people for armed struggle.

Freedom from despotism, imperialism, exploitation, and freedom for Individual thought and expression became the common cause of the different ideological groups and inspired for collective efforts for revolution. Before three weeks, in 18 January 1979, the movement climaxed in armed uprising. Taleghani in his speech addressed "this great movement was born of the struggle for freedom and its success would mean freedom for all the people. This movement has not been brought about by any single individual, group, or ideology".[252] Urging the revolutionaries, whether Muslim or communist, to remain united in the struggle against Shah's dictatorship, he said

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[248] Ervand Abrahmian (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 425.

[249] Muhajeri, Masih (1982), *Islamic Revolution: Future Path of the Nation,* Tehran: The External Liaision Section of the Central Office of Jihad-e-Sazandeghi, 8.

[250] Irfani, Suroosh (1983), *Iran's Islamic Revolution: Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship*, London: Zed Books Ltd,150.

[251] ibid, 151.

[252] ibid, 162

'our nation at this critical juncture of history and destiny is not after any ideology.[253] The influence of Ayatollah Khomeini was immense across Iran. During his exile period he remained as national opposition to Shah. His leadership was accepted by all the groups. Clergyman already had their national organisational network through mosques, they had direct contact with the masses, and the sterling leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini was accepted as the only possible avenue for leading this movement. Moreover, Khomeini's fight with Shah, left no doubt in the people's mind that he would never compromise with the regime. Khomeini led the revolution because he represented the popular unity.

With the long struggle from 1977-79, in which various confrontations between Shah's state and mass happened in violent form, mass protests and demonstrations by different groups across the country took place. Finally, Reza Shah was toppled down in January 1979.[254]

However, different groups; religious, nationalist, secular, communist, and feminist fought together and overthrew Shah Pahlavi, and monarchy was replaced with an Islamic Republic, which provided ultimate political power in the hands of supreme leader of the country in particular and clerical class general.[255] Iranian revolution gave a religious legitimacy to the nation-state. Following the revolution world witnessed a unique kind of national identity in the form of Islamic Republic of Iran. A political system came into existence as a combination of both; democratic institutions such as parliament and president as well as non-elected institutions like Council of Guardian and Supreme Leader of the state. Religion became the basis of the laws and regulation. *Shi'ite* Islam became state's ideology. Since the Iranian revolution was founded, Islamic Republic led both politicisation as well as Iranianization of *Shi'ism*.[256] Post-revolutionary Iran emphasised on national sovereignty; it vehemently opposed western influence particularly US in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini came with policy of 'neither west, nor east', in post-revolutionary Iran.[257]

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[253] ibid, 162.

[254] Homen, Roger (1980), "The Origins of the Iranian Revolution", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs),* 56 (4): 673.

[255] Curtis, E. Glenn and Hooglund, Eric (2008), *Iran: A Country Study,* Washington: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 3.

[256] Votyagov, Seregy (2009), "Islamic Republic of Iran: Comparative National System", Accessed Online [Online: web] Accessed on 13 July 2017, URL: http://www.mitchellorenstein.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Iran.pdf. 3.

[257] Farhi, Farideh (2005) "Crafting a National Identity amidst Contentious Politics in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 29.

Following the revolution, concern over the national debate shifted from the language to religion and the identity of different linguistic and ethnic groups were undermined. Ayatollah Khomeini said that the word minority should not be used to refer for Kurds, Lurs, Turks, Persians, Baluchs and others. The term minority assumes that there is a difference between these brothers. Islam does not allow such difference among the Muslims.[258] The national identity created on the basis of *Shi'ism* in which clergy became the sole authority and protector of this identity. Islamic history and conception became the historical justification for new state and Islam became the foundation of nation-state.

Nationalism in Iran can be viewed through two complimentary processes. Nationalism as an ideology as well as means to secure legitimacy which is contested by various factions and ideological groups in order to appropriate it for their own political agendas. These ideological groups can be divided as secular nationalist, religious nationalists, the left and the dynastic nationalists.[259] These ideological groups provide narratives of historical decent that tent to emphasis their own role over the others in an unfolding grand narrative or 'myth' of progress and emancipation. Second, it has produced a kind of demotic tendencies through mass media and universal education. The second one is an important process through which nationalism pervades among the masses. What defines the Islamic Republic of Iran rise and struggle of charismatic figure who inserted a revolutionary *Shi'a* political theology into a modern nation-state.

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[258] Atabaki, Touraj (2005) "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 38.

[259] Ansari M. Ali (2012), *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2.

CHAPTER: 3

MINORITIES-STATE RELATIONS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

The present chapter deals with relations of minorities with state of Iran in general and with Islamic Republic in particular. It has given a detailed modern historical trajectory of minorities and state relations in Iran. Further, some important question regarding minorities has been analysed. It deals with problems that minorities are facing for being different groups in the Persian-*Shia* dominate Iran. It mainly focuses on the question; How have language and religion played (are playing) a significant role to determine the national identity of Iran and its relation with ethno-religious minorities? In which it has analysed that how a Persian-*Shi'a* dominant population have been in dominant and high-status position and other ethno-religious groups remained in periphery. Negatively stigmatised, discriminated and ostracised. And another question; what are the ethno-religious problems in Iran and how Iran is dealing with them. It shows that ethno-religious minorities in modern Iran have been the harsh subject of treatments. Different ethnic groups have several different problems and methods to fight and express them, but almost each groups have some similar demands such as respect and recognition of plurality of culture, autonomy of the provinces or decentralisation of power, and protections of basic human rights. These demands have been in contradiction to the central authority and most of the times, these demands are met with extreme suppression of the state.

Minorities in Iran

Historically Iran has always been a country of diverse population in terms of ethnicity. Hence, ethnicity becomes significant aspect to study before making any generalisation about Iranian society and culture. Pre-Islamic Iran was a multinational empire with Zoroastrianism as the majority religion. It was during Arab invasions in 7 century A.D., Islam spread across the Iran. Turkic, Mongol, and other groups over the course of history have settled in different parts of the Iran.[1] Iran is a heterogeneous country comprised with diversity of language, religion, race, culture and so on. Moreover, it is a hierarchal country with one dominant ethnicity and several

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[1] Sanasarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 8.

subordinate ones.[2] The Iranians speak languages; Persian, Kurdish, Luri, Gilaki, Mazandarani.[3] Moreover, among the Turkic languages Azeri, Turkmen are spoken by the Iranian Azeris and Turkmens as well as Arabic, Hebrew and Assyrian by Arabs and others. Geographically distinct regions and provinces have been inhabited by different ethnic and linguistic groups.[4]

However, there are many different linguistic and ethnic groups in Iran but very few have been designated as 'minorities and 'ethnic' groups. These are the Azeris, the Turkic speaking *Shi'a* in the north-western province of Azerbaijan; the Sunni Turkmen of north-eastern Iran, the Kurds; the Arabs of Khuzestan; and the Baluchs of south-eastern provinces of Sistan and Baluchistan.[5] The politically dominant Persians hold its demographic majority. According to recent data, the Persian speaking population constitute more than 51 per cent, Azeris with 24 per cent; the Kurds make up 7 per cent; about 5 per cent are Mazandarani people; Arabs take 3 per cent, and remaining 10 per cent represent other minorities.[6] The diversity of the rest of Iranian population is ignored in ethnic inventories of the country. Apart from a few tribal groups everyone else is eluded together in the category of 'Persian'.[7] Despite multi-ethnic nature of the Iran, it has been able to maintain relatively coherent and stable national identity in the West Asian region.[8] Although among the different ethno-religious groups have concerns and movements for cultural preservation, greater political participation, autonomy, but very few of them have hostility to the integrity of Iran.

Likewise, people profess many different religious beliefs, including the dominant *Shi'a* Islam, but also *Sunni* Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Mandaean religion, and Baha'ism.[9] Majority of the population embraced Shi'a Islam which is estimated around 85 per cent, *Sunni* who constitutes 10 per cent are situate in the

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[2] Bernstam, S. Michael (2011), "Considering Kurdistan: Another Way to Stop Iran", *Harvard International Review,* 32 (4): 12-16.

[3] Bayat, Kaveh (2005), "The Ethnic Question in Iran", *Middle East Report,* 237: 42-45.

[4] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2): 211-224.

[5] Bayat, Kaveh (2005), "The Ethnic Question in Iran", *Middle East Report,* 237: 42.

[6] Bernstam, S. Michael (2011), "Considering Kurdistan: Another Way to Stop Iran", *Harvard International Review,* 32 (4): 13

[7] Bayat, Kaveh (2005), "The Ethnic Question in Iran", *Middle East Report,* 237: 42.

[8] ibid, 42.

[9] Amanolahi, Sekandar (2005) "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran & the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 37-41.

periphery. A section of Kurds located in Northwest, a group of Arabs near Iraq border in the southwest and Baluchs resides in Southwest and Turkmans in the Northeast.

Map 3 (a) *Ethno-religious Distribution*

Source: International Federation for Human Rights[10]

Apart from the Sunni minority in Iran, non-Muslim, meanwhile constitutes less than 5 per cent of the country's total population. These minorities groups include Assyrian Christian, around 80,000, inhabits in the area of lake Urmiah; Armenian Christian constitutes 90,000 of the total population, resides near Isfahan, as well as in Rasht, Tehran, and Western Azerbaijan; Jews in Yazd, Shiraz, Tehran, Isfahan and Hamadan constitutes around 50,000; and 15,000 Zoroastrians lives in different cities and provinces of Iran such as Yazd, Kerman, Tehran and Isfahan.[11] However, more than 90 per cent population follow the *Shi'a,* religion. among *Shi'a* majority is constituted

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[10] International Federation for Human Rights (2010), "The Hidden Side of Iran: Discrimination against Ethnic and Religious Minorities", [Online web] Accessed on 21 Jan 2018 URL: https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/IrandiscrimLDDHI545a.pdf.

[11]Abrahamian, Ervand (2006), *A History of Modern Iran,* New York: Cambridge University Press,

by Persians and also Azeris, some section of Kurds and other ethnic groups belongs to the same *Shi'a* faith. Therefore, ethnically all *Shi'a* are not Persians, and all Persians are not *Shi'a.* In terms of linguistic demarcation of the ethnicity Persian is the mother tongue of the barely half of the population even though it is an official language of Iran.[12]

The Baha'is, the Jews, and the Zoroastrian, five major non- Muslim religious minorities belong to the Persian linguistic community. Ethnically and linguistically, Turkic speaking people constitutes the largest minority group in Iran, but they have other differences based on religion mainly division between *Shi'a-Sunni,* and sub-ethnic, clan, tribal as well as local lines. Many *Shi'as* Turkic speaking people particularly Azeris have integrated into the Iranian national identity. In 1990, an ethnic classification was drawn in which Persians estimated around 51 per percent, Azeris 24 per cent and Kurds 7 Per cent. Following Table gives the detail of major ethnic identity groups.

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[12] Sanasarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 9.

Table 3 (a)

Ethnic groups	Estimated Numbers	Religion	Language	Location	Extension Across Iranian Border	Recorded Major Uprisings	Degree of assimilation	z
Arabs	615,000-2 Million	Sunni and Shi'a	Arabic	Khuzestan Province	Iraq, Persian Gulf	1920-25: United tribal uprising Separatist goals 1946: a coalition of tribal chiefs asking for incorporation of Khuzestan into Iraq	degree of assimilation correlated With residence in Khuzestan; the more tribal the less assimilated; overall a mixed result	
Azeri	8.8-10 million	Shi'a	Turkic	North-western Iran, divided into Two provinces of Western and Eastern Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan	1920: the Khiabani movement, nationalist democratic and anti-imperialist	very high	
Bakhtiyari	300,000-1 million	Shi'a	Luri	Central-western region of Zagros Mountains: spread mainly across four provinces of Khuzestan, Luestan, Chaharmahal and Isfahan	Non	1922, both uprising in 1929: response to Reza Shah's military and economic policies	very high	

Baluch	500,000-1 million	Sunni	Baluchi	Province of Sistan and Baluchitan in eastern/south-western part of Iran	Pakistan, southern Afghanistan, Persian Gulf, Turkmanistan	1928:Dost Mohammad's low attempt to establish an independent principality	low
Kurd	3-8 million	Majority are Sunni significant number of Shi'a and Adherents To the Sufi Order	Kurdish (various dialects)	Province of Kurdistan and south of western Azerbaijan; Shi'a concentrated in the Bakhtaran province	Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan	1919-22:the Simko uprising attempted to establish an independent Kurdish republic 1941-45: self-rule 1945-46: the independent Mahabad Republic with Soviet help	low
Lur	300,000-580,000	Shi'a	Luri	Western Province of Lurestan	None	some Lurs have joined in Bakhtiari and Qashqai uprisings	high
Qashqai	800,000-1 million	Shi'a	Turkic	in south-western province of Fars (in the Khuzestan Province and the Persian Gulf coast) Some in Isfahan province	None	1929, rebellions against 1932: Reza Shah's oppressive policies 1946: an uprising demanding reforms, trial of corrupt local officials, improvements in health, education, and roads, some local autonomy	Moderate (limited assimilation with other ethnic/tribal groups such as Bakhtiari, Lur,

						1963: small scale protests accompanied by non-Qas-shqais demanding reforms mid- small armed force led 1960s: by two cousins raid-police stations and in early 1970s joined the leftist forces in Kurdestan	
Shahsevan	310,000	Shi'a	Turkic	North-western Iran, Spread from Eastern Azerbaijan province To districts between Zanjan and Tehran	None	1909: revolt against the Constitutionalist government (plundered the city of Ardabil). 1925: revolt against Reza Shah, Chiefs defeated and and executed by Reza Shah	Highly settled and partially assimilated mainly within Azerbaijan
Turkman	1.1 million	Sunni	Turkic	South-east section the Caspian Sea in	Turkmenistan and Afghanistan	1906-11 revolt against the Constitutionalists	low (many have settled and

Source: Eliz Sanasarian[13]

[13] Sanasarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ethnic Minorities in Iran

There is need to define the ethnicity before entering into the debate of ethnic minorities in Iran. Rabinovich and Esman (1988) defined ethnicity "as a collective identity and solidarity based on real or alleged common descent, language, custom, belief system and practices, and in some cases race or colour".[14] Culture has been major factor behind the determination of the ethnic identity. From anthropological point of view ethnicity is a cultural phenomenon. Generally, culture is constituted by the non-biological aspect of human society. In other words, cultural aspect of human life covers everything, which is produced by human society and transferred from one generation to another through learning and not through biology. Therefore, culture is a way of life of the society, which encompasses from religion and language, moral values, folk customs, a subsistence pattern, music and dance, handicrafts, political and social organisations, and other aspect of human social life.[15] This definition reveals that culture has determining role to define and redefine the ethnic variations among the human societies. To some extent physical characteristics of colour, race also contribute to the ethnicity, but still culture remains major determinant of the ethnicity.[16]

The major determinant of ethnicity in Iran has been culture. With religion and language, cultural elements covered whole way of life of the individual. Folk custom, music, moral values, clothing, art and others. The language and religion are the most important factors responsible behind the formation of different ethnic identities in Iran. For instance, the ethnicity of some communities such as the Armenians, Mandaeans, Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Assyrians are determined by both language and religion.[17] Rest of the communities are differentiated on the basis of language criterion. Apart from language and religion ethnic identities are influenced by a variety of cultural elements.

On the basis of ethnicity, it is very difficult to decide which ethnic group is in majority and which ethnic groups are in minority. In this regard there are several

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[14] Milton J. Esman, Itamar Rabinovich (1988), *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East*, Cor-nell University Press, 3, qtd in Amanolahi, Sekardar (2005), "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 37-41.

[15] Amanolahi, Sekardar (2005), "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 38.

[16] Serena Nanda (2000), *Cultural Anthropology,* NewYork, 309-315, qtd. in Amanolahi, Sekardar (2005), "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 38.

[17] Amanolahi, Sekardar (2005), "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 39.

scholars, activists and politician provide different numbers for Iran's ethnic groups. Most of the data available is based on the estimation. Due to lack of reliable data on the exact number of different ethnic groups, scholars and institutions engaged in Iranian studies have made several, and somewhat different estimation. For instance, some of the studies suggest that Persian speaking population constitutes 60 per cent of the total population, other studies contended that this number is roughly 50 per cent. In 1978, Halliday estimated that Persian as one of the several linguistic groups in Iran constitutes around 50 of the total population of Iran.[18] In 2009, Tohidi has estimated percentages of various different ethnic group as: Persian 51 per cent Azeris 24, Gilaki and Mazandaranis 8, Kurds 7, Arabs 3, Lur 2, Baluch 2, Turkomen[19] other groups which has been mentioned above constitutes 1 per cent of the total population. So, on the basis of language it can be argued that Persians are the dominant ethnic majority. In the present Iran, the minority and majority debate has been confined to the recognised ethno-religious groups, since Muslims comprised almost 99 per cent of the total population.[20] Except very few groups, almost every other identity has been coloured as Persian.

However, by the different sources ethnic conglomeration of Iranian society has been identified and with the Persian majority most of the scholars has designated other ethnic groups as national minority. These includes; Azeris, Gilaki and Majandarani, Kurd, Arab, Lur, Baluch, Turkmen and others. Among all these minorities, Azeris, Kurds, Baluch, and Arabs has been major concern for scholars as well as successive governments to deal with. However, these groups have not been incorporated as collective identity in the constitution of Islamic republic and even they were not recognised by the constitution of 1905-06 as well as under the dictatorship of the Pahlavi dynasty.

The focus on four major ethnic groups becomes important: Azeri, Kurd, Arabs and Baluch due to several reasons. First, these groups formed highest percentages among the ethnic minorities' groups in the Iran. Second, they are inhabiting in a sizable amount of land for a considerable amount of time. Third, there has been the politics of regionalism and effective ethnic political mobilization throughout the modern history of Iran.

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[18] Halliday, Fred (1978), *Iran Dictatorship and Development,* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 12.
[19] Tohidi, Nayereh (2009), "Ethnicity and Religious Minority Politics in Iran", (ed.) in Gheissari, Ali *Contemporary Iran: Economy, Society, Politics,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 299.
[20] Amanolahi, Sekardar (2005), "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 39.

Azeri

Azeris are the linguistic-cultural group in North-western Iran which Share the border with independent Azerbaijan, and Armenia. They form the largest ethnic minorities in the country, and the second largest ethnic group after the Persians. The term Azeri itself reflects the meaning of the inhabitants of the Azerbaijan. Linguistically, Azeris speak a dialect of Oghuz or Western Turkic of Altaic family. They are also known as 'Turk' due to this linguistic characteristic. Linguistic and cultural characteristics, while making a distinction between them and other Iranians also generates a relatively strong bond with republic of Azerbaijan and some connection with Turkey, and Republics of Central Asia. Religiously, majority of the Azeris of Iran are the adherents of the *Shi'ism,* which creates a connection with majority of the Iranian population.[21] The religion is one the most important aspect of Azeris which makes a bond with the majority population of Iran with different ethnicity.

Map 3 (b) *Iranian Azeris*

Iranian Azerbaijanis in northwest provinces of Iran. (Source: Geography from GMMS 2011, Global Mapping International Language Locations from World Language Mapping System 2011)

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[21] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 28.

Around half the Azeri population is urban. Majorly they inhabit in cities such as Tabriz, Urmia, Ardabil, Zanjan, Khoy, and Maragheh. There are sizable number of Azerbaijani's are settled in other major cities such as Hamadan, Karaj and Qazvin.[22] Moreover, a significant number of Azeris lives as diaspora, in large, mainly industrial and *Shi'ite* holly cities including Qom, Tehran, Mashhad, Arak, and Karaj. It has been observed that the East Azerbaijan has been in the top in terms of migrating in different parts of the country, since the first census of 1956, and some diasporas have been living in those cities for generation.[23] Some of them have been disconnected to Azerbaijan for long time, and absence of functioning Azeri cultural institutions, a sizeable portion of Azeri diaspora in Tehran and other cities have lost their Azeri linguistic characteristics and intermingled with Persian language. In Iranian society there is social stigma about Azeris for the being *Tork,* however, a considerable part of Azeri diaspora still identifies themselves as Azeri, and in Iranian context as *Tork.[24]* Azeris prefer the term for themselves as *'Tork'* rather than any other such as 'Azeris' and 'Tatars'.

However, the Azeris have been the ruling ethnic community in Iran, but their geographical location, different linguistic and cultural identity, and historical incidents of manifesting Azeri nationalism always make state suspicious to the community. The movement for regional autonomy, cultural expression has been part of Azeri community in the modern Iran. Still there have been restrictions on Azeri language, and there is a process of homogenisation. Even in Islamic republic of Iran Azeris are not incorporated as collective identity. Being a different ethnic community, often they are subjected to humiliation and stigmatization. According to report of the International Federation for Human Rights in 2010, Azeri language, Azeri language media and other forms of cultural expression are still restricted, and they are also to some extent subjected to social, economic and political marginalisation.[25]

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[22] Rashidvash, Vahid (2013), "Iranian People: Iranian Ethnic Groups", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* 3 (5): 220.

[23] Bayat, Asef (1997), *Street Politics: Poor People's Movement in Iran,* Columbia: Columbia University Press, 30.

[24] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 64-65.

[25] International Federation for Human Rights, (2010) "The Hidden Side of Iran: discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities," [Online web] Accessed on 23 January 2017 URL: http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/ Irandiscrim LDDHI5 45a. pdf; and BBC (2010)", "Azeris feel Iranian

Kurds

Kurdistan region is divided among the Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq inhabited by the Kurds, who are linguistically and culturally different to the majority of these countries. Often referred to as 'the largest stateless nation'. The Kurds in Iran speak a variety of closely related dialects, it is also known as Kirmanji. "The dialects are divided into northern and southern groups, Kurds living in mountain valleys speak different dialects of Kurdish language".[26] Kurds have developed a small body of Kurdish literature which is written in modified Arabic script. Kurdish language has close association with Persian, it contains numerus Persian origin words. Mainly in large cities populated by Kurds there educated population speaks both Persian and Kurdish languages.[27] The countries (Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq) where Kurds are located are reluctant to conduct census therefore it is very difficult to find out the exact number of Kurds population in any country. Around 5 to 11 million of the total population of Kurds lives inside the border of Iran, which constitutes 7 to 15 percent of the total population of the country.[28] In Iran Kurds are located in Kurdistan and Kermenshah provinces, as well as with a strong majority in Ilam and also in the West Azerbaijan Province. Moreover, outside Kurdish heartland a considerable Kurds are also living in North Khorasan, and to less numbers in Razavi Khorasan Province.[29] However, majority of the Kurds are Sunni in Iran, but over a period of time, many Khorasani Kurds converted to *Shi'ism* and also speaks Persian language, they still have preserved their Kurdish sentiment, and identify themselves as 'Kurd' and call their region Kurdistan.[30]

During the reign of Qajar rule and unlike other region, Kurdish area got divided into *Iyalats* of the empire which was in the almost semi-autonomous condition, and there was minimal control of the central power over the region. It was during the Pahlavi regime and the beginning of the formation of the centralised modern state, the semi-

pressure", [Online web] Accessed on 16 February 2010 URL:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8516682.stm.
[26] Rashidvash, Vahid (2013), "Iranian People: Iranian Ethnic Groups", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* 3 (5): 220.
[27] ibid, 220.
[28] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 32.
[29] McDowall, David (2004), *A Modern History of the Kurds,* London and New York: IB Tauris Publishers, 5.
[30] Madih, Ali (2007), "The Kurds of Khorasan", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 11 (1): 11-31.

autonomous status of Kurds the *Iyalats* was demolished.[31] In the process of the centralisation of the state, Kurds became marginalised and there have been discontentment regarding this process among the Kurds which have led to the Kurdish ethnic sentiment. The policies of the modern state and attacks on local tribal/ethnic traditions provoked serious discontent and major rebellions in Kurdistan.[32] On several occasion Kurds have expressed their dissatisfaction with the central power of the Iran. The revolt of Simko after World War I, and the establishment of autonomous Mahdad Republic, are the incidents through which Kurds have expressed their desire for the self-rule and self-determination. These demands and aspirations often have been crushed in the modern history of Iran. Suppression of these uprisings was clear that central authorities oppose to recognise any form of autonomy and distinct identity of different ethnic groups.

Throughout the twentieth century Kurds have been fighting for regional autonomy and greater freedom for Kurdistan. They participated in the Iranian revolution of 1979, and were expecting pursuing democracy, economic improvement, ending corruption and despotism, with aspiration of gaining ethno/national rights through devolution of power and regional autonomy for Kurdistan. In the beginning of revolution, it had been promised to Kurds for political opening, pluralism, and more inclusive political atmosphere.[33] However, at the end of the day when Islamist tightened their grip on power, the Islamic Republic proved to be increasingly intolerant towards ethno-national demands for autonomy, and new state ruled out the agreement promising the Kurds limited regional autonomy.

Arabs

Arabs in Iran are a minority who are ethnically close to Arabs and speak their language. The Term "Arab" denotes an umbrella that represents a people from Asia to Africa. There is no any official data is available about Arabs in Iran, but various estimations by scholars and statistical centres suggests that Arab constitutes around 1.5 to 2.5 million, which forms roughly 2-3 per cent of the Iran's population. Some

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[31] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 35.

[32] McDowall, David (2004), *A Modern History of the Kurds,* London and New York: IB Tauris Publishers, 22-223.

[33] Natali, Denise (2005), *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran,* New York: Syracuse University Press, 141-42.

other estimations claims that Arab population is up to 5 million. Historically, the Arabs have been settled in Khuzestan province. Alongside in Khuzestan, they are also lives in the area of Persian Gulf coasts and islands in Bushehr and Hormozgan province, as well as southern corners of Fars province.

Khuzestan province is mainly inhabited by the Arabs. Arabs constitutes around 65 per cent of the total population in this province.[34] The majority of the Khuzestani Arabs are adherents of the *Shi'ism* but there are also Sunni followers, as well as Jewish, Christian and Mandaeans in Khuzestan. Ethnically Khuzestani Arabs closely shares distinct culture with southern Iraqi Arabs as well as distinct dialect of 'Arabic'. Bandari Arabs of Iran, surrounding the Persian Gulf mostly follow the Sunnis belief of Islam, and they speak Gulf dialects of Arabic language.[35] Culturally Arabs of Khuzestan still follow their traditional clothing and tattooing, folk, poetry and proverbs, food, music as well as unique religious ceremonies and rituals.

Over a period of time, the migration has changed the demographic nature of the Arabs in Khuzestan. Migration of Persian population into Khuzestan has further decreased the Arab demographic dominance in the province. There are number of factors which changed the demography of Khuzestan; inside and outside migration, Iran-Iraq war, and discovery of oil. Since the first census of 1956, Khuzestan has been found constantly among three migration destinations. The high rates of in and outside migration in the area is a part of oil extraction industries as well as social and regional disparities within the province. This condition has resulted into underdevelopment, disfranchisement and the less literate people migrated to other part of the country in search of daily waged manual labour.

However, For Iran, Khuzestan province is one of the most important sources of income in terms of oil industry as well as relatively important agricultural centre. But it has been seen that the Arabs are in the receiving end. The Arab ethno-nationalists claim that the area is highly underdeveloped, it suffers with environmental problems and facing rampant unemployment and poverty.[36] Arabs of Iran claim that the Iran's

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[34] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 36.
[35] ibid, 36
[36] ibid, 36.

racist bias of the governing authorities are the major reasons behind the social and economic underdevelopment of the province.

Like other parts of the country the border of Khuzestan has been volatile in term of ethnicity. It expresses threat of Arab nationalism, and due to oil rich area it has been a playground for colonial powers. During the twentieth century and with the emergence of nationalism, the power dynamics of the region took a new form. Persian nationalism was a state led project to form a homogenous nation state, Arab nationalism in Iran was reaction to monopolization of power by the centralist modern state and cultural hegemony of the Persians. In the history there have been revolt for independence in Khuzestan. The revolt of Shaikh Khaz'al in 1916-24 can be described as such nationalist inspiration for independent Khuzestan.[37] In 1924, Reza Shah defeated Shaikh and abolished the Sheikhdom. Moreover, for many Arabs in Iran the revolt of 1916, represents a desire of the Khuzestan's self-determination. After that there have been continuous attempt to maintain their local traditional authority, which is being undermined by the modern state established in Tehran.

Unlike other ethnic minorities, Arabs also participated in 1979 revolution for their concerns of autonomy and cultural, political rights. Recognition of Arabic as an official language in education and media, appointing Arabs in provincial administrations were the major demands of the Arabs. However, after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran these demands were crushed and the major activists were executed and were forced to exile.

There are many radical factions of Iranian nationalism which considered Arabs as 'guests. Such branches of Iranian nationalist discourse often considered Arabs as 'newcomers' that have arrived to Iran only in 'recent centuries'[38]. The racial interpretation of the national identity of the Iran has excluded Arabs as an 'other'. This understanding of the national identity is the major impediments in accommodating Arabs into an Iranian nation. Moreover, Persian cantered nationalism has been reluctant to adopt a more civil definition of national identity that would have the capacity to include Arab as well.

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[37] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 37-38.
[38] ibid, 37.

Baluch

The Baluchs are the inhabitants of the area which is historically known as Baluchistan. The area is located between the Iranian plateau, and north of the Gulf of Oman, south of River Helmand. At present Baluchistan region is divided among Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. Moreover, some Baluchs are living in Arab countries such as Oman, UAE, as well as other parts of the world. It is estimated that the total numbers of Baluchs across the world may be around 10 million. In Iran various estimation suggest that Baluchs are around 750,000 which makes 1-2 per cent of the total population.[39]

In Iran Baluchs are concentrated in the Makran highlands, areas spread from Gulf coastal Areas of Oman to the border of Pakistan.[40] In term of region, Baluch are the integral part of Baluchistan as a nationality with its larger portion in southwest Pakistan and a smaller part in southern Afghanistan. Baluchistan was first combined with Kerman and later with the Sistan to form a larger province. This territorial combination altered the demography of Baluchistan, it reduced the Baluch number in a single province, and thus influenced the electoral outcomes. Iranian Baluchs have common expression for a particular territorial self-identification which is based on a distinct cultural identity.[41] Baluch speaks Baluchi language which has two different dialects. Baluchi language belongs to the western group of Iranian languages. Majority of the Baluch are the adherents of Sunni Islam of the Hanafi School and a small minority of among them also follow the *Shi'a* tradition of Islam.[42] Among the Baluch few members belong to the Zikris, member of an Islamic Sect. Apart from these sects there are also a rising number of Wahhabi and Salafi followers. Sistan has been joined with Baluchistan for administrative purposes, which has been populated by Persian speaking peoples over a period of time.

Historically, in the form of local (*Khanats)* Baluchistan have been enjoying a level of self-rule. The relationship between Baluch and Iranian state has been the subject of the strong and centralised state's formation based in Tehran. During the Pahlavi

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[39] ibid, 38.

[40] Rashidvash, Vahid (2013), "Iranian People: Iranian Ethnic Groups", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* 3 (5): 222.

[41] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 39.

[42] ibid, 39

regime, Shah established a strong centralised state which dissolved the semi-autonomous status of Baluch tribes. Moreover, he led the campaign of Persianisation of the different nationalities, by exerting pressure on local tribes and their forced settlement, nationalising postures, incarcerating and executing Baluch political and religious leaders, putting restrictions on Baluch language and culture. Moreover, replacing local place names with Persian one to do away with the distinct ethnic manifestation of the local population.[43]

However, over a period of time Baluch nationalism has been emerged among the middle class of Baluchi literate people. During 1950, Dad Shah a tribal leader of Baluchistan revolted against the central government of Iran. The revolt lasted almost ten years, and eventually Dad Shah was defeated. Suppression of the Baluch Revolt and protests by the Reza Shah and forceful extension of the central authority over the Baluchistan, artificially pacified the region, but never succeeded in drawing loyalty of Baluch and their accommodation into the political life of the country. There are several organisations which are active with aspiration of independence, autonomy and linguistic and cultural rights. Number of organisations use militant means which led to the rise of insurgencies in Iran and they are fighting for these greater objectives.

The region in many terms is least developed. Unemployment, poverty, environmental degradation, drugs abuse, and smuggling are the constant features of the province's life. Baluchs claim the condition of the region is the result of the discriminatory policies and behaviour of the central authorities to the Baluchistan and Baluch people. Being both ethnically and religiously different to the Persian *Shi'ite* centre, the Baluchs feel double discrimination by the state. The constant denial of the linguistic, cultural rights and religious institutions has resulted radical activities from *Sunni* militants. The development of the area has been viewed through security perspective, and Baluch is seen as a threat to the Iranian state. At present there is disenchantment among the Baluch to the central authorities on several issues of the community. The region has been volatile for administrative purpose, and there are frequent insurgencies against the central government of the Iran.

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[43] ibid, 40.

Religious Nature of Iran

As it has been mentioned, religion has been integral part of Iranian society as well as political life of Iranian people. Especially the role of *Shi'ism* has been continued since the establishment of the Safavid dynasty. Since 1501, when Safavid declared the Twelver *Shi'ism* as state religion[44], gradually entire society embraced *Shi'ism* and it penetrated every aspect of the lives of Iranian people. After Safavids, almost every successive dynasty adopted *Shi'ism* as state religion. The Qajar dynasty has taken forward the political and religious tradition of Safavid and treated their non-Muslim minorities such as Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian minorities as legitimate minorities on the principle of "People of the Book". These minorities were legitimate because they had their own holy book and were recognised as such in the Quran and the Shari'a.[45] These religious groups were given permission to choose their own leaders and to build organisations. Also, they were permitted to maintain and run their own schools and tax levies, and their own law and places of worship. The Armenians had their own archbishop in Isfahan who was representing them, through Patriarch of Urmiah Assyrian were represented, Grand Rabbi in Yazd represented Jewish community of Iran by and the Zoroastrian were represented by their High Priest based in Yazd.[46]

The role of *Ulemas* or clergies has been significant in Iranian politics, and they have been enjoying religious privileges. In nineteenth century when Qajar rule was week, *Shi'a Ulemas* got immense freedom in the economy as landowners and as collectors of the special religious tithe that is tenth part of once income.[47] *Ulemas* have been enjoying great respect and acceptance and following among the Iranian people. Qajar's pro-western policies were challenged by these *Ulemas*. *Ulemas* actually mobilised the huge Islamic nationalists protest against the government policies. Under the Pahlavi modernisation project, *Ulema*'s lost their traditional privilege and their position declined and economic sources were closed, the land reform changed the traditional ownership of *Ulemas*. The *Shi'a* clerics and the *Ulema* were the prominent forces behind the Iranian revolution in 1979. Their strong hold among the people and

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[44] Abrahamian, Ervand (2006), *A History of Modern Iran,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 5.
[45] ibid, 17.
[46] ibid, 19.
[47] Skocpol, Theda (1982), "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution", *Theory and Society*, 11 (3): 265-283.

tie with Bazaris and other middle class proved a significant mobilizing force against Pahlavi regime.

The present constitution of Iran is based on the Islamic tradition. Iran became Islamic Republic following the revolution of 1979. Article 12 of the Islamic Republic of Iran clearly defines that "the official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver Ja'fari school (in usual al-Din and figh), and this principle will remain eternally immutable".[48] Twelver Ja'fari School belong to the *Shi'a* tradition of Islam. Same article says that "Other Islamic Schools, including the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Zaydi, are to be accorded full respect, and their followers are free to act in accordance with their own jurisprudence in performing their religious rites".[49] These schools got official status and related litigation in court of law. Non-Muslim minorities which have been designated as "People of the Book" has been recognised in the constitution and other minorities such as Baha'is have no place in this framework of Iranian state. Article 13 of the Islamic Republic has officially recognised Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian as religious minorities.[50] Apart from these non-Muslim minorities, *Sunni* of Iran has been recognised as the religious minorities in Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the term *Sunni* directly has not been mentioned in the constitution, but certain *Sunni* school of thought such as Hanafi, Shaf'I and Hanabali have been recognised by the constitution in article 12 with full respect. When the government system and rule which have been formed within a framework of a religion, then religious base division of people becomes inescapable.[51]

The Islamic Republic has been formed with the fusion of the highest religious and political authority which has been in the hands of politico-religious leaders. The Iranian political system is the full of complexity and it carry the nature of different systems. Absolute supremacy of Islam as an ideology over public life denotes its totalitarian character; like authoritarian regime it permits a limited degree of pluralism; unlike democracy it also conducts regular elections for some democratic

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[48] Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, [Online web] Accessed on 12 Jan 2015 URL: http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch01.php.

[49] ibid, and Ashaq, Hussain (2013), "Religion in Iran", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2 (3): 1-8.

[50] Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, [Online web] Accessed on 12 Jan 2015 URL: http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch01.php.

[51] Freedom House, "Ethnic and Religious Minorities", [Online web] Accessed on 22 August 2018 URL: https://freedomhouse.org/report/discrimination-and-intolerance-irans-textbooks/chapter-3-ethnic-and-religious-minorities.

institutions such as parliament and president in which people sometimes have a genuine choice.[52]

The Iranian revolution of 1978-79 paradoxically contributed to giving roots to the Iranian nation state. Modern nation system is territorial which confined the solidarity of within that territorial framework and ultimate goal of the nation is the well-being of its nationals. Traditionally the concept of the nation and territorial solidarity has been alien among the Islamic traditions. The concept of *umma* in the Islamic faith is not territorial it is based on the similarity of religious belief which extend its solidarity across the world. In the Islamic faith the nation state is incompatible with global solidarity of *umma*, the higher unity. The concept nation state emerged in western countries which was alien to the Islamic Societies.[53]

Zubaida (1988) argued that "alongside this global solidarity there is the more immediate solidarity based on tribe, region or sect, equally incompatible with the nation state".[54] In Iran following the Iranian Revolution Islamic tradition gave a different character to the nation state. Through revolution Iran got religious legitimacy to the nation-state at the expense of the transnational solidarity. Dualism in the Iranian state nation state concept and Islamic forms has intermingled. Scholars argue that the principles of *velayat-e-faqih* developed by Khomeini applied to government is a major departure from historical tradition of *Shi'ism*.[55] The duality of Iranian political system is indicated in the very title of the Islamic "republic". Republic denotes a similarity with the French Revolution, and revolution is a transition to modern world in general and in every part of the country which have toppled a monarchy. On the one hand, it contains the Islamic values and on the other, modern conception of the nation state. Moreover, it has been designed in such a way that it is neither fully Islamic theocracy nor fully modern democracy, unlike Western political system or nature of the nation-state.

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[52] Votyagov, Sergey (2009), "Islamic Republic of Iran: Comparative National System", [Online web] Accessed on 12 April 2017 URL: http://www.mitchellorenstein.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Iran.pdf.
[53] Zubaida, Sami (1988), "An Islamic State? the Case of Iran", *Middle East Report*, 153, (): 3-7.
[54] ibid, 3.
[55] ibid, 3.

Modernity and Minority in Iran

The composition of the majority-minority is linked to the modern developments in Iranian politics. Moreover, it is connected with the process of the centralisation of power in which other ethnic provinces were enjoying immense autonomy and power, where central authorities were not strong enough. Even during the rule of Safavids, Khuzestan enjoyed considerable autonomy, and it was known as Arabistan, which reflect Arabian culture and majority of the Arab people. Bani Ka'b Shaikhs achieved semi-independent status in Southern Khuzestan in the time of Qajar rule. This status continued till the rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925.[56] The Qajar monarchy was decentralised and most of the provinces and local Ilkhans and tribal leaders were governing their areas without interference of the central authority. Unlike other tribals, Khan's Kurds were enjoying a greater autonomy. Prior to Reza Shah, Kurds proclaimed law for their tribes. The Qajar dynasty rarely asserted its authority over Kurds by refusing to the leadership of a particularly powerful Khan.[57] The Khans and Chiefs were the immediate rulers of the basic tribal units; they collected taxes, and together with the mullahs, carried out the functions of the courts, both civil and criminal. There was little left for the central government to do, and little reason for the tribesmen to think of an external authority. The most important tribes were the Kurds, the Qashqais, the Lurs, the Bakhtiaris, the Khamesh, the Shahsevans, and the Turkmens.

Richard Cottam (1978) has categorised the tribes, religious minorities, and the regional autonomists as non-national groups in pre-nationalist Iran. Their terminal loyalty was to their respective unit rather than the nation. In pre-nationalist Iran these groups were able to maintain a good deal of autonomy. With the infusion of the nationalist values in the population their position inevitably changed. As the nation-state becomes increasingly an object of primary loyalty for the majority, the position of the non-national groups deteriorates.[58] Furthermore, he argues that even a liberal member with his nationalist values aspires for the integration of the different identities rather than their continuation of the autonomy. Moreover, he stated that under the impact of nationalism, non-national groups seem to have two alternatives. Either they

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[56] National Fabrics: Iran's Ethnic Minorities, [Online web] Accessed 12 August 2017 URL: https://smallmedia.org.uk/nationalfabric/Nationalfabric.pdf 55.
[57] Cottam, Richard (1978), *Nationalism in Iran*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 65.
[58] ibid, 8.

can move in a direction of integration within the nation, in this case the nation for them would become a primary loyalty, or they can move into an increasingly perilous isolation from the majority.[59] In this regard he argued that various groups have chosen different alternatives.

At the turn of the century during Qajar rule, these tribes recognised the supremacy of the Shah. But actual interference in tribal affairs was rare, and most tribes remained indifferent to the central government as long as they were left alone.[60] However, Persians and Azeris have been ruling communities from the centuries in Iran. Moreover, in the process of building a modern nation, these two communities claimed major stake. The relationship between majority and minority, whether on the basis of religion or ethnicity is also related to the power and powerlessness. Modernity has centralised the political power, especially during the Reza Shah's rule and his policies of nation building in which the local autonomy of the different tribal Khans and leaders declined sharply.

In the process of modernisation of Iran, the traditional power relations of different ethnic communities and their political autonomy declined, and it resulted into their marginalisation in political affairs of Iran. The development of nationalism weakened the tribal loyalty which was very much visible in Iran before 1921 among different tribal communities. As nationalism became established, it inevitably demanded that Iran become a nation worthy of the respect of other nations, with a national army, an adequate communication, and a broad extension of education.[61] All of these developments tended to destroy tribal autonomy and isolation. The relationship between modernity and minority entrench to each other, and the Iranian nationalism has centralised the power and broken the traditional ethnic and tribal power relations.

Before capitalism in Iran, society was composed with separate but interlocking formations. First, social formation was constituted by the agricultural and urban formation based in central Iranian plateau and in Azerbaijan. Second, the peripheral areas such as Kurdistan, Khuzestan, Baluchistan and others were represented by the

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[59] ibid, 8.
[60] ibid, 52.
[61] ibid, 64.

pastoral nomadic and seminomadic formations.[62] The modern nation state incorporates various features which were invisible in pre-industrial state, and these features denounced the various collective identities of the different groups within the nation state. the modern nations state has character to include or incorporate citizens into the state structure individually. It emphasises on individual rights and duties with respect to the state and disregard other collective social identity.[63] This process in a multi-ethnic state encourages acculturation of different minority cultures to a common and a core culture and lead to assimilation. In pre-industrial state, this incorporation was collective. The differences between constituent groups were explicitly recognised by the state. The relationship with one individual to another as well as with state were defined in terms of group identity. Pre-Industrial Iran sometimes have been governed by one group, and sometimes by the coalition of elites from the different groups but assimilation and acculturation had not been the part of state agenda.[64] The modern state is primarily relying on the individual incorporation of citizens and sometime it offers limited use of collective incorporation.

Apart from the idea of citizenship, modern state has various additional features which determine the minority state relationship. Modern Common technological, economic, and international environment hardly left aloof to anyone from its domain. The contemporary boundaries of the states have been clearly defined and demarcated with effective mechanism to control all range of its territory. State, equipped with technological developments, especially in the military, transportation and communication, have been able to penetrate all the sector of society. And as state's power and influence extend over the life of other ethnic and religious groups who consider themselves different from the dominant group, there ethnic identities often enhanced and politically mobilised which led to the ethnicity and ethnic nationalism.

Nationalism and ethnicity both are the modern concerns in the Iranian modern history. These new developments have made the people conscious about their role, status and participation in the society. The role of majority and minority, their power relations and interests are defined in a way where conflict of interest occurs. Consequently, the

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[62] Helfgott, M. Leonard (1980), "The Structural Foundations of the National Minority Problem in Revolutionary Iran", *Iranian Studies*, 13 (1/4): 196.
[63] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 41-42.
[64] ibid, 41.

minorities find themselves in a receiving end which result into some time as ethnic movement for greater autonomy, sometime in an insurgency and sometime freedom of religion and belief practices.

As ethnicity has been defined as a collective identity and solidarity-based on commonness of descent, language, belief, custom, practices and others.[65] This commonness may be both alleged and real. Anthony D. Smith defined ethnic group as "human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity".[66] When collective identities perceive themselves to be marginalized in a given political system they mobilized through ethnically framed ideologies. These ethnically framed ideologies sometimes convert into ethno-nationalist agendas that appear to challenge the nation state congruence.[67] The ruling elite of the existing nation state always becomes suspicious to these forces even if the aim of such movement may not be to establish an independent separate nation state. For ruling elites, even a demand of respect for cultural differences can appear alarmingly like separatism[68]. Religion and language are the most important factors behind the formation of different ethnic identities in Iran.[69] Throughout the history, linguistic, cultural differences and geographic isolation of different groups have been the major forces against the assimilation.[70]

From Safavid dynasty *Shi'a* Islam has been inseparable part of Iranian political history. However, in Islamic history there has been concept and practices of *umma* and *dhimmih*, where the people of the book according to Islamic belief which includes Jewish and Christian, recognised as collective identities and given their religious rights. However, in the modern history of Iran some religious groups find their limited collective incorporation in state. Both Pahlavi and Islamic Republic have recognised and incorporated the group identity of Zoroastrian, Jewish, Armenian and Assyrian

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[65] Amanolahi, Sekandar (2005) "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran & the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 38.

[66] Smith, D. Anthony (1986), *Ethnic Origins of Nations,* London: Oxford, 32.

[67] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 7.

[68] ibid, 7

[69] Amanolahi, Sekandar (2005) "A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran", *Iran & the Caucasus,* 9 (1): 39.

[70] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2): 211.

Christians. The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran formally guarantees the religious freedom in which the recognised religious minorities enjoy to certain degree of autonomy with regards to their personal status and family law. Moreover, each religious minority group have been given one elected representative in National Assembly. Before Islamic republic, these group had similar status under the 1909 electoral Law, and the civil code of the Pahlavi state. The representatives of these groups have been excluded from the ministerial position under the old constitution, as well as Constitutions of IRI also barred them from the office of president.[71] Both the state (Pahlavi and IRI) or Constitutions did not guarantee the non-Muslims the same rights as Muslims particularly *Shi'a* majority enjoy.

The role of religion (*Shi'ism*) has been the determining factor whether in the matter of nationalism and with relations of majority and minority. State, government, and nationalism have never been free from the *Shi'ism* in the modern history of Iran. Although, Pahalvi state was designed in the secular premises, but it was not free from religion. Persian identity was triumphant over the religious one. Islamic Republic restored the religious nationalism and the relations between majority and minority was determined on the basis of religion.

Pahlavi Regime and Questions of Ethno-Religious Minorities

The formation of nation state system in third world and other non-European countries have followed different methods. As modern theorists of nation suggest that nation is as modern as modernity itself. Capitalist development brought together industrial, technological, modern currency and fiscal policies which facilitated the rise of nation and nationalism. Through the capitalist mode of production, independent or loosely connected provinces, laws, governments and system of taxation became centralised[72] for a particular defined territory, consequently it emerged in the form of nation. However, in these countries' industrialisation could not be developed as it happened in the European countries but modern technological and communication expanded. In these countries, capitalism or industrialization could not take place where an economic uniformity can develop a common economic life, economic stage which

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[71] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 44.

[72] Marx, Karl, and Engel F. (1996), *The Communist Manifesto,* Beijing: Foreign Languages Peking, 36.

Western European countries such as French and Britain have gone through. The decline of feudalism and emergence of capitalism lead to the process of constituting people into a nation.[73] This process has happened in the case of Western European countries. The western societies were transformed into nations when the advancement of capitalism triumphed over feudalism. This has not been in the case of other underdeveloped nations.

In Western countries, nations evolved and developed into states, in other world particularly in colonised countries states have been formed with several nationalities within its fold. In the process of nation formation in these countries a particular community has played crucial and dominant role. For instances, in Austria the Germans proved to be politically advanced took the responsibility to unite different Austrian nationality into an Austrian state, in Hungary, Magyars united different nationalities into Hungarian state, and in Russia, these were Russians, who have been historically powerful and well organised aristocrats who united different nationality into Russian state.[74] In these cases, nation is the imagination of the well organised dominant community. Here Eric Hobsbawm is significant to define the role of elite in the process of nation formation when he states that "the identification of historical process whereby national elites tries to construct culturally a national lineage is undoubtedly valuable".[75] Almost similar process has been followed by the Iranian state to form a nation. Persians are the well organised dominant communities who has taken the responsibility of uniting different nationalities into a nation called Iran. The problem of ethnicity and minorities arouse with formation of modern nation state in underdeveloped countries have gone through different methods of state formations. Here, feudalism still persist, capitalism has not been fully developed, different nationalities remained in periphery and they have not been able to consolidate themselves economically into integral nation.

Although, nationalism began in Iran long before Pahlavi era, but the state led nation formation's process began from Reza Shah Pahlavi from 1924. Reza Shah consolidated the state power and started to form a modern nation state based on the

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[73] Stalin, J.V (2011), "Marxism and the Question of Nationalities", *Critical Quest,* New Delhi, 12, the Text along with notes reproduced from JV Stalin, Works, Volume 2, 1907-1943, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, 300-381 and 417-420.

[74] ibid, 13.

[75] Hobsbawm, Eric (1992), *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780 Programme, Myth Reality,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

western values with authoritarian rule. It was the project to Persianize the country and form a homogenous nation by undermining the different ethnic and linguistic groups. Through various state led policies and plan with coercive measures Reza Shah imagined a nation based on Persian identity with a secular state. As it happened in other non-western state, the process of nation's formation led by the Persians to unite different nationalities into one state. The nation which are still in the process of becoming have several problems. Therefore, in these countries' nation is the daily plebiscite. In Iran multiple ethnic nationalities, and religious minorities are not naturally incorporated into state, and these minorities have several grievances to the central authorities.

Shah and Ethnic Minorities

Reza Shah established the constitutional Monarchy in 1925, and tried to build ethno-linguistic nation with principle of "one nation' and 'one language" for centralised and unified Iran.[76] The common historical experiences of the people of the Iran through modern media and education, and emphasis on Persian language made up crucial components for a collective identity of Iran. Through state ideology, discourse of Aryan race propagates to de-emphasise the Arab and Islamic influence on Iranian history. Arab minority in Iran has long experienced an uneasy relation with the Persian domination. The Iranian Persian/*Shi'ite* based national identity in Iran has been defined and oriented in comparison with- if not necessarily but against Arab identity in the West Asian region. It is partially due to racial interpretation of Iran as an "Aryan nation," and also the perceived centuries long competitions with Arabs in the region. Arabs along with Turks and other non-Aryan nationalities have been defined as the "others" of the Aryan Iran.[77]

Moreover, through the state-controlled media and education system, pre-Islamic history with culture and Persian language was promoted through modern education system. Military, educational, bureaucratic and media instruments were filled with Persian nationalist elites in order to persuade the cultural homogenisations of the different ethnicity. Most importantly, flagrant disregard of the regional identities from

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[76] Yesiltas, Ozum (2016), "Contested Notions of National Identity, Ethnic Movement and Democratisation in Iran", *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* 8 (1): 56.
[77] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* United States: Palgrave Macmillan, 125.

central government happened when a decision turned into a law to rename the provinces with Persian terms. There were numbers of Provinces and places which were adhering the regional and linguistic identities and their names were changed, such as, province of Arabestan was named Khuzestan and Lurestan as Kermanshah.[78] The intention behind the renaming was to wipe out the province names that referred to historical identities of ethnic minorities.

In order to undermine the ethnic minorities, their cultural rights were curtailed. Writing in non-Persian was banned, speech and expression in other languages in public became illegal and offenders were punished.[79] Reza Shah Pahlavi, from 1925 to 1941 forcefully persuaded his policies of homogenous nationalism and disregarded the ethnic diversity of Iran. Soon after holding the grip on power after World War II, his son Mohammed Reza Shah followed the same method to deal with minorities of the country.[80] The policy of Reza Shah to homogenise Iran into one linguistic and cultural identity and his actions to close the schools of minority and their printing presses hit almost all the ethnic and linguistic minorities, but its impact was very hard on Azeris. Azeris has been the more urbanised population than the Kurds, Arabs, Baluchs and Turkomans and had developed their own intelligentsia, was culturally affected by these policies of Reza Shah.[81] These discriminative policies by Pahlavi state resulted into cultural resentment. Persian schools, pedagogy, books, papers and printing presses imposed on Turkish language schools Azerbaijan.[82] It stimulated a new form of ethnic communalism.

Economic dividend, particularly revenue from the oil, facilitates Shah to make effective use of policies which were intended to homogenise the different ethnic groups. Government was able to developed and acquire resources through oil but peripheral regions remain untouched from the benefits of the new economic growth. It produced uneven economic development. The unequal economic development has generally formed core-periphery pattern, in which central provinces of Iran are more

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[78] Sanasarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15
[79] Hassanpour, A (1994), "The Nationalist Movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan", in J. Foran (ed.) *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 86.
[80] Farhi, Farideh (2005), "Crafting a National Identity amidst Contentious Politics in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1):
[81] Abrahmian, Ervand, (1982), *Iran Between Two Revolutions,* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 164.
[82] ibid, 164-165.

developed and the provinces situated in periphery are underdeveloped. However, since the establishment of the modern state in Iran, only central provinces has been in privileged economic development policies, and deliberately peripheral provinces has been neglected.[83] Through the planned economic expansion, state had effective control over all the resources of the country.

Apart from oil resources, Pahlavi state had ownership of other mineral resources, transportation, banking and other large industries.[84] Economic development ambitions in the form of centralized industrialization relatively developed the central provinces of the country but peripheral regions left impoverished, which are mainly inhabited by the ethnic and religious minorities. These policies led the massive durable disparities.[85] The regional linguistic minorities were not in a position to access resources equally. The project and policies designed by the central authorities for provinces extracted more money than they return for the regional development of the provinces. This relative discriminations against the peripheral region, and extraction of resources in favour of developed or core areas strongly felt by the linguistic minorities.[86] These policies were designed in a way that led to the periphery impoverished. Reza Shah remained suspicious to ethnic minorities, and the economic development of the region would fuel the ethnic consciousness which was a threat to the centralised Iranian state.

However, there is no data available on individual level regarding the economic disparity, and over a period of time in-migration has changed the demography of the provinces. Disparity in the provinces show the reality of the economic policies of the Pahlavi rulers. Through available data on occupational structure and urbanization for various provinces, one can assess the discriminatory policies of Reza Shah for various ethnic minorities in Iran.

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[83] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2): 213.
[84] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 45.
[85] Abrahmian, Ervand, (1982), *Iran Between Two Revolutions,* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 449
[86] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 49.

Occupational structure and Urbanisation for various provinces **Table: 3 (b)**   *(In Per cent of Population)*

Province and Ethnicity	Working in Agriculture		Living in Urban Areas	
	1966	1976	1966	1976
Central (Persians)	**19.2**	**13.8**	**70.3**	**79.7**
East Azerbaijan (Azeri)	50.2	41.6	29.0	36.3
West Azerbaijan (Azeri and Kurd)	61.0	53.9	25.5	32.1
Kermanshah (Kurd)	55.2	40.7	35.4	43.4
Sistan and Baluchistan (Baluch)	**66.6**	**57.1**	**14.4**	**24.5**
Iran	46.2	36.1	39.1	46.8

Source: Akbar Aghajanian[87]

Ethnically it can be analysed that the rate of Persians was least in the agricultural occupation in both the years 1966 and 1976. The ethnic communities which were representing highest rate in agricultural occupations were the Baluch with 66.6 per cent in 1966, and 57.1 per cent in 1976 followed by Kurds. Persian constitutes highest rate in living in urban areas contrary to Baluch and Kurds who represents the least numbers in urban areas respectively. There is relation between the location of ethnic communities and ethnic inequality. In almost every situation it is clear that the, living in urban areas has higher opportunity and access to educational institution, it led the greater opportunity and diverse economic and employment opportunities.

Apart from the inequality in occupational structure and urbanisations there is huge gap of literacy rate between Persian and other ethnic minorities. However, often it is argued by the development and modernisation theorists that development and modernisation led to the degradation of ethnic inequality and assimilate various ethnic communities into one economic structure and blurred the differences among the different cultural communities. Contrary during Reza Shah it had widened the gap between various ethnic communities. The policies of Reza Shah and the process of

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[87] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2):215.

economic development and modernisation has benefitted only Persians. It is very difficult to analyse the socio-economic condition of ethnic minorities in pre-modern Iran due to lack of data, but they were enjoying semi-autonomous status, and less interference of the central authorities in their region. The available data for literacy rate by gender for various provinces and ethnic groups shows the inequality in Iranian society and the failure of modernisation and development led by the Pahlavi governments.

Table: 3 (c)   *Literacy Rate by Sex for various provinces and ethnic groups*

(In per cent)

Province and Ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
Central (Persian)	59.7	74.8	38.5	56.6	49.6	66.1
East Azerbaijan (Azeri)	31.5	51.1	8.9	21.7	20.5	36.3
West Azerbaijan (Azeri and Kurd)	29.2	50.1	9.3	25.2	19.8	38.1
Kermanshah (Kurd)	34.7	53.6	14.2	29.7	25.1	42.2
Kurdistan (Kurd)	21.8	43.8	5.7	15.0	14.3	30.0
Sistan & Baluchistan (Baluch)	23.1	39.1	6.2	19.4	14.9	29.7
Iran	40.1	58.8	17.9	35.6	29.4	47.5

Source: Akbar Aghajanian[88]

The above disparity of literacy rate between the Persians and other ethnic minorities shows the inequality in Iranian society. However, there is variation among the different ethnic minorities, apart from Persians, there are not impressive changes for others.

Location of the ethnic minorities often has been serious concern for Iran. Most of the minorities inhabit strategic border areas of Iran.[89] The location of the ethnic communities has been a serious problem for the Iran. In security point of view, state often adopted the measures and policies which have caused impoverishment of the region, population dislocation and several other coercive measures to secure territorial

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[88] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2): 216.
[89] Wimbush, Enders (1980), Iran's Ethnic Factions Threaten to Split the State", *The Rand Corporation*, Santa Monica, California, 2.

integrity. Elize Sanasarian argued that the ethno-national diversity of Iran raises the issue of the potentiality for secession.[90] Three ethnic minorities that are- Kurds, Baluchs and Arabs in past have claims to separatism.[91] These minority groups have several reasons to oppose Persian domination. The first two ethnic groups belong to the *Sunni* believers while the third has a majority of *Shi'a* believers. In the light of ethnic politics Eliz Sansarian concludes that *Shi'a-Sunni* line is a serious political threat of ethnic separatism. In the modern time the highest potential for separatism has been demonstrated from the side of Kurds and the Baluch in Iran. The major factors behind this potential are their *Sunni* belief and their geographical locations at bordering areas along with various other supplementary factors which strengthen this potentiality. These major factors include the political movements in the past and modern history of Iran encourage them to have independent statehood. Both ethnic groups despite having internal challenges of intra-ethnic conflicts and acute poverty, have maintained strong cross-border connections and networks with their co-ethnic communities in neighbouring countries. Population of these two groups possess a large swath of territory. They have been in opposition to Persianization, and this position has remained unchanged.[92] All these factors are interconnected, which shows highest potential of separatism. The security of the territory has been viewed by the Pahlavi regime a serious matter of intervention. Which led the design of the minority policies by the centralised state based on the Tehran.

However, in order to crush the ethno-national consciousness of the different ethnic groups, Pahlavi rulers adopted the policy of population dislocation of different tribes, and also promoted inter-state migration through economic policies. In ethnically diverse societies, periphery-core migration also functions as a mechanism of population mix and cultural assimilation. Central provinces dominated by the Persian were developed and periphery remained underdeveloped, consequently a huge migration began towards developed provinces in search of employment. To some extent migration served the policies of cultural assimilation of various ethnic identities into Persian identities. As it has been mentioned that a group of Kurdish people who are based in Tehran and other Persian dominated region speaks Persian, and culturally they are assimilated with dominant Persian culture. Relatively

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[90] Sanasarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 14.
[91] ibid, 14.
[92] ibid, 14.

developed central areas or the core aspire for population of periphery to migrate in order to achieve better employment opportunities. These migrants have settled in a different territory for long, where they marry and have children, and quite often, the identity of the children born in the new 'locale' is under the influence of their immediate social environment rather than those of their parents.[93]

However, the constitution of the Pahlavi regime had some provisions of elected local council for regional governance, but these provisions were restricted through other mechanisms of the central government. The effectiveness of the local was systematically curtailed.[94] In order to crush the local governance, local leaders were deprived from appointment to any official positions in their own locality.[95] Reza Shah changed the local administrative system. countries economy and polity were centralised in Tehran. In order to erase the regional differentiations, he redrew and renamed administrative units. He posted outsiders especially Persians on the key positions of the local administration to weaken the local elites.[96]

In Reza Shah's Iran, the structure of modernisation and economic growth has adapted to existing inter-ethnic inequality.[97] However, policies of acculturation and assimilation adopted by the Pahlavi state, and constitution gave the special status to recognised religious minorities, but their representation remained unchanged. Assimilation partially achieved, but minorities remained deprived of equal opportunities and access to position of power and authority. During the 1960s, the political elite who were dominating the state institutions and government were mainly Persians, and the only Azeris were the linguistic minorities who have achieved higher position in the government system.[98]

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[93] Wallerstein, Immanuel (1997), "Integration to What? Marginalisation from What? Keynote Address at 19th Nordiske Sociolog kongres 13-15 June, Copenhagen: Integration and Marginalisation", *Scandinavian Political Studies,* 20 (4): 317-330.

[94] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 44.

[95] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2): 220

[96] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 44.

[97] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2): 219-220.

[98] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 44, and Zonis, Marvin (1971), *The Political Elite of Iran,* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 179-80.

Pahlavi state and ethnic minorities relations have been subject to modernisation process and the formation of modern nation in Iran. Main ethnic areas inhabited by Azeris, Kurds, Arabs and Baluchs had been seen as threat to national integrity, therefore the linguistic and cultural rights of the linguistic and ethnic minorities were kept aside, and state emphasis on acculturation and assimilation with arbitrary use of power.

Religious Minorities

As Pahlavi state attempted to construct a modern state based on western values, they emphasised on secularisation of Iran but not democratisation and decentralisation of power. The linguistic homogenisation was the major concern of Pahlavi state, and religion became secondary to defined Iranian national identity. Unlike ethnic minorities, religious minorities also incorporated as individual rather than collective identification except for a few recognised religious minorities in the constitution. Shah's attempt to secularize Iranian society resulted in equalization of citizens belonging to different religious faiths, under secular law.[99] The implications of the Pahlavi policies regarding the religious minorities were both positive and negative, some minority gained respect and power position in the government and some were lagged behind and persecuted.

As a recognised religious minority Christians are divided in mainly two ethnic groups; Armenian Christians and Assyrian Christian. During the range of Pahlavi regime these religious minorities faced restriction on their missionary activities and persecution in different forms. However, these communities never found to engage in any separatist activities against the state.[100] As a recognised religious minority in the constitution, the Armenian Christians, Assyrian Christians, and Chaldeans were given one additional deputy in *Majelsh*, and permitted cultural and religious autonomy. Growing missionary activities by the Christians and their foreign connection was seen as threat to the Iran. In response Reza Shah banned the Armenian schools in 1938-39 and threatened their religious autonomy. Moreover, during this time, Armenians were denied employment and government jobs.

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[99] Choksy, K. Jamsheed (2006), "Despite Shah and Mollas: Minority Socio-politics in Pre-modern and Modern Iran", *Journal of Asian History,* 40 (2): 129-184.
[100] Sanasarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 36.

With his policy of Persianisation, Reza Shah renamed many villages in Azerbaijan earlier which had Armenian names. There were not even a single Assyrians representative in the parliament between two World Wars, it was only after 1959 the first Assyrian deputy was elected for four years.[101] They were accused and criticised by the state-controlled media. Assyrian Christian and their religious mission were considered as destabilising force since their political role in the past.[102] In the late 1920 government began to impose general restrictions on missionary activities of the Assyrians. Moreover, in 1934, all foreigners were forced to leave Azerbaijan region. These measures were taken because of the 1933 uprising which resulted into the massacre of Hakkaki Assyrians in Iraq. Reza Shah suspected that missionary functions of Assyrians might cause separatism among the Azerbaijan region similar to Iraq. Schools and hospitals established by the Assyrian missionaries were so attractive even among the Muslims, particularly elites used to admit their children in these schools. Reza Shah banned village evangelism, and in 1932, Persian of any regions were prohibited from attending missionary schools. Moreover, in 1951, a Christian hospital run by the local Angelical Church missionary society in Isfahan was closed by Mohammed Reza Shah. The head of Anglican priest attested that after 1952, his church and missionary activities were under surveillance from Shah's secrete police (SAVAK) and Islamic Groups.

These communities not only profess different religion, at the same time they had different linguistic and ethnic lineage and became the victim of both communal and territorial politics of Reza Shah. Particularly during the range of Reza Shah, closing down of minority schools and renaming of their cities, streets and village in particular and entire policy framework had clear intention to diminish the foreign influence.

However, with the beginning of the Reza Shah regime, Jewish and few other non-Muslim groups felt temporary relief. Unlike other non-Muslim, Reza Shah during the 1920s forced to close down the Jewish Schools. With the rise of Hitler in 1930s, and Reza Shah's sympathetic attitude towards Nazi became serious threat to Iranian Jewry. Although there were no any directly persecutions were seen, but along with

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[101] ibid, 42.
[102] ibid, 43.

other minorities anti-Jewish literature was produced in Persian media.[103] Following the World War II and establishment of State of Israel in 1948, encouraged a huge migration of Jews from Iran to Israel. Within five years around one third of the Jewish of Iran left to Israel[104]. For remaining Jews in Iran, the Arab and Israeli conflict became one of the serious challenges in Iran.

Mohammed Reza Shah's period was the most peaceful time for Iranian Jewish. They had considerable political and religious freedom. Both at national and provincial level, their synagogues, and other associations were functioning without any constraint. Moreover, Scholars suggests that the Reza Shah Jewish were Persianised and their Zionist and Jewish values were weakened.[105] The participation of the Jewish in different higher positions and professions was considerable. During the end of Reza Shah period in 1979, Eliz Sansarian estimated that 2 of the 18 members of Royal Academy of Sciences were Jewish, 80 of the 4,000 university lecturers, and 600 of the 10,000 Physicians, in Iran were Jewish.[106] This was the era when first time in the history of Iran, almost 50 per cent elementary school age Jewish children attended Hebrew schools. Moreover, their economic status increased drastically compared to the past. It has been noted that with exception of Israel and South Africa Iranian Jewish were the wealthiest Jewish community in all of Asia.[107] According to some sources, in 1979, majority of the Jewish community was middle class.[108] It was after Iranian revolution, persecution of Jews begun again in Iran, therefore Jews started to flee Israel.

In Iran, the Zoroastrianism has been one of the indigenous and ancient faith in Iranian history. It was after Arab invasion and the establishment of *Shi'ism* in Iran the Zoroastrianism deteriorated from the land. Although there is little information about the perils of this community in Iran. It is noted that in ninth and tenth centuries the Zoroastrians were badly oppressed, and from Khorasan a large group of them left to India specially in present day Gujrat, and here they came to be known as 'Parsis'.[109]

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[103] Sanasarian, Eliz (2004), *Religious Minorities in Iran,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 46-47.
[104] ibid, 47.
[105] ibid, 47.
[106] ibid, 49.
[107] ibid, 47.
[108] ibid, 47.
[109] ibid, 48.

From India, Zoroastrian priest and representatives have made their regular visit to Iran.

The Reza Shah rule had been relevant to the Zoroastrian community. Unlike other non-Muslim minorities, they were subjected to restrictions on their schools and worship centres. In terms of nationalist ideology for Pahlavi's monarchy they became a unique instrument because of their pre-Islamic heritage. Pre-Islamic Persian myths and symbols directly linked to the Zoroastrians became the cornerstone for the building of modern nation in Iran. As Reza Shah officially renamed the "Persia" as "Iran". The term "Iran" which has been derived from the holy book Avesta.[110] The new system of monarchy led by Reza Shah was welcomed by the Zoroastrians, and many of them were ardent supporter of Reza Shah. One of them Arbab Keikhosrow Shahrokh, became a deputy in the *Majlesh.* As a deputy he tried his level best to ameliorate the condition of the Zoroastrian communities across the country.[111] Overwhelmingly he advocated the development programme for Iran designed by Reza Shah. With regards to Zoroastrians the regime of Mohammed Reza Shah was certainly better than his father's rule. During his time in 1960, one of the Zoroastrian was placed in high position of the government and also the first Zoroastrian congress organised in Tehran.[112]

The uniform legal code for Zoroastrians was made functional during 1930. Under the rule of Shah Pahlavi, Zoroastrians were given their rights in personal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Through the various laws, such as "Family Protection Law of 1967", and its revision in 1975, the government restructured Zoroastrian's legal relationships with Iran.[113] The uniform nature of these civil codes was introduced by the Mohammed Reza Shah. It gradually secured physical safety, provided religious freedom and cultural practices, increased access to education and enhanced opportunities for employment.[114]

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[110] ibid, 49.
[111] ibid, 49.
[112] ibid, 49.
[113] Choksy, K. Jamsheed (2006), "Despite Shah and Mollas: Minority Socio-politics in Pre-modern and Modern Iran", *Journal of Asian History,* 40 (2): 153-54.
[114] Choksy, K. Jamsheed (2006), "Despite Shah and Mollas: Minority Socio-politics in Pre-modern and Modern Iran", *Journal of Asian History,* 40 (2): 154.

Baha'is were rarely persecuted during this time. Moreover, the secularisation project led by Reza Shah in late 1920 improved the condition of *Baha'is* and they built a *Baha'i* centre in Tehran.[115] In the various government branches and civil administration *Baha'is* were appointed in the number higher positions, particularly on the branches of the government related to finance. Due to the importance of the *Shi'a* clergies in the Iranian society, laws were made to control employment of the *Baha'is* particularly in civil services which resulted into minor improvement in their position.[116] However, they got a limited degree of protection from persecution, as well as permitted to open their schools. Schools opened by the *Baha'is* rapidly gained the huge reputation in term of excellence, even monarch was moved to enrolled their children in these schools. latter it was seen that some restrictive laws were imposed on the *Baha'is* and prejudice and hostility against them expressed in Iranian society. Reza Shah also adopted the divide and rule politics in order to perpetuate and strengthen his monarchy. Eventually, he formulated policy of discrimination regarding the treatment of the *Baha'is.*[117] Most importantly, during the 1933 this community became the subject of Reza Shah's policy, and there were ban on several aspect of life of *Baha'is* including banning their literature, declaring their marriage illegal, offenders were punished, banning their press and eventually closing down to their schools.[118] Again, they were reduced to as a hated minority.

The Pahlavi state and its relations with minorities can be analysed in light of its attempt of modernisation, and secularisation of Iran. As Pahlavi state was based on the linguistic and ethnic nationalism, and the Iranian identity had been constructed on the premises of the Persian and Aryan supremacy, the other ethnic and linguistic minorities became the worst subject in relation to the state. As far as religious minorities were concerned, the Reza Shah cleverly managed the affairs of these minorities. At one hand religious minorities were given the recognition by the state but several restrictions were imposed on them. In fact, it is visible by the above analysis that the relations of ethnic minorities (except Azeris) with the state had been worse than the religious minorities, in term of representation, economic employment, and freedom of culture. According to Patricia J. Higgins "a review of the background

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[115] Hussain, Ashaq (2013), "Religion in Iran", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Invention,* 2 (3): 3.
[116] ibid, 3.
[117] ibid, 3.
[118] ibid, 3.

of cabinet members in the late Pahlavi era shows that the linguistic minorities remained underrepresented in the political sphere, but religious minorities with small population represented adequately".[119] Moreover, during the end of the Pahlavi regime some efforts were made for the upliftment religious minorities in government services, as well as social and legal disabilities were taken into consideration.[120] Apart from these differences, the linguistic and ethnic minorities were not able access equal resources, whereas religious minorities considerably had a good standard of living under the Pahlavi regime.

Minorities under Islamic Republic of Iran

The minority-state relations, following the revolution remained almost unchanged. Although, there was a dramatic shift from Pahlavi's secular nationalism to religious character of the Islamic Republic, but minority state relations remained with little change.[121] The nature of Iranian Revolution and the prominence of the *Shi'a* clerics prescribed *Shi'a* Islam as the main component of Iranian collective identity. Due to the supremacy of the *Shi'ism* in state affairs, division of *Shi'a-Sunni* became major determinant of the majority-minority relationship. With the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the definition of the 'nation' got shaped in a religious character, and 'religious nationalism' was promoted as a primary dynamic of state-society relations. The supremacy of the *Shi'ism* in the new system considerably accentuated *Sunni* grievances, including mostly the Turkmen, *Sunni* Arabs, Baluchs and Kurds. These groups are also ethnically different to the Persians, and therefore became both ethnic and religious minority.[122]

The power relations between ethnic and religious communities remained same in both Pahlavi and Islamic Republic. The official culture promoted by both of the regimes, and majority of the leading figures and political elites of both states, belong to the same religious and ethnic communities that of *Shi'a*-Persians.[123] The consequences of the revolution did not lead to the transfer of power from one ethnic group to another, but it remained in the same hands of Persian-speaking *Shi'as*. Baluch and some *Sunni*

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[119] Higgins, J. Patricia (1984), "Minority state Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 49.
[120] ibid, 49.
[121] ibid, 39.
[122] ibid, 19.
[123] ibid, 51.

Kurds whose remained in marginal position and not able to associate with either principle of unity. In this sense, their position with regard to state and the domination of Persians remained unchanged.

Following the revolution, concern over the national debate shifted from the language to religion and the identity of different linguistic and ethnic groups were undermined. Ayatollah Khomeini said barred to use the term 'minority' for different ethnic groups, while arguing that the terms express the division among the different linguistic Muslims and Islam does not permit it.[124]

After revolution there were political discontents among the ethnic groups such as Kurds, Baluchs, Arabs and Azerbaizanis over regional autonomy, therefore some revolts and political unrest was taken place. Revolts in Kurdistan and Turkmensahra erupted in 1979, in Kurdistan it lasted for six years.[125] First, Kurds placed their national demands in front of new regime.[126] Furthermore, another political unrest was taken place in Khuzestan and Baluchistan during the mid of 1979.[127] The most intense and challenging unrest came from the *Sunni* populated areas. Their major objection was the constitution's provision which placed official religion of Iran to be Twelver *Shi'ism.*[128] All ethnic groups who with dissent had an immediate common objective of gaining more cultural, linguistic and political autonomy within Iranian state.[129] However, except Kurds and Baluchs call for outright separation from Iran was not visible among the different ethnic groups.[130]

The Minorities in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran

In the modern history of Iran, the constitution has been a major source of categorisation of the populations, and subsequently the justification for ethnic discrimination. From the constitutional revolution to Islamic Republic, the

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[124] Atabaki, Touraj (2005), "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 38.
[125] ibid, 38.
[126] Wimbush, S. Enders (1980), *Iran's Ethnic Factions Threaten to Split the State,* California: RAND corporation.
[127] Atabaki, Touraj (2005), "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 38.
[128] ibid, 39, and Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, [Online web] Accessed on 12 Jan 2015 URL: http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch01.php.
[129] Wimbush, S. Enders (1980), *Iran's Ethnic Factions Threaten to Split the State,* California: RAND corporation, 5.
[130] ibid, 5

constitution has elevated Persian population as the backbone of the Iranian nation, and Persian as the sole culture of the country. However, the non-Persian has been denied their collective incorporation into the constitution. As Islamic Republic declared *Shi'ism* is the official religion, the basis of inequality strengthens, despite having other provisions for equality. Article 12 of the constitution explicitly says that:

> "The official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver Ja'farî school [in usul al-Dîn and fiqh], and this principle will remain eternally immutable. Other Islamic schools, including the Hanafî, Shafi'î, Malikî, Hanbalî, and Zaydî, are to be accorded full respect, and their followers are free to act in accordance with their own jurisprudence in performing their religious rites. These schools enjoy official status in matters pertaining to religious education, affairs of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, and wills) and related litigation in courts of law. In regions of the country where Muslims following any one of these schools of fiqh constitute the majority, local regulations, within the bounds of the jurisdiction of local councils, are to be in accordance with the respective school of *fiqh*, without infringing upon the rights of the followers of other schools".[131]

In this article mentioned other Islamic schools except Zaydî rest of them belongs to *Sunni* Islam. *Baha'i* who constitutes a sizeable number of populations were denied to recognise as a religious minority, and their persecution in Islamic Republic of Iran is rampant. A large number of *Baha'is* are outside of the country, and settled in US, Europe and in some parts of Asia and Africa.

In relations to other minorities, constitution only recognised the people of the book according to Islamic interpretation of the other religion. Article 13 of the constitution mentioned that "Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies, and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education".[132] The constitutionally recognised minorities were guaranteed with religious freedom and limited autonomy in their

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[131] Iran (Islamic Republic of)'s Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989, [Online web] Accessed on 23 September 2018 URL:
https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989.pdf?lang=en.
[132] ibid, and the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Adopted: 24 October 1979, Effective: 3 December 1979, Amended 28 July 1989, [Online web] Accessed on 24 July 2017 URL: pwerth.faculty.unlv.edu//Const-Iran(abridge).pdf.

personal status and family law, as well as one elected representative by each group in the national Assembly.[133]

However, the follower of different sect of *Sunni* school of thought and recognised religious minorities have given certain religious rights and freedom but they cannot equally gain and achieve the political paramount in the Islamic republic of Iran. Article 115 of the constitution barred them to be elected as president of the country, it says that "the president must be elected from among religious and political personalities, who convinced belief in the fundamental principle of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the official madhhab of the country".[134] For the representation of non-Shia Muslims constitutions does not have any provisions except one deputy in National Assembly from recognised religious minorities. Moreover, members of ethnic and linguistic groups have been incorporated not as a collective identity but as individual citizen of the country.[135] However, constitution guarantess the equal status to all citizens of the country, but in practice there are huge disparity between Persian and non-persian. Amnesty international and UN reports enumerate that land and property confiscations, employement and educational discrimination, movement restrictions and other civil right violations are rampant in Islamic Republic of Iran.[136] Even though, in article 14 of the constitution it is claimed that rights of religious minorities will be secured but in the same constitution *Shi'ite* Islamist exceptionalism is permeated, this system can be observed as a testimony to a new system of discrimination against large part of the Iranian populations.[137]

Although there is principle of equality has been established in the constitution under article 19 which says that "all people of Iran, whatever the ethnic and group or tribe to which they belong, enjoy equal rights; and colour, race language, and the like, do not

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[133] Higgins j. Patricia (1984), "Minority-State Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 34.

[134] Iran (Islamic Republic of)'s Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989, [Online web] Accessed on 23 September 2018 URL: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989.pdf?lang=en.

[135] Higgins j. Patricia (1984), "Minority-State Relations in Contemporary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 17 (1): 44.

[136] Bernstam, S. Michael (2011), "Considering Kurdistan: Another Way to Stop Iran", *Harvard International Review,* 32 (4): 13.

[137] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 51.

bestow any privilege".[138] The constitution says that linguistic minorities have rights to use their language in mass media and education. Despite this constitutional equality, in practice there is huge disparity of resources, opportunities and employment between Persian and non-Persian. Furthermore, article 15 of the constitution stipulates that:

> "The official language and script of Iran, the lingua franca of its people, is Persian. Official documents, correspondence, and texts, as well as text-books, must be in this language and script. However, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching of their literature in schools, is allowed in addition to Persian".[139]

Persian was declared as the official language of the Islamic Republic and it is the mother tongue of almost half of the population of Iran.[140] The constitution allows the teaching of local and ethnic languages only at school level, but does not obligate. The instructions of these languages are allowed in addition to Persian. There is not any concrete and permanent provisions and measures have been taken to facilitate teaching in minority languages.[141] Even if the article 15 of the constitution is fully implemented, it will not be able to guarantee the proper use of minority languages in terms of human rights standards. Constitution allows the use of the minority languages in media and education but makes Persian use compulsory as conjunction. The term in Article 14 'regional and tribal languages' does not give recognition to the linguistic identities of national and ethnic minorities or mother language as a fundamental principle.[142] It means that the ethnic or linguistic minorities has no recognition in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, they are merely incorporated individually, not with their regional linguistic collective identities.

The Islamic state gave the ultimate power in the hand of the clerical authorities. However, there is no such explicit provision of anti-minority in the constitution but

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[138] Yesiltas, Ozum (2016), "Contested Notions of National Identity, Ethnic Movement and Democratisation in Iran", *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* 8 (1): 57.

[139] Iran (Islamic Republic of)'s Constitution of 1979 with Amendments through 1989, [Online web] Accessed on 23 September 2018 URL: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989.pdf?lang=en, and Yesiltas, Ozum (2016), "Contested Notions of National Identity, Ethnic Movement and Democratisation in Iran", *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* 8 (1): 57.

[140] Tohidi, Nayereh (2009), "Ethnicity and Religious Minority Politics in Iran", (ed.) in Gheissari, Ali *Contemporary Iran: Economy, Society, Politics,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 299-300.

[141] Yesiltas, Ozum (2016), "Contested Notions of National Identity, Ethnic Movement and Democratisation in Iran", *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* 8 (1): 57.

[142] ibid, 57.

through various means and the interpretation of the constitution IRI treats them as second-class citizen in the country.

Ethnic Movements in Islamic Republic of Iran

The emergence of the different political aspirations was very much visible during the Iranian revolution in 1979, and different political ideological groups of various ethnic and religious groups were fought against the Reza Shah. Soon after the revolution Iran witnessed the ethnic, religious and regional conflicts between the major political stake holders over the future and the nature of the new Iran. Islamic republic of Iran failed to manage or to incorporate the plurality of Iran. There are major ethnic communities which are fighting for their due share and rights in the Islamic republic of Iran.

Ethnic movements and resurgence began with nationalist movement throughout the modern Iranian history. Both, ethnic and national consciousness are the product of the modernity. The European (colonial) intervention in the country, Reza Shah's modernisation and nationalisation policies and establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran are the phases where this consciousness manifested in the ethnic and nationalist movements. In eve of the revolution violent conflict erupted between the central authority based in Tehran and the different regional and ethnic groups. With these conflicts minority groups expectations for greater cultural and regional autonomy were dashed under the newly established Islamic state.[143]

From the areas overwhelmingly populated by *Sunnis* strong dissent came against the promotion of an ardent *Shi'a* identity by the Islamic Republic. Even though a religious communal identity among the different ethnic groups such as *Shi'a* Azeris, Arabs and Kurds straightened through this new emphasis on *Shi'ism* by Iranian state, but it alienated the *Sunni* Kurds, Baluch and Turkmens.[144] The religious minorities which are also ethnically different felt double discrimination in the Islamic Republic. This structure of the constitution has provoked the ethnic communities and strengthen the ethnic consciousness.

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[143] Hassan D. Hussein (2008), "Iran: Ethnic and Religious Minorities", *CRS Report for Congress*, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34021.pdf, 2.
[144] Bayat, Kaveh (2005), "The Ethnic Questions in Iran", *Middle Report,* 237 (): 42-45.

Although, it has been mentioned that the Azeris followed the same religious belief with Persians and have been most integrated, politically, socially and economically into Iranian society. There has been strong patriotism from the Azeris side to the Iranian state. following the revolution Azeris expected that Islamic Republic would allow for linguistic freedom and their contribution to the Iran will be recognised.[145] Three factors which has shaped and reshaped the ethnic consciousness of the Azeris; first the formation of the Soviet Union and its role in the ethnic mobilisation in Iran, formation of the Iran as a centralised Islamic Republic, and the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan after the disintegration of the USSR. Although there are many incidents where Azeris have revolted against the Iranian state for the freedom and greater autonomy.

The current Azeri ethnic movement took shape during the revolution when a small but very vocal organisation such as *Anjomen-e Azerbayjan* (Azerbaijan Society) demanded the end of cultural subjugation of the Azeris by the Persian domination.[146] During the revolutionary period confrontation between Ayatollah Shariatmadari and Ayatollah Khomeini over the nature of the Islamic Republic can be as seen first ethnic mobilisation of Azeris, in the current regime. Azeri religious leader Shariatmadari vehemently opposed theocratic system as well as demanded greater cultural freedoms in the new system.[147] This confrontation between Shariatmadari and Khomeini has been interpreted as symbolic broader struggle between ethnic minorities who are demanding some measures of the autonomy in the new system and those who are advocating a centralised Iran with continuation of Persian dominance. Movement for greater autonomy of the Azeris faced problem of Iran-Iraq war. Gradually, governments control over the provinces populated by Azeris expanded. War with Iraq was used as pretext to appeal Azeris' sense of patriotism and the historic role of Azeris against the Arab expansionism was valorised.[148] Most of the ethnic based

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[145] Grebennikov, Marat (), "The Puzzle of a Loyal Minority: Why do the Azeri Support Iranian State?", [Online web] Accessed on 23 August 2017 URL: https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2010/Grebennikov.pdf. 4.

[146] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 63.

[147] Grebennikov, Marat (), "The Puzzle of a Loyal Minority: Why do the Azeri Support Iranian State?", [Online web] Accessed on 23 August 2017 URL: https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2010/Grebennikov.pdf. 7.

[148] ibid, 7.

movements faced the same problem of war, therefore the demands were seen as anti-national activities, and secondary concerns to deal with.

After the war, post-Khomeini Iran witnessed a fresh and new ethnic resurgence. Independence of the North Azerbaijan boosted the new aspirations among the Iranian Azeris. During the Glasnost policy of USSR Azeri organisations find the appropriate condition to flourish. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union many nationalist organisations became active in Republic of Azerbaijan which influenced the Iranian Azeris and organisations based in Iran. A number of Iranian born ethno-nationalist based in Baku converted themselves from socialist to ethno-nationalist with the disintegration of Soviet Union.[149] At present Iran, a number of Azeri ethnic organisation are operating at various levels. One among them *hoviyat-talab* (identity seekers) is very much prevalent among the university students.

The first sign of the Azeri students' movement after Khomeini era has been recorded in 1993. During this year a survey was allegedly conducted by the state media, on public attitudes toward Azeris, which faced huge protest from the Azeri students. In a meeting with MPs from Azerbaijan, these students forcefully raised their concerns regarding the prejudices inherent in the survey. The demands of these students' organisations have not been threat to the integrity of the Iranian state. Their demands range from structural issues such as increased autonomy and federalism, to protection of human and civil rights of ethnic minorities.[150] Apart from students' movement some radical ethno-nationalists are aspiring for bigger objectives which are against the national integrity of Iran. These ethno-nationalists inspired by chauvinist ideologies of Pan-Turkism from Turkey and Caucasus. These radicals sought for various radical demands including separation of Azerbaijan from Iran, uniting with "Northern Azerbaijan" and forming "Greater Turan" which covers all Turkic speakers from Greece to China.[151] Their influence among the Azeris is not strong. Due to scarcity of the reliable data based on unbiased and comprehensive survey it is very difficult to estimate what amount of Azeri population have this sense that their culture

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[149] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 63.
[150] ibid, 64.
[151] ibid, 64.

is in danger because of the Persian domination. Even among the ethnicists the number of moderates is greater than the radical, pan Turkists and separatists.[152]

Along with these organisations, some other ethnic based mobilizations were often seen among the Azeris but in an unorganised way. The young Azeris who may not be politically articulate, sometime demonstrates ethnic symbols when ethnic issues are raised in the public, particularly it can be seen during sport events, cultural celebration or in demonstrations to protect local landmarks.[153] There are some Azeris who support the cultural revivalism but privately avoiding the risk of direct political involvement. The number of Azeris who disagree with the ethnicist agenda is higher in Iran. A large number of Azeri intellectuals perceive Azeri ethnic agenda misguiding and detrimental and they stand with Iranian nationalism. Moreover, many Azeri origin people have settled in different part of Iran and became Persianised and they do not speak Azeri language as well as disassociate themselves with Azeri culture.

One of the Azeri grievances is common, that is their underrepresentation in the Iranian popular culture. Moreover, in the domination of the Persian culture, Azeri culture has been ridiculed. Azeris have been stereotyped and stigmatised in the Persian dominated Iran. For centuries, demeaning jokes and negative stereotyping have been *Torks* Such as '*tork-e khar'* (Turk donkey) among the Persians, and this negative stereotype is still very much visible in modern movies and literatures of Iran.[154] This ridiculing behaviour of main-stream Persian society about them has been perceived as part of a historical pattern of discrimination and marginalization among the Azeri nationalists.

During the revolution, a most challenging resurgence came from Kurdish side for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Kurds have been known for the separatist tendencies throughout the modern history of Iran. In the Islamic republic of Iran various ethnic group and ethnic based mobilisation is still active in large part of the Kurd regions. At present mainly three strains of ethnic nationalism are active among Kurds in Iran. One group who took advantage under Khatami's relatively free political climate. These

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[152] ibid, 64.
[153] ibid, 65.
[154] ibid, 65.

activists work through the NGOs, and organise themselves through these mechanisms. These groups functions in the domain of state acceptance. Most of them work as human rights activists, independent intellectuals, artists, scholars. They have adopted methods of non-violence resistance, with belief that the Islamic Republic can be reformed to accommodate Kurdish aspirations. The second group is represented by the radical Kurdish nationalists who operates through underground organisation with armed forces, from their base in Iraq.[155] Third group of Kurdish nationalists believe in the channelization of Kurdish discontentment against Iran which can bring revolutionary zeal among them to bring the substantial change for the Kurdish. Although, there are various reason, but Elling argued that due to restrictions on freedom of speech in the sensitive bordering areas of Iran, it is very difficult to find out the data about the size of the ethnicists of different strains, additionally there is significant overlap.[156]

The most influential Kurdish opposition in Iran are Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and Komala militant organisations. Their fundamental demands are ranging around decentralisation of power and democratisation. These organisations argued that the demands of the Kurds and other ethnic minorities (national minorities) must be accommodated within a decentralised structure to establish true democratic political process in Iran.[157] In this regard these demands from Kurds for democratisations does not only address the Problems of minorities and their rights, but also proposed larger political reforms for more inclusive democracy in Iran. These organisations have been engaging violently, and number of members have been killed or assassinated Iran. KDPI leader Asemlu was assassinated in Vienna in 1989, and in 1991 his successor, Sharafkandi, was killed in Berlin.[158] Kurds blamed Iranian intelligence agents but Iran denied to take the responsibility of their assassinations.

These two organisations were very active during and after the revolution. At present their military operations are scaled down, but they are functional as underground parties. Within Iran the data about support base of these organisations is difficult to

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[155] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 67.

[156] ibid, 67.

[157] Yesiltas, Ozum (2016), "Contested Notions of National Identity, Ethnic Movement and Democratisation in Iran", *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* 8 (1): 60-61.

[158] "Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 68".

estimate but among a large Kurdish diaspora their active members are operating from outside.[159] Apart from these two organisations, there are other organisations such as PJAK, its formation year is contested (in Iraq 1991, and in Iran 1997). It is claimed by the most of the observers that the PJAK is the Iranian wing of the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party), which had its base in Turkey until 1999. After that a large members left to northern Iraq. PJAK was formed on leftist ideological line, but later on party shifted its ideological line from a leftist to a liberal discourse on democracy and human rights. This group has ambiguous position on Kurdish independence.[160] In 2006, it was estimated that the PJAK fighters constitutes 3,000 in numbers and have financial support of Kurdish diaspora. During 2004, a series of attacks on Iranian police and military forces were launched by this party.

Moreover, there have been several incidents when Kurd have shown their different identity and nationalism. For instance, in 2005 when Masud Barzani became president of KRG, the celebration of his victory by Kurds with display of Kurdish flag, symbols and picture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in Northern Iran led to the violent clashes between Iranian forces and Kurds.[161] Among all the national minorities Kurdish poses a real threat to Iran's territorial integrity. Constantly it is visible that the various organisations are active with arms in the Kurdish region especially at border areas.

In case of Arabs of Iran, it has been seen that their cultural and religious distinction are subject to the systematic discrimination by the Iranian state. Unlike other ethnic movement, Arabs faced the same complexity of war period. Khuzestan was severely damaged due to Iran-Iraq War. Consequently, ethnic voice of Arabs was undermined. It is striking to note that Iraqi invasion on Iran did not result into mass celebration among Iranian Arabs as well as this volatile situation was not utilised by them significantly for military or guerrilla activities.[162] Post-war period leads to the new phase of ethnic mobilisation. The socio-economic and infrastructural damages caused by war could not despise efforts made by the government in the province. Moreover, despite having rich of natural resources in the province, there is wide spread poverty

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[159] ibid, 69.

[160] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 69.

[161] ibid, 69

[162] Helfgott, M. Leonard (1980), "The Structural Foundation of the National Minority Problem in Revolutionary Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 13 (1/3): 210.

among the Arabs of Iran, rampant unemployment, poor health facilities, less opportunity of education. There has been a history of industrialization in Khuzestan due to the oil richness. In the year of 2006-7 there were huge protests led by the workers of oil and sugarcane factories. The Arab ethnicists claim that the poor socio-economic condition of Arabs is because of the systematic discrimination and it is a deliberate attempt of the regime to deny share progress and welfare in the provinces inhabited by Arabs.[163] Their claim of discrimination to some extent proved valid when in 2005, UN's Special Rapporteur which was prepared through investigation, announced that the Arabs suffers with numerous discriminative practices by the government.[164] Arabs have certain valid grievances to the government, but their demands are perceived as separatist agenda.

State systematically depriving Arab minorities from their land and natural resources through the state mechanism in the name of development and industrialisation particularly from the Khuzestan province. The grabbing and expropriation of land from Arabs and their inability to defend their land rights in Persian speaking courts due to lack of sufficient documentation is one of the key discontentment among the Arab nationalists.[165] Not only ethnicists, even some MPs have been raising the issue of military complex and state-owned sugarcane and blamed that governments business operations in Khuzestan are ethnically motivated. Furthermore, Arab nationalist of Iran claim that a 1998 document exposes the real intention of regime to eliminate Arab culture and change the demography of Khuzestan in favour of non-Arabs.[166]

There are several organisations of Arabs who are fighting for their basic rights. Among these organisations both peaceful and militant organisations are active. Most of them are operated from outside of the country, particularly from Europe and some neighbouring countries. The political organization representing Arabs inside Iran are small in numbers and face serious control from the state apparatus. Among these two radical organisations are aspiring for the freedom of Khuzestan; first one is "Arab People of Ahwaz's Democratic Front" (Al-Ahwaz), second is "Ahwaz Liberation

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[163] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 70.
[164] ibid, 70.
[165] ibid, 70.
[166] ibid, 70

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Organisation" (ALO). Al-Ahwaz is based in England and ALO in Holland.[167] The first group claim that the "Al-Ahwaz" (Khuzestan) is occupied by Persians since 1925 and must be liberated. Moreover, ALO radically sought for the liberation of not only Khuzestan, but also of the Iranian side of Persian Gulf.[168] In 2006, Al-Mansouri leader of ALO was arrested in Syria and brought to Iran, and sent to prison for 30 years.[169]

Apart from these radical organisations some moderate organisations are also active, their demands range from the protection of basic rights to autonomy within the Iranian framework. Among the moderate groups include the Al-Ahwaz Democratic Solidarity Party based in US and its associate organisation the British-Ahwazi Friendship Society in UK, working with non-violent strategy for autonomy within a federal Iran.[170] These organisations seem very active through online, but it is very difficult to assess the support from within Iranian Arabs. Historically the cooperation between Britain and Arab separatists has been discredited by the Iranian Arabs. this does not mean that ethnic movement in Iran is not vibrant among Iranian Arabs. It can be testified by the ethnic unrests which have happened in post-Khomeini period, the most violent which erupted in April 2005.[171]

After the reformist era (Khatami regime), peaceful pro-reformist organisations of Arabs have been closed down and civil activities were repressed. At present some militant groups are actively carrying their movement with support of foreign governments, others are getting financial support by the exiled community.

Baluchistan as a region which is divided among the Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, has a history of colonialism and annexation. The current region of Sistan and Baluchistan was annexed by the Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925. Baluchistan region in Pakistan is the result of division of Indian subcontinent in 1947. Baluch nationalists claim their history, and different national identity and continuously fighting for their liberation. Several Baluch nationalist organisations and parties are active from radical to moderate ideological stands. Among them BPLF, BLA, and BLF, Republican

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[167] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 71.
[168] ibid, 71.
[169] ibid, 71.
[170] ibid, 71.
[171] ibid, 71.

Party, Baluchistan Republican Party are much active and visible in different part of the Baluchistan. The Baluch liberation Army (BLA) is a militant organisation associated with Marri tribe. This organisation was run by Baluch Mari until he was killed in 2007. After Mari, his id leading BLA. This organisation sought for the independence of a "greater" Baluchistan including the parts in Iran and Afghanistan.[172] Around 20 to 30 organisations are operating and spanning a large range of ideologies; some of them saw armed struggle as another form of pressure politics and other groups took it as ineluctable revolutionary struggle. In the beginning of 1974, some of the more militant organisations were united under the banner of Baluchistan People's Liberation Front (BPLF).

The demands of Baluch militant groups based in Iran have not been same. Some of the militant groups like Baluch Liberation Front (BLF) claims separate nation from Iran but some demand cultural rights and autonomy like Jandullah and others. Particularly in Iran, three militant organisations; Jandullah, Jaish-Ul-Adl and Harakat Ansar are active in Baluchistan and Sistan region of Iran.[173] Often Jandullah head Abdolmalek Rigi has expressed demands to the Iranian state through various interviews. He stated that "Jandullah's aims are to protect the national and religious rights of the Baluchis and Sunnis in Baluchistan province".[174] Although Jandullah is a militant organisation, their leader Rigi claimed they are not fighting for independent Baluchistan from Iran but a democratic federal structure within Iranian framework.[175] This organisation (Jandullah) utilizes the Sunni flavoured rhetoric and symbolism. Iranian media claim that chief of Jandullah has been student of Wahhabi theological school who have participated in Talibani movement in Afghanistan. Iran accused this organisation of being separatist and terrorist which ideologically aligning with Taliban and Al-Qaeda, getting financial and logistic support from the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. In 2010, Jandullah leader Abdolmalek Rigi was arrested and executed by the Iranian government.[176]

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[172] Grare Frederic 2013. *Baluchistan State versus the Nation,* Washington DC: The Carnegie Papers, 6.

[173] Rehman, Ur Zia (2014), "The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan", *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre,* 3.
[174] ibid, 3.
[175] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 74.
[176] Rehman, Ur Zia (2014), "The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan", *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre,* 3.

However, there is little information about Jaish-Ul-Adl, but analyst believed that the organisation is the offshoot of the Jandullah, because the group is following the same goal as Jandullah. Salahuddin Farooqui and Mullah Omar are the two significant and influential leader who are actively involved in the militant activities against the Iranian forces. In 2013, 14 Iranian border guards were killed by Jaish-Ul-Adl. Moreover, in November in the same year it shot dead an Iranian prosecutor in Zahedan, and in December in a bomb blast it killed three Iranian Revolutionary guards.[177] Apart from these examples there is continue conflict between Iranian military forces and these militant organisations.

Apart from these militant organisations there are several groups and diaspora-based means of ethnic mobilisation are active. The Baluch immigrants based in UK, Sweden, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia, also play puts their demands for federalism in Iran.[178] Through the modern means of communication, there is strong bond between the Baluchs living in different countries and the organisation build by the Baluchs who are in exile. Nonetheless, family and tribal bonds are very much alive beyond Iran's borders, and these cross-border bonds plays a significant role to develop a common ethnic consciousness across the Baluchistan region.[179]

However, there are historical reasons behind the ethnic insurgencies in Iran, but the marginalisation of the provinces is the result of discriminatory practices of the central government. As it has been noted that the Baluchistan province of Iran is least developed and facing serious problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and poor health facilities. Baluch ethno-nationalist argue that the political, socio-economic and cultural marginalisation of the Baluch region is rooted in Persian-centric prejudices.[180] Moreover, they blamed that the religious nature of the Iran systematically discriminates Blauch because of their belief in *Sunni* Islam.

Mainly the minorities such as Arabs, Baluchs, Kurds and Turkmens have always denied to accept the uniform Iranian national identity perpetuated by the ruling elites

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[177] ibid, 3.
[178] Elling, Rasmus Christian (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity After Khomeini,* Palgrave Macmillan, 74.
[179] ibid, 74.
[180] ibid, 73.

and also are not fully integrated into Iranian society.[181] The ethnic movement of the different groups constantly has been suppressed, and the demands of these movements have perceived as an instrument of separatism by the IRI. The growing opposition by these communities to the state's minority policies in Islamic regime, the groups based on ethnic identity across Iran represent a significant force which cannot be undermined. Turning ethnic mobilisation and minority politics into an important space of resistance and movement for political change in the country.[182] The grievances of these minorities are facing two major dilemmas of the country; first the religious nature of the state, and second, their peripheral and border-based location, where security views undermine their basic rights within the framework of Iranian state.

Minorities' Grievances

As theories on minority and majority concept suggest that these are not merely numerical but also denotes positive and negative social conditions and treatments. The term 'minority' denotes a group and individual who are negatively stigmatized, ostracised, oppressed and outcast.[183] On the other hand, term 'majority' reflects positively valued and high-status group in a society. Discrimination, persecution, stigmatisation and oppression of minorities are rampant in the Islamic Republic of Iran. As it has been mentioned that the except Azeris most of the minorities are facing double discrimination in the Islamic regime; one of their being different ethnic origin and second their being of non-*Shi'a* minority, where *Shi'ism* has become the state ideology. In case of Arabs, despite having rich natural resources in the province of Khuzestan, including richness of agriculture, immense gas and oil resources, they face relatively high poverty rate, less employment and educational opportunities. It has been noted that the Arabs of the Khuzestan are in much less favourable socio-economic condition compared to the Persian population of the provinces.[184] The harsh socio-economic conditions have added another layer to the Arabs ethnically grounded dissatisfaction with the central authorities based in Tehran. Both socio-economic

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[181] Boroujerdi, M. (1998), "Contesting Nationalist Constructions of Iranian Idenity", *Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 7 (12): 54.
[182] Yesiltas, Ozum (2016), "Contested Notions of National Identity, Ethnic Movement and Democratisation in Iran", *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* 8 (1): 54.
[183] Seyranian, Viviane, Atuel, Hazel and Crano D. William (2008), "Dimensions of Minority and Majority Groups", *Group Process and Intergroup Relations,* 11 (1): 21.
[184] ibid, 70.

grievances, political persecution as well as ethno-national resentment has fuelled an increased in Arab regionalism in post-revolutionary Iran.[185] Moreover, the province populated by the Arabs suffered with basic infrastructure of health and education.

Similarly, Kurds are also facing the same problems of poverty. During the period of Khatami's presidency Kurds realised relatively better political environment in the province, but region remains economically underdeveloped. According to the UNDP human development Index Reports of 1999, and 2006 official report found Kurdish inhabited provinces as least developed areas in the country.[186] Apart from these reports, in 2001, local MPs of the province claimed that the 80 per cent of the Kurds lived below the poverty line, and in 2005, the UN's special rapporteur claimed that the Kurds "seems to suffer disproportionate inadequacy of basic services such as water, electricity and unsatisfactory reconstructions efforts".[187] Among the Kurds one can find the relatively high illiteracy rate, and unemployment compare to Persians. Kurdish nationalists are also claiming that the discrimination by the central authority towards Kurds is directed with communal and ethnic intentions.

Baluch who are living in extreme climatic condition, their location as well as their identity determines their political as well as socio-economic condition in the country. As Elling argues that the Baluchistan is a least developed province in the country, and subject to numerous social and political problems. In the region there is rampant smuggling, drugs abuse as well as insufficient infrastructure with high unemployment rate.

Several reports show that migration and discriminatory laws are systematically applied against the ethnic groups to keep them in periphery. For instance, the concept of "Gozinesh" which means selection, it decides the criterion which systematically excludes the non-*Shi'a* Muslims from the employment opportunity.[188] Candidate have to demonstrate the allegiance towards Islamic Republic along with *Sh'ism* who are seeking for government jobs. Ethno-nationalists and some of the reports claim that the condition of minorities is result of the discriminative policies of the government. The

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[185] ibid, 70.
[186] ibid, 67.
[187] Ibid, 67.
[188] UNPO (2014), "Ethnic and Religious minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 23 November 2017 URL: https://unpo.org/downloads/936.pdf.

national average of the people living in poverty is 11 per cent. There is huge disparity in unemployment rate between Persians and non-Persians. Unemployment rate in Dezful a city with Persian majority, is only 7 per cent, at the same time the cities populated by the Arabs, Abadan and Mohammerah face around 41 to 60 per cent unemployment rate.[189] Apart from these discriminative policies, these minorities groups face land confiscation, forced migration, and resettlement of Persians in the minority areas.

Alongside with economic marginalisation there is systematic political suppression of the ethno-religious minorities. There is a rampant culture of impunity in which gross violations of human rights are being committed. In order to crush all forms of opposition and instigate fear, Islamic Republic of Iran has intensified violent measures against minorities, particularly political and human right activist frequently persecuted and tortured. Enforced disappearances, persecution extra-judicial killings, death penalty, and torture are usual for the minority in minority areas in general and on activists in particular. There are several examples where minority activists, leaders and religious clerics especially Kurds, Baluchs and Arabs have been killed by the state machineries. A Kurdish journalists and cultural activist Adanan Hassanpoor arrested in 2007, along with his cousin Abdolwahed a environmentalists sentenced to death on the charge of fighting God (Moharebeh).[190] Although during the campaign of presidential election in 2013, Rouhani pledge to improve the condition of the minorities, but records shows that the execution of the political prisoner have increased. Around 500 people are known to have been executed, even some of them in Public.[191] However, several human rights agencies are claiming a gross violation of human rights in Iran in the Rouhani regime. Since 2013, the rate of execution and enforced disappearance has increased in Baluchistan, Kurdistan and Ahwaz[192] which are all minority regions.

In short, the complex relationship between state and minority are the product of modernity. Along with centralisation of authority by a dominant group Persians,

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[189] ibid, 3.
[190] International federation for Human Rights, "The Hidden side of Iran: Discrimination Against Ethnic and Religious Minorities", [Online web] Accessed on 23 January 2017:
[191] UNPO (2014), "Ethnic and Religious minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 23 November 2017 URL: https://unpo.org/downloads/936.pdf.
[192] ibid, 3.

political and socio-economic conditions of other ethnic and linguistic groups deteriorated. From Pahlavi to Islamic Republic of Iran the implicit and explicit exclusion or discrimination is visible in Iranian society. Formalisation of state minority relations visible in both constitutions, which express the explicit marginalise positions of non-*Shi'a* as well as non-Persians, while the socio-religious structure of Iranian society implicitly demonstrates their lower positions. In Islamic Republic non-*Shi'a* and non-Persians are subject to various state restrictions formalised even in the constitution. Apart from that the general social behaviour towards marginal identities is visible through negative stereotyping in the Persian literature and main-stream society. As the nature of Iranian state and society is not based on other democratic countries, the relationship between state and minorities is defined and justified on the ground of Islamic principle and tradition. However, Azeri ethnic community historically has been the ruling community of Iran along with Persians, as well as both these communities have similar religious belief system, which provides Azeris a strong hold in Iranian system and society. Other non-Persians and non-*Shi'a* groups such as Baluchs, Sunni-Kurds, Sunni Arabs remained in inferior position even in the IRI. In present Iran these ethnic communities are subjected in two senses of minority, one on the ground of religion and on the other ethnicity.

CHAPTER: 4

STATUS AND POSITION OF AZERIS IN IRAN

The present chapter of the study mainly focuses on Azeri ethnic minorities. It discusses their political and economic conditions and explores the reasons behind their status in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This chapter also explores Azeris' position in Iranian nation. Moreover, it analyses how Azeris are being treated by the state as well as analyses the Azeri's sense of belongingness to Iranian nation and threat of Azeri nationalism for Iranian State. Moreover, there are some expressions of separatism from a group of Azeri nationalists and a cross-border connection between Iranian and Azeris of the Republic of Azerbaijan who aspire for integration of north and south Azerbaijan, although there is minimal support from the side of Iranian Azeris. The political dynamics of Iran and in its surrounding countries such as North Azerbaijan and Turkey have given impetus to Azeris of Iran to rediscover their 'Tork' identity as a source of pride. Among the Azeri nationalists the demands of cultural, linguistic, economic and political rights are more prominent which have gained a new energy in Iranian politics since 1990.

Azeris have been a significant ethnic group in Iranian politics since ancient times and have played an important role in major political events which have taken place in the twentieth century. Azeri constitutes 24 per cent of the total population of the country. They inhabit North-western provinces and speak 'Azeri' language. Majority of the Azeris follow *Shi'a* Islam which is the binding commonality between majority Persian nationals. Azeris historically have been in many dominant political positions, like in the medieval period they dominated various dynasties and at present they are holding many top political positions in IRI. In contemporary Iran Azeris are dominating the higher administrative and ministerial positions in the Iranian political system. Economically they are occupying various business centres, commerce and trade. Contemporary 'Supreme Leader' of the country Ayatollah Khamenei belongs to Azeri ethnic identity. Along with their religious similarity with majority Persians their historical background, political movements and economic conditions make them able to equate themselves with Persians. Due to these conditions Azeris are in a better position to bargain with the state. Moreover, Azeri ethnic movement also poses a

serious threat which Iranian state is dealing with. However, being a different ethnic identity, at times Azeri people feel discriminated against and humiliated because of some stigmas attached to them among the Persians. Persians use the term 'Tork' in reference to Azeris. This prejudice and derogatory use of Azeri ethnic identity sometimes has been manifested in the controversies. However, Azeris have some issues regarding cultural freedom, autonomy, and discrimination but till now there have not been any serious militant insurgencies unlike in Baluchistan, Kurdish and some provinces which can seriously challenge the national security of Iran. Although there are certain groups working underground and from outside of the country which are aspiring for assimilation of North and south Azerbaijan against Iran, their voices have almost no impact among Iranian Azeris. Iran has major suspicions of cross-border surrounding of Turkic dominated countries such as Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey. The cross-border connectivity, cultural and linguistic exchange affect the Azeri nationalism in Iran. Moreover, the suspicion of foreign involvement also makes relations between Iranian authorities and with Azeri provinces more conflicting. The demands and movement surrounding greater cultural rights, democratic reforms, federalism, and autonomy are strong enough among Azeris' ethnic movement. Through different means regularly Azeri ethnic nationalists manifest their political aspirations. For example, sport nationalism, particularly during the football matches between the teams from Persian provinces and teams from Azeri provinces, where on many occasions' manifestation of ethnic symbols, flags and slogans have been reported. Azeri nationalism becomes very much visible on the ground. Moreover, through the environmental movement also Azeris put their ethnic and national demands in Iran. These mediums of expressing Azeri nationalism have been discussed in detail in this chapter.

Although there have been Azeri ethnic movements throughout the twentieth century. Following the Iranian revolution and during the constitution building, Azeri ethnic questions became important and the expression of new ethnic demands were among the major political challenges for Iranian authorities. It was after 1990, ethnic demands, nationalism, and regional questions expressed to some extent freely and a new wave of ethnic assertion came in Iranian politics.

An Overview of Azeris

Azeris are scattered in different parts of the world. They constitute majority population in former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan (now Republic of Azerbaijan), a minority in Turkey, Russia, Caucasian as well as central Asian Republics and other countries.[1] The language of the majority of Azerbaijanis is 'Azeri' (known as Azeri-Turkic), influenced by Persian and Arabic.[2] The roots of Azerbaijan can be traced back to the fourth century B.C. with the emergence of the two kingdoms in the region, first was Caucasian Albania in the North and second Atropatan in the South. The second kingdom Atropatan takes its name from its founder 'Atropat' a satrap of Alexander the great.[3] Turkic speaking people appeared in Azerbaijan for the first time during the seventh century. At that time Skit, Sack, Hun and then Oghuz tribes were settled in the region. This region was part of the Sassanid Empire for a long period of time. It was due to the establishment of trade relations, there was ethnic, political and cultural unity of the country. This political and economic condition connected the Turkish and non-Turkish population of the country therefore, the process of single identity was accelerated.[4]

After the Arab invasion and decline of the Sassanid Empire, the region came under the suzerainty of the Arab empire. In the region new religion came with Arabs and spread across the country. The spread of Islam proved a turning point for the fate of the people. It created a new identity for the people in the region. During Arab occupation and spread of Islam in the region it created a unified identity. Islam became the dominant ideology. Political and economic stability restored in the country. This stability stimulated the revival of the Azerbaijani culture with Islamic culture. The unity of the Turkish tribes was strengthened because of the similar religious belief among the different tribes of the region. Religious conflict ended because majority of the population adopted Islam, therefore religious unity realised by

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[1] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 31.

[2] Grebennikov, Marat (2013), "The Puzzle of a Loyal Minority: Why do Azeri Support the Iranian State", *The Middle East Journal,* 67 (1): 1. And Rashidvash¸ Vahid (2013) "Iranian People: Iranian Ethnic Groups", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 3 (15): 220.

[3] History of Azerbaijan, [Online web] Accessed on 2 January 2019 URL: http://www.taxes.gov.az/vn/child/eng/tarix.html, 1.

[4] Ismailov, Yunis, Dilgam (2017), *History of Azerbaijan,* Baku: AzMiU, NPM Baku, 61.

the Turkish and non-Turkish population. At present Azerbaijani Turks accept their ancestry from both Turkish nomad and Albanians.

After the fall of the Sassanid Empire, the Shirvan kingdom emerged which was ruled by the Albanians till the rise of the Safavid dynasty. During this time *Shi'ism* began to spread across Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani Turks adopted *Shi'ism*; belief closely associated with Persians while Turks from Ottoman were following *Sunni* tradition of Islam. It resulted in a new bond of religious unity of Azeri and Persian *Shi'a* Muslims. Therefore, these *Shi'a* Turks remained closer to the Persian *Shi'a* than the fellow *Sunni* Turks. A series of Turkic rulers have ruled the Azerbaijan region, and the region became fully Turkic speaking in thirteenth century following the Turks' invasions.[5]

After the rise of the Safavid dynasty during the sixteenth century, the Shirvan kingdom as well as Nackhichevan and Karabakh, came under the control of Safavid rule. This was the time of struggle between Safavid and the Ottoman Empire. Wars between these two empires resulted into the ottoman occupation of eastern Caucasia between 1578 and 1603.[6]

A large population of the Safavid kingdom was Azerbaijani Turks. Military command, financial institutions, management of districts, and most of the position in palace were under the Azeris.[7] Safavid ruler declared *Shi'a* Islam as state religion in 1501, which further strengthened the religious ties between different tribes and ethnic groups. From that time Azerbaijan region of Iran has been home to a stable *Shi'a*-majority population, and *Shi'a* clergies became a stable economic class in Azerbaijan.[8] With the fall of the Safavid Empire, Ottoman and Russian forces changed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan as well as influenced the Azerbaijani culture.

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[5] Rashidvash¸ Vahid (2013) "Iranian People: Iranian Ethnic Groups", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 3 (15): 220.

[6] Azerbaijan, [Online web] Accessed on 12 January 2019 URL:https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56167d1de4b0141a0f9a9378/t/59b7ff837131a570d3535bba/1505230723905/CountryProfileAZERBAIJAN.pdf, 2.

[7] Ismailov, Yunis, Dilgam (2017), *History of Azerbaijan,* Baku: AzMiU, NPM Baku, 131.

[8] Jodicke, Ansgar (2017), "Shia Groups and Iranian Religious Influence in Azerbaijan: The Impact of Trans-boundary Religious Ties on National Religious Policies", *Eurasian Geography and Economic*, https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2017.1413579, p 14.

Majorly two wars (1804-1813 and 1826-1828) between Russia and Persia, and their consequences (Gulistan treaty and Turkmenchay treaty) have determined the present shape and fate of the region. Through Turkmenchay treaty Russia undertook to get off its troops from South Azerbaijan, and Iran refused to claim Northern Azerbaijan.[9] Azerbaijani north khanates of the Araz river belonged to Russia and those in the southern bank remained in Iran. However, the region was divided between two empires through this treaty, but it   allowed free flow of the people from Iran to North Azerbaijan.[10] After thirty years of the treaty, the process of distribution of land and people came to an end. Consequently, North Azerbaijan became a colony of Russia and South Azerbaijan became a part of Iran.

Although soon after the collapse of Tsarist rule in Russia, the Russian part of Azerbaijan with Armenia and Georgia declared their independence on 20 May 1918, and this memorable day   is still celebrated by Azeris. The Azerbaijan's Muslim Democratic Party enjoyed the popular support base of the urban elite of the Azerbaijan and ruled Azerbaijan till the Bolshevik overthrow of the Azerbaijani state in April 1920. North Azerbaijan remained as part of the Soviet Union till its disintegration in 1991, and South Azerbaijan remained part of Iran.

Azeris comprises largest ethnic minorities (approximately a third of the total population) in Iran.[11] Iranian Azeris are known as '*Tork'* (Turk), and sometime as Azeri and Azerbaijani.[12] Three Iranian provinces, East, West Azerbaijan and Ardabil Province are predominantly populated by Azeri population.[13]

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[9] Ismailov, Yunis, Dilgam (2017), *History of Azerbaijan,* Baku: AzMiU, NPM Baku, 193.

[10] ibid, 193.

[11] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 449.

[12] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 28.

[13] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 449.

Map 4 (a) *Regions Populated by Azeris*
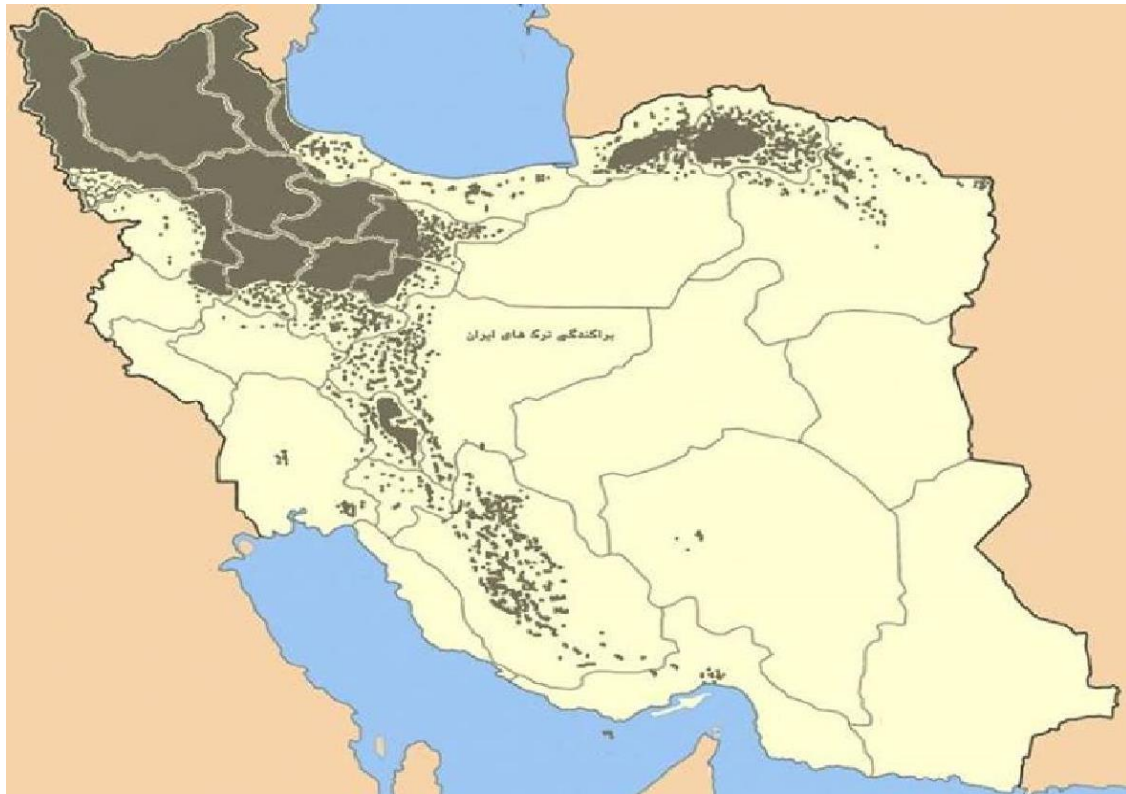
Distribution of Azeri Speaking Population in Iran.[14]

With the linguistic and ethnic feeling, Azeris are distinct from other major linguistic groups, although they share the same religious belief with the majority community of Persians. Azeris have played a very significant role in Iranian history, most of the Iranian scholars considered them as most integrated part of Iranian society, economy and politics.[15] In most of the Iranian cities particularly in Tehran Azeris dominate many commercial and trade activities at present and are prominent having maintained themselves in higher positions of political, military and religious institutions. Number of political figures in present day Iran, including the supreme leader of Ayatollah Khomeini first prime minister of Islamic Republic of Iran Mahdi Bazargan have Azeri roots.[16]

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[14] Minority Rights Group International and Centre for Supporters of Human Rights (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 21 April 2019 URL: Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf 6.

[15] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 29.

[16] ibid, 31.

Construction of the Azeri Identity and Nationalism

Azeri identity at present is quite a complex identity. They are ethnically Turks, religiously Muslim who follow the *Shi'ite* tradition. They have also lived under the Russian (Tsarist and Soviet Union) rule, thus acquiring a Russian heritage also.[17] They have alternatively influenced and being influenced by the three empires, which have resulted into multiple and alternative, and often competing identities as Turks, Iranians, Muslims and distinct Azerbaijani identity.[18] The present identity of the Azeris is the result of a long history of cultural exchanges of these three (empires: Persian, Russian, and Ottoman) major cultural and political centres. Azeris have some features which make them people with special characteristics. Some elements need to be taken into account to determine the identity of Azeris. *Shi'ism* is the majority religion of Azeris. This element of their identity is the result of Persian heritage. The Azeri language belongs to the languages of Turkish family, a consequence of the Turkish influence.[19] The Russian style of education system bridges the gap between Azeri and the European continent, which came from the Russian legacy. Apart from these elements, Azeris possess some elements which belong to their history, and makes Azeri people even more unified and singular and different to the Russians, Turkish and Persians.

The modern developments in surrounding Azerbaijan, in the Ottoman empire, Russian empire and Persian empire influenced the development in the identity of Azerbaijanis. During the Tsarist rule in Azerbaijan the Muslim community of the region were officially called as "Tatars", Azerbaijani Tatars, Persian Tatars and Caucasian Tatars, but local population preferred to identify themselves as Muslims rather than Tatars.[20] In the nineteenth century, Azerbaijan began to realise the sense of nationalism. It arises among the intellectuals based in Azerbaijan who were western educated and influenced from the western values. These intellectuals influenced the formation of national identity by putting forth the works on history, language and literature of

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[17] Moreno, Priego, Alberto (2005), "The Creation of the Azerbaijani Identity and its Influence on Foreign Policy", *UNISCI Discussion Papers,* 1.

[18] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 450.

[19] Moreno, Priego, Alberto (2005), "The Creation of the Azerbaijani Identity and its Influence on Foreign Policy", *UNISCI Discussion Papers,* 2.

[20] Yilmaz, Harun (2013), "The Soviet Union and the Construction of Azerbaijani National Identity", *Iranian Studies,* 46 (4): 511-533.

Azerbaijan.[21] The first seminal work on the history of the region with the title *'Gulistani Iram'* was written by Abbasgulu Aga Bakikhanov in 1841, in Persian language. This work is accepted as one of the important sources of history of the region.[22] For the construction of the national identity, works of Mirza Kazim Bek proved very significant for Azeri nationalists. His work *Darbentname,* on history and *Turkish Tatarian Grammar*, offers a comparative analysis of Turkic language. He made a suggestion to Tsarist regime that Tsar should establish a common language for Turkic population across the empire.[23]

Although both Abbasgulu Aga Bakikhanov and Mirza Kazim Bek did not talk about the formation of a nation in Azerbaijan, their works proved important sources for local intelligentsia in   the construction of a national identity of Azeris. Mirza Fatali Akhundov had a significant contribution in the formation of national identity of the Azeris and Azerbaijan. He founded a Drama School of Azerbaijan and wrote all his dramas in Azeri language. Through his dramas he addressed the problems of Azeri people, which were carrying deep philosophical problems He gave   importance to education in Azeri language and proposed   the opening of Turkic-Tatar section of Gori Seminar.[24] Later their efforts were realised by the Azeri intelligentsia.

After the second half of the nineteenth century, the formation of Azerbaijani identity became intensive. The first newspaper *Ekinchi,* published in the Azerbaijani language, raised the questions about the identity of the local Muslim population. The founder of the paper, Hasan Bey Zardabi insisted on the Turkic origin of the local Muslim population.[25]

Early intellectuals who joined the debate on the origin of the nation mainly supported the Turkic identification. One group supported the leading role of the Ottoman Turks, common identity of all Turkic people, and insisted on full integration with them. The

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[21] Mahmudlu, Ceyhun (2016), "Theorizing Nation Building in Azerbaijan", (ed.) in Mammadli, Aliaga, Broux, Adeline, and Mahmudlu, Ceyhun, *"Azerbaijani" and Beyond: Perspective on the Construction of National Identity,* Verlag-Keoster, 127.
[22] ibid, 128.
[23] ibid, 128.
[24] ibid, 129.
[25] ibid, 129.

other group emphasised on the differential factors between Azeri and Ottoman Turks and stressed the uniqueness of the national identity of Azerbaijani Turks.[26]

A third group of intellectuals emerged during 1860, who insisted on the "Azerbaijani" identity of the nation. In 1860, for the first time, Vazirov published a textbook *Tatar Azerbaijani dialect* in Russian. Furthermore, in 1890, a book *Caucasian Tatar Azerbaijani Dialect* was written by Sultan Mazid Ganizade. In the same year the term "Azerbaijani nation" was used first time by the columnist writing under the nickname "Azerbaijan" in the newspaper *Keshkul.*[27]

It was in 1917, Jelil Mammad Gulizade in his play, 'The Book of Mother', raised the problem of marginalization of the identity of Azerbaijanis, and argued that Azerbaijanis are different from Ottomans and Persians. He stressed that they had their own native language and identity, which they should preserve.[28]

The establishment of Azerbaijan as a nation state in 1918 caused suspicion and threat to Iran. Iran refused to recognise the new state under the name of "Azerbaijan" which was identical to the region encompassing its northern province that is known as South Azerbaijan. Mostly Iran was suspicious that the establishment of an independent Azerbaijan would influence the people of its Azerbaijan region to also seek independence.[29] Although there has been constant cultural exchange between North and South Azerbaijan which influenced the Iranian Azeris, it has become an important factor to determine the foreign policy of both the countries.

After the disintegration of the USSR, North Azerbaijan became an independent nation-state and it influenced the Iranian Azeris also. A nationalist government came in power under the leadership of Abulfaz Elchibe, whose political views were ethno-nationalists, and he supported the Turkic origin of Azerbaijan. Prior to his presidency, Elchibey publicly accused Iran of violating the rights of ethnic Azerbaijani Turks in Iran. Moreover, he stressed the importance of restoring the historical territories of

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[26] ibid, 130.
[27] ibid, 130.
[28] ibid, 130.
[29] ibid, 130

Azerbaijan. Consequently, these statements worsened the relationship between these two countries.[30]

Through various ethnographic studies it has been found that there are differences among the Turks of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran due to their geographical and political differences. The division of North and South Azerbaijan in 1828 separated the same ethnic communities, and under USSR North Azerbaijani got influenced by Russian culture and south Azerbaijani by the Persian. The complete separation of North Azerbaijan, and USSR domination which lasted almost seventy years has radically influenced the North Azerbaijani culture, language religion and social values, similarly south Azerbaijani society witnessed the same process under Persian rule.[31]

There is common language and common folklore shared by the two co-ethnic groups which played an important role in keeping strong ties between them. Azeri script in North Azerbaijan has gone through several changes over a period of time, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes through political pressure. Azeri script has been changed three times; first Arabic to Latin, from Latin to Cyrillic and after independence again from Cyrillic to Latin. These changes have both benefits as well challenges to the cohesion of Azerbaijani identity. While still in Iranian Azerbaijan, Azeri script is in Arabic which causes difficulties in literary communication between Iranian and Azerbaijani Azeris. Even today, in Iran a few books are published in Azeri language while using Arabic Alphabets. Also, there is a difference in the tone of both sides. But despite having these differences in script and slang, people from both sides can easily understand each other. This has been understood as one of the most important cultural links between North and South Azerbaijanis.

There are museums and libraries in both   North and South Azerbaijan that   have preserved the common history of Azeris. A museum based in Baku presents the history and culture of the Azeris of Iran as integral part of their people's general

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[30] ibid, 139.

[31] Khalili, Mostafa (2015-16), "A Comparative Study of Ethnic Identities among Azerbaijani Speakers in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan", *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies,* 34 (): 161-174.

history.[32] Authors, historical figures, and literature from south Azerbaijan have been preserved in North Azerbaijan's Nizami museum of Azerbaijani National Literature, and they present it as part of Azerbaijan's national literary heritage. North Azerbaijan did not make a distinction between their historical figures and heroes despite a long history of separation. Moreover, in the National Carpet Museum of Baku carpets produced in Tabriz are labelled as products of Azerbaijan.[33] In fact, there are other cultural ties between both co-ethnic communities of these two states. Their historical past and different cultural environment have constructed differences in common culture, common destiny, common aspirations, common self, common others and finally a common loyalty.

Stuart Hall through his theory of *Constructionism* shows that ethnicity and nationalism are not fixed, they are subject to change, and are the product of human interaction, history and politics. *Constructionism* sees ethnicity and nationalism as the products of social and political activities, which is constructed through creative social acts of human agency.[34] From Stuart Hall's point of view, if we see the ethnic and national formation of the Azeris in different states, (Turkey, Republic of Azerbaijan and Iranian Azerbaijan) also has been subject to these changes.

However, Azeris from both the sides follow the same religious belief that is *Shi'a* Islam, but in North Azerbaijan, particularly under the soviet rule and after its disintegration a different kind of Islam has been shaped which has vernacular character, which is distinct from the Iranian version of *Shi'ism*. Iranian Azeris are highly influenced by Shi'ism developed and defined in post-revolutionary Iran. Tabriz province of Iran which is overwhelmingly populated by Azeris is one of the most religious cities, while Azerbaijanis of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been governed by USSR which discouraged religion therefore Azeris of North Azerbaijan considered to be less sensitive about Islamic regulations.[35] These differences have a critical role

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[32] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 468.

[33] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 468.

[34] Hall, Stuart (1990), "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", (ed.) in Rutherford, Jonathan, *Identity: Community, Culture Difference,* London: Lawrence and Wishart, QTD in, Khalili, Mostafa (2015-16), "A Comparative Study of Ethnic Identities among Azerbaijani Speakers in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan", *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies,* 34 (): 173.

[35] Khalili, Mostafa (2015-16), "A Comparative Study of Ethnic Identities among Azerbaijani Speakers in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan", *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies,* 34 (): 173.

in the shaping and reshaping of Azeri identity across the border. In this regard there is negative perception to each-other. Azeris of Azerbaijan Republic think that Iranian Azeris are conservative and backward-looking people, while Iranian Azeris think that their co-ethnic community on the other side of Araz river have no culture, and they have forgotten the Islamic legacy. As they grew up in the domination of the USSR their inclination towards western values is very much visible. The independence of North Azerbaijan and its survival, conflict with Armenia, threat of Iran are the factors which determines foreign policy of Azerbaijan as well as perception towards Iranian Azeris. Foreign policy of Azerbaijan is western looking which influences the internal political, social and cultural values of the people.

The 'others' for Azeri of RA are the primarily Armenians because of their longstanding territorial disputes which make Armenians as common enemy. For Iranian Azeris their 'others' are primarily Kurds, and Azeris have healthy relations with Armenians of Iran. The Iranian Azeri are very much welcomed by Armenian, and the experiences of the Iranian Azeris in Armenia are positive in comparison to Azeris of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Rise of Azeri Nationalism

When the rise of nationalism and trajectory of nation building are analysed, the modernist approach of the study suggests that the modern nation-state is the product of modernity. Nationalism has laid the foundation of nation not vis a-vis. Moreover, the rise of ethnicity, ethnic assertion and their quest for cultural rights, autonomy, and national self-determination is as modern as the emergence of the nation-state system. Azeri prof. Ghadir Golkarian (2017) an Azeri scholar on Azeri nationalism supported the modernist view to analyse the rise of Azeri nationalism and ethnicity in relation to Iran. He argued that:

> "As Iranian nationalism prompted a dominant discourse in the era of Reza Shah and Mohammed Reza Shah, ethnic nationalism became more prominent in the same way. The dynasty let the ethnic reaction increase due to empathy (impose of idea) of idea of "one flag, one language, one nation" and it is noteworthy as a result of this policy, ethnic nationalism and the quest for identity among Azeri Turks and Kurds of Iran raised".[36]

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[36] Gulkarian, Ghadir (2017), "The Prospect of Ethnic Nationalism in Iranian Azerbaijan", *International Journal of Political Science,* 3 (1): 14-22.

At present the old debate about the formation of a common identity and nationality among Azeri nationalists is alive. What can be a common term for Azeris? Some groups, activists and intellectuals prefer to call themselves as 'Turks' and emphasise on their common Turkic origin such that   at present a human rights activists and board member of Association for the "Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran" (AHRAZ) and others perceived the term 'Azeri' for the people of region is unappropriated. Other intellectuals prefer to call Azeris as 'Azerbaijanis' to consolidate a unique identity of the Azeri people which is different from   both Turks of Turkey and Persians of Iran and talk about an autonomous and independent identity. Unlike their understanding about a common identity, their national aspirations differ to each-others. As it has been mentioned that there are some nationalists who express their nationalist agenda which includes the whole Turkic people from Iran to Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey. This Pan-Turk expression often has been seen during the football matches between Persian dominated and Azeri dominated teams. Azeri nationalists through pluck cards express frequently their lineage from Turkic origin with the slogan of 'Tabriz, Baku, Ankara, our path is different to the Persians'.

Historical Experiences of Azeris in Iran

It has been mentioned that Azeris in Iran have been the ruling class of the country for centuries. Since the tenth or eleventh centuries, Iran was ruled by Turkic dynasties and tribes, although they were subsequently subjected to strong Persian cultural influences.[37] At the beginning of the twentieth century and with the fall of Qajar dynasty Turkish dominance over Persia came to an end, and the Persian (Pahlavi) dynasty was established under Reza Shah Pahlavi. At the same time Persian nationalism strongly developed and became state's ideology.[38] The careful cultivation of Persian nationalism was followed by the regime. In the process of nation building based on ethnic supremacy that was Persian, followed harsh measures to homogenise the multi-ethnic character of the country. From the assimilation policy of the Shah, Azeris of Iran did not remain untouched, they also became a harsh subject to these

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[37] Souleimanov, Emil (2011), "The Evolution of Azerbaijani Identity and the Prospects of Secessionism in Iranian Azerbaijan", *Connections,* 11 (1): 77-84.
[38] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 1-23.

policies. Azeris were perceived as potential threats to the national integrity of Iran. It was because Azeris represents a large number with huge territory bordering to the north Azerbaijan, as well as their degree of integration into Persian society.[39]

Ethnic consciousness as well as ethnic conflicts have emerged with modernity. Iranian constitutional revolution of 1905-11 led to the establishment of Parliament and the modern central government in Iran. The differences occasionally have been translated into political rivalry and conflict, where religion and language became fundamental determinants.[40] Since the last one hundred years, Iran has faced some ethnic conflicts, threat and attempt of secessionism from Azeris' side. Not so long, but after the constitutional revolution, in 1920 Khayabani led a revolt against the central government. Within a few weeks this movement occupied the greater Azerbaijan, which includes East and West Azerbaijan, Ghazvin, Zanjan and Ardabil provinces, and the region was renamed as Azadistan.

The beginning of the twentieth century has been an era of revolutions not only in Iran but also in surrounding countries. Russia, and Turkey were passing through the same process of revolution. In between 1905 to 1908, Azeris witnessed three major revolutions in their surrounding: The Russian Revolution 1905, the constitutional revolution of Iran in 1906, and the Young Turk Revolution in 1908.[41] These incidents deeply influenced the consciousness of the Azeris about their identity. In 1911, *Musavat* (equality) party was formed, which was the embodiment of the Azeri identity. The party was committed to secular Turkic nationalism, and autonomous Azerbaijan in the framework of the Russian federation of free and equal states. However, the leaders of the party were not clear about the phrases of "autonomous" and "free" and "independent" which they were thinking about Azerbaijan. The different cells of *Musavat* party were formed in Iranian Azerbaijan, primarily in Maku, Tabriz, Rasht, Ardebil, and Khoi, as well as in border areas.[42] With the collapse of the Russian army in   Caucasus, *the Musavat* party found a ripe situation and established an independent state as a part of Transcaucasian federation. Consequently, when the federation dissolved, North Azerbaijan became an

[39] ibid, 3.

[40] Khorshidi, Majid (2010), "Ethnic Secessionism in Iran: Accusation or Fact", *Journal of Politics and Law,* 3 (2): 269-276.

[41] Chapter 1, "The Azerbaijanis until 1920", 32.

[42] ibid, 37.

independent state. One of the chief activists of *Musavat* party Nasib bey Ussobekov expressed his reservation about proclaiming a state in North Azerbaijan without the South, even though at the same time Azeri sentiment was high there as well. On 28 May 1918, Azerbaijan Provincial Council declared the independence of Azerbaijan a new state that was Azerbaijan Democratic Republic.[43] But soon after the establishment of the Soviet State, Red Army forces led the military campaign to reconquer the former territories of the Russian empire. On 27 April 1920, Azerbaijani communist supporters assisted the Red Army to conquer the independent republic of Azerbaijan and brought down its independent status.

Constitutional Revolution in Iran and Azeri Revolts

Majority among the Azeris of Iran have been identifying themselves as Iranian. During these years two main trends of Azeri identity emerged among the Azeri activists. One trend emphasised and supported the assimilation of Azeris and other minorities in Iran in the hegemonic Persian identity, and advocates of this view believed that it would increase unity and ease the development of the modern state. Other groups emphasised the formation of a constitutional system which must allow for cultural autonomy of the minority groups. A group of this trend demanded autonomy for Azeris and other ethnic minorities in Iran, and they see this autonomy as a means to form liberal structure in Iran. The Iranian Azeri activists who had been educated in Caucasus and are in constant touch with their co-ethnic in north Azerbaijan including the leftists, strongly supported the preservation of Azeri cultural and linguistic rights within Iran. Contrary to those who were educated in Tehran and remained isolated to their co-ethnic across the border, usually supported the Persianization of the Azeris in Iran.

However, the majority of the Azeris in Iran were in favour of the constitutional government with reforms in the Iranian society which would allow the cultural and linguistic rights of the Minorities. On a number of occasions, they have made great efforts to preserve the constitutional regime, in which they have threatened and shown their potential to separate from Iran, particularly in their confrontation with the monarchy regime. These efforts to preserve the constitutional regime shows

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[43] ibid, 38.

awareness of their distinctive cultural and linguistic identity within Iran, and a perception of its potential political power.

The Constitutional revolution of 1906 also gave birth to local councils or *anjumans* to supervise local parliamentary elections. These councils or *anjumans* were supposed to supervise the elections only but Tabriz *anjuman* went beyond this function and remained in permanent session after the elections. It was a move that shows the Azeris aspirations for local rule.[44] The success of the constitutional revolution was reversed by Muhammed Ali Shah and he established an autocratic rule. Under the leadership of Sattar Khan, Azeris revolted against the Shah. In the name of Tabriz *anjuman* one of the Azeri leaders Sattar Khan captured Tabriz. Iranian flag was replaced with the flag of the Tabriz *anjuman*, and Sattar Khan refused to recognise the sovereignty of the Shah and declared Azerbaijan as "nation of Azerbaijan". Sattar Khan was closely associated with Caucasus based left wing party named *Firqeh-e Ijtima'iyyun 'Ammiyyun*.

End of the Qajar monarchy was preceded by the three revolts in north Iran: Gilan, Khurasan, and Azerbaijan. In these uprisings Azeris from north, south of Azerbaijan and from the Caucasus actively participated. The revolts led by Khaybani were more threatening to the Iranian state. During these revolts he conveyed a conference of representatives from most of the towns of Azerbaijan. In this conference some demands were made to the Iranian government. These demands were; the appointment of governor of Azerbaijan who would be trusted by the people of the province; the immediate reconvening of the national assembly in Tehran; and the reconvening of the *anjumans,* as provided by the constitution.[45] In the conference Khaybani claimed that Azeris contributions and sacrifices made constitutional revolution possible but in return they received nothing. Azeris neither got fair parliamentary representation nor considerable budgetary allocations from the central government. When his demands were rejected by Shah, he declared the establishment of an autonomous government of Azadistan in April 1920 while seizing the power of the province.

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[44] ibid, 40.

[45] Atabaki, Touraj (2005), "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 33.

He was not in support of complete separation from Iran but autonomy, cultural and linguistic rights of the Azerbaijani peoples, and had differences with ottoman Turks as well as north Azerbaijani Turks. Although, he was strongly in opposition of the Iran's centralised administration but was in support and committed to preserving the territorial integrity of Iranian state, rather independence from Iran.[46] Khiyabani's demands reflected both Azerbaijani and Iranian identity. During the time of autonomous Azadistan, he tried to reform Azerbaijan. As part of his reform, he established Azerbaijani-language school, and employed teachers from North Azerbaijan and Turkey. His cultural programmes and reforms remained short, because Reza Shah's forces subdued the movement, dispersed democrats and Khiyabani was executed in September 1920.

World War II and the Independence of Iranian Azerbaijan

Ethnic consciousness among the Azeris culminated during the volatile situation particularly in both World Wars. The expansion of communism and its influence deeply touched the ground of the northern part of Iran. In between two World Wars there has been continued ideological import from North Azerbaijan to Iranian Azerbaijan. After the establishment of Soviet Union   free movement across the border had been curtailed but Azeri intellectuals in Russia continued to serve as conduit for the propagation of the Marxist thought in Iran.[47] With support of the Soviet Union in Iran communist organisations such as Tudeh and its offshoot the *Firqi-e Demokrat-e Azerbaijan* (Azerbaijan Democratic Party) emerged. In order to protect its border from Germany through Iran, USSR occupied Northern Iran, till the end of War in 1946. Soviet intention during the world war was not only to protect its Iranian border but also to import communism in Iran as well as to captured and exploit the oil resources reserved in the northern part of Iran.[48]

However, Soviet Union tried to utilise the ethnic propaganda in order to unify the North and South Azerbaijan, but this effort was met with little support in Iran.[49] With the Soviet support, North Azerbaijan Democratic Party under the leadership of Ja'far

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[46] ibid, 33

[47] Sadri, A. Houman and Entessar, Nader (2009), "Iranian-Azeri Dynamic Relations: Conflict and Cooperation in Southern Caucasus", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali,* 76 (1): 59-79.

[48] * There are some documents that have been discovered and preserved in the Baku Archives in which a detailed Soviet policy regarding South Azerbaijan has been discussed, which shows the ambitious plan of the USSR. From the Baku Archives "New Evidence on the Iran Crisis 1945-46", *Cold War International History Project Bulletin,* ISSUE 12/13 (): 309-14.

[49] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 31.

Pishevari established National Government of Tabriz in 1945.[50] Soon after the end of World War II Soviet Union withdrew its support to Democratic Party, therefore it could not survive even a year.

The Democratic Party was mostly concerned with linguistic and cultural rights for Iranian Azeris, and autonomy or self-rule from Tehran. Declaration of autonomy and ethnically framed rhetoric were backed by Red Army with intention to merge the south Azerbaijan with North, but Democratic Party did not have the intention of separation from Iran.[51] During this time Moscow's policy was to facilitate the nation building process in Azerbaijan. In order to materialise these policies, administrative and cultural means were utilised by the Soviet Union. One of such measures was the declaration of Azeri as the official language; it was made mandatory that official business must be conducted in the mother tongue. Many schools were opened and their medium of instruction was Azeri and the number of publicationss in Azeri and grammar books dramatically increased.[52] The provincial government instituted several cultural, social and economic reforms and later dismayed the landowners.

The reforms introduced by regional government established by Pishervi and the autonomy of the state crushed by the Iranian forces in 1946, but the movement and its subsequent violent suppression by Iranian authority left with a lasting impact on Azeri nationalism.[53] This crisis in north Azerbaijan could not influence the entire Azerbaijani region of Iran. Azeris in Tehran and also in other parts where they were living with the Persian majority manifested least ethnic orientation and support to the Autonomy of Iranian Azerbaijan.

Impact of the event of the autonomy movement persists in the mind of Azeri ethno-nationalists. For instance, during the anti-Shah protests in December 1977, students at Tabriz University organised a series of protests against the Pahlavi Regime. Azeri students intentionally decided the date 12 December to launch one of the most

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[50] S. Laciner, and T. Demirtepe, (2004), "Nationalism as an Instrument in a Socialist Foreign Policy: The Southern Iran Problem in Soviet-Iran Relations", *The Review of International Affairs,* 3 (): 443-444.

[51] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 31.

[52] S. Laciner, and T. Demirtepe, (2004), "Nationalism as an Instrument in a Socialist Foreign Policy: The Southern Iran Problem in Soviet-Iran Relations", *The Review of International Affairs,* 3 (): 451.

[53] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 31.

significant demonstrations. For these reasons, Azeri students till this date commemorates both the days; the establishment and fall of the provincial government of Azerbaijan in 1945 and 1946 respectively.[54] Even though popular support among Iranian Azeris for secession from Iran was far from widespread, reprisals followed in both cases (Khiyabani revolt and Pishevari revolt), being particularly harsh in the aftermath of 1946. Furthermore, it led to the harsh measures against any form of Azeri identity manifestation, and demonstration of the distinct identity.

The Identity Question during Iranian Revolution

Throughout the twentieth century with the emergence of Iranian nationalism, the question of ethnic identity and regional autonomy has been a major concern   for different identity groups. As it has been seen during the constitutional movement and both World Wars, whenever political instability has taken place different identity groups manifested their greater will for autonomy, cultural and linguistic rights. In the Iranian revolution of 1979, the role of Azeris was significant. The major cities inhabited by the Azeris became the centre for the revolutionary activities against the Pahlavi regime. However, the Pahlavi regime was overthrown, but the question of identities emerged which resulted into conflicts between central authorities and peripheral ethnic and linguistic identities. Although the ethnic policies designed under the Pahlavi regime were supposed to be obsolete. However, initially it was expected by the ethnic minorities that they would achieve their cultural and linguistic rights. The identity formation of Iran shifted from linguistic (Persian) to religion (*Shi'ism*), but with the consolidation of Islamic regime, the same ethnic policies were adopted by the Islamic Republic. Shi'ism emerged as the dominant discourse in the country. It was intended to establish solidarity among all Muslims irrespective of ethnic, linguistic and religious differences. Civil society and the idea of pluralism were regarded as non-significant. Moreover, Asgharzadeh stated that the "Islamic regime maintained the language-based racism of Pahlavi era, just adding a new *Shi'i*-based religious component to Iranian nationalism".[55] Ayatollah Khomeini condemned different variations of ethnic nationalism, and said that Azeri, Baluch Arab, and Kurd

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[54] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*,". 28 (3): 451.

[55] Asgharzadeh, A. (2007), *Iran and the Challenge of Diversity: Islamic Fundamentalism, Aryanist Racism, and Democratic Struggle,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 213-214.

have no difference they are brothers, this kind of nationalism has no place in Islam. Pan-Iranism, pan-Turkism and other such kind of isms are contrary to the Islam.[56]

In Azerbaijan, the majority of the Azeris overwhelmingly participated and supported the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime, and many Azeri leaders proved instrumental in this revolutionary process. Azeri and Iranian identity are in contradiction and the supporters of Azerbaijani autonomy often harboured with Azeri and Iranian identity. Supporters of autonomy believed that democratization of Iran would lead to autonomy. Therefore, their struggle for democracy throughout the modern history of Iran strongly shows their aspirations for autonomy of Azerbaijan.[57]

There was also disagreement over the leadership, majority of the Azeris pledged their allegiance to the local Ayatollah Shari'atmadari rather than Khomeini during these volatile situations in Iran.[58] Over the new political system of Iran, there were differences between both of them. Shari'atmadari wanted an Islamic multi-party democratic system. With his endorsement 'Muslim People's Republican Party' was established in Tabriz after the control of power by the new revolutionary regime in Iran. Both the party and Shari'atmadari opposed referendum because it includes two choices only, Islamic Republic and Monarchy, but MPRP argued that people must give more choices.[59] Shari'atmadari opposed the concept of *Velayat-e Faqih*, because it gave ultimate power in the hands of the Supreme leader and it led to the highly centralised system in Iran. Disagreement or dissent over the drafting of the new constitution resulted in tensions which led to the short-lived uprising in Tabriz in December 1979. In Azerbaijan pro-Khomeini forces were forced to leave particularly from Tabriz, Azeris removed the governor of the province and seized the radio station.[60]

This movement began on 25 February 1980 in the provincial capital of Tabriz, but very soon spread across the region and supporters of the Shari'atmadari began to

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[56] Atabaki, Touraj (2005), "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 38.

[57] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 452.

[58] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 48.

[59] Atabaki, Touraj (2005), "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 39.

[60] Elling, Christian, Ramsus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 48.

occupy the state agencies. This movement lasted for two months, and subsequently Khomeini's forces made possible their control over the city, and the movement came to an end. Within these two months, some new Azeri newspapers were published to intensify the national consciousness among the Azeris, but after the suppression of the movement, and arrest of Shari'atmadari all of them were banned except *varliq* journal.[61]

The Rise of Azeri Nationalism in Islamic Republic

With the consolidation of Islamic regime, and the Iran-Iraq war, the process of ethnic assertion abruptly banned, and any such expression met with severe crackdown. At the end of the 1980s the open expression of demands for ethnic and linguistic rights were not tolerated, and there were little opportunities for political and cultural activities, the situation caused by war did not allow to these expressions.[62] The external aggression of Iraq was systematically utilised by the Iranian state to consolidate Iranian national identity for all Iranian irrespective of their ethnic and linguistic differences.[63] The idea of defence of the nation against Iraq appealed to everyone. The Azeris had played a crucial role in the Iranian revolution and in the Iran-Iraq war. In the war period Azeris remained loyal to the Iranian state. Everywhere from Tabriz to Tehran even most ordinary Azeris ethnic citizen associated and described themselves to be proud Iranian and influenced by Iranian nationality.[64] Moreover, their experiences with Persians while fighting against the Iraqi forces brought together two nationalities.

It was after the eight-year war with Iraq, ethnic demands and activism started, and mostly after the 1990s open expression of ethnic based demands increased dramatically. In the case of Azeris, the independence of northern Azerbaijan following the disintegration of the USSR influenced ethnic sentiment among the Iranian Azeris. Expansion of use of Azeri language and cultural expression began to

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[61] Katouzian, Huma and Shahidi, H. (2008), *Iran in the 21st Century: Politics, Economic and Conflict,* London: Routledge, 54-55.

[62] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 459.

[63] Khalili, Mostafa (2015-16), "A Comparative Study of Ethnic Identities among Azerbaijani Speakers in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan", *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies,* 34 (): 171.

[64] ibid,171.

be visible among the Azeris in the eve of the war. Moreover, expression of Azeri collective identity assertion found a free space under Khatami's presidency. Since 1990, there has been growing sense of Azeri nationalism and boom in Azeri nationalist publications, and growing interests in both Turkey and independent Azerbaijan.[65] This revival of Azeri nationalism led to creation of certain organisations, among them there is South Azerbaijan Awakening Movement known as Gamoh founded by a professor Mahmudali Chohrangani whose own father once torture by the Shah's secrete police for Turkish nationalism. After winning election to the Iranian parliament Chohrangani was not allowed to take his seat in 1995 because of his assertion and active involvement in Azeri ethnic movement.

Gamoh strongly rejects the "Persian Chauvinism" demanding more social and cultural rights for Azeris, and a government with federal structure based on US model, in which Azeris can have their own flag and parliament.[66] Gamoh's proclaimed support for self-determination, secular government does not sit well with Tehran. Its growing popularity has been always in Tehran's radar screen. Gamoh leader Chohragani has been jailed and tortured. In 2002, he was allowed to visit the US. In April 2005, two Gamoh member's bodies were found floating in the Araz river, and in September in the same year Iranian government blamed Gamoh for shooting a government official in Urumieh. In the year of 2006, several Gamoh members attended the second 'World Azerbaijanis Congress' in the capital of North Azerbaijan Baku. In this regard there were several Azeri Gamoh members of Iran were arrested in Tabriz, and in April 2006 an Azeri newspaper *Navid* Azerbaijan was banned.[67] In an interview Chohregani said that "a strong sense of nationalism is growing in Iran and predicting the possibility of Azeri-led unrest unless the demands of Azerbaijani movement are met".[68]

Apart from the Gamoh there are several incidents and political events which witnessed the highly ethnicised political manifestations, and groups, individuals and intellectuals expressing and asserting their different ethnicity and aspiring for a

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[65] Koknar, M. Ali (2006), "Iranian Azeris: A Giant Minority", *The Washington Institute,* [Online web] Accessed on 12 June 2018 URL: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/iranian-azeris-a-giant-minority.
[66] ibid.
[67] ibid.
[68] ibid

different political imagination. As Iranian political system does not entertain open political expression, and any ethnic based democratic demands are met with suppression. Azeri activists and nationalist take chances through various cultural and social movements to express their political demands. There are certain issues, incidents and political dynamics since the 1990s from which the expansion of Azeri nationalism needs to be analysed.

Impact of Independence of North Azerbaijan

The situation of Azeri provinces after 1990 began to change drastically. This was largely driven by developments outside Iran. The expressions of Azeri collective identity have received more impetus when Republic of Azerbaijan was established which also resulted into intense interaction of both side Azeris across the border.[69] Shaffer argued that "the ethnic identity in Iran is not merely a domestic affair and is considerably subject to influences from events taking place outside its border, such as the establishment of the ethnic based state like Azerbaijan".[70] Many secular and nationalist minded Azeri see these attributes of independent Republic of Azerbaijan with enthusiasm as romantic, encouraged and imported nationalistic literature and films from the North Azerbaijan.[71] The establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan has become an immense concern for Iranian authorities. Moreover, the Azerbaijan-Armenian war over Nagorno-Karabakh region has threatened Iran's territorial security which also can influence Azeri populated provinces of Iran. Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict also becomes a source of inspiration for Iranian Azeris to rediscover and associate with their northern co-ethnic group. Apart from the political change in North Azerbaijan, the positive development in Turkey particularly the economic and political rise made many Iranian Azeris rediscover their ethno-linguistic and cultural roots and reconsider their Turkic heritage as source of pride.[72] Consequently, following these developments since the last 25 years, many Iranian Azeris have become conscious and take over their unique cultural heritage and identity as Azeri.

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[69] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 471.

[70] ibid, 471.

[71] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 5.

[72] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 5.

After the independence of North Azerbaijan, the tendency to refer to Azeris instead of Turks began to rise among the Iranian Azeris, it was considered as the first manifestation of rising among the Azeris in post-revolutionary Iran. The change was reflected in their self-reference after 1991. During this time the Azerbaijani students send a letter to Iranian leadership:

> "It is time to pay attention to such important items as the realization of a bilingual educational system based on clause fifteen of the Iranian constitution. This does not contradict our unity, because we are united by Iranian Muslim duties, but not by the Persian language. We must take into consideration that if we do not realize necessary issues in the sphere of native language, cultural and other demands, some undesirable phenomena may occur".[73]

In the first half of the 1990s, Iran experienced a major Azeri literary revival. Azeri intellectuals and authors modified the Arabic script used for Azeri language in Iran, long before it was done by North Azerbaijanis in order to ease the reading of Azeri language. In the early 1990s Iranian newspapers such as *Keyhan,* and *Jomhuri-e Islami* began to include a page of Azeri language. During this time in order to search relatives whom they lost during the long soviet separation, Azeris from both sides began to release advertisement in these newspapers.[74] There were many new books containing the problems of Azeris that were published in Azeri language. The public use of the Azeri language expanded.

Apart from these developments, in 1998, the impact of the RA establishment was felt by an open letter to Khatami sent by Azeris. A group of 60 Azeri intellectuals wrote to Khatami while appealing for expanded cultural and linguistic rights. The Majlesh deputies from Azeri origin started to speak about the rights of Azeris and problems of the region. Impact of the RA leads to a sense of regionalism even among the parliamentarians. The jokes and derogatory terms which were common among the Persian about the Azeris were responded to, and these terms were called as cultural humiliation by Azeris.

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[73] ibid, 460-61.

[74] Shaffer, Brenda (2000), "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective identity in Iran", *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (3): 461.

Although Iranian Azeris were influenced by the independence of North Azerbaijan but the dissimilarities which occurred between them for a long time, separation of the region remained a major determining factor for differences between them. The division of the Azerbaijan in the first half of the 19th century between Russia and Persia has shaped and reshaped the cultures of Azeris which brought the differences in the cultures of Iranian and Russian Azeris.[75] Under the long Russian rule North Azerbaijan has gone through the Russification of culture and strong secularisation process of the Soviet Union. On the contrary, traditional culture and strong Islamic belief has been preserved by the Iranian Azeris. These strong and emphatic cultural dissimilarities between north and south Azeris become significant issues even for those in favour of Azerbaijan unification. At present time these cultural differences on both sides of the Araz River is one of the major hurdles for Azeri nationalist who aspire for a greater Azerbaijan.

Apart from the differences between north and south Azeris, there is division of opinion over the identity and nationalism among the Iranian Azeris too. The old generation inclined towards religion, and strongly identify themselves with their fellow believers rather than ethno-nationalists. They view *Shi'ism* as the embodiment of Iranian statehood, for them Azeri ethno-nationalism is antagonistic to the Iranian state. Moreover, they carry a negative perception towards Anatolian Turks because they follow Sunni tradition of Islam and Azerbaijani Turks as pro-Russia.[76] On the contrary, the young and secular minded groups do not give much importance to the *Shi'a* identity but tend to claim their Turkish origin, or profess Turkish Azeri nationalism. These ideas favour Turkic nationalism, and the unification of Azerbaijan, and distance themselves from the idea of Iranian statehood.

Sport Nationalism

The post 1990s developments in the rise of Azeri nationalism have been organised and manifested through the mechanism of sport in the Islamic Republic of Iran. On several occasions the manifestation of ethnic and distinctive identity and sense of

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[75] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 5.

[76] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 6.

pride to being Azeris has been noticed on several occasions, especially during the football matches between Persian and Azeri teams. Restrictions on the open expression of national identity, and ethnically framed political demands, led to the invention of sport-based reflection of nationalism, a unique medium or tool for Azeris activists to expose or express their different ethnic and cultural identity.[77] This phenomenon is embodied by the Tractor Sazi, the premier Tabriz soccer team. This football team of Azeris formed in 1970 at a Tabriz Tractor factory, which gradually became a top soccer league with a huge international following.

The Tractor Sazi influenced the ethnic identity of the non-Persians, especially Azeris. During the matches with Tehran based and Persian dominated teams such as Esetghlal and Persepolis, thousands of the Azeri supporters joined the matches and supported their own Azeri team. Not only in the Azeri dominated cities but also cities such as Tehran and other Azeris of that place come in support of Tractor Sazi. Moreover, the team's great popularity also became possible because of satellite television broadcasts of most of the team's matches, which are watched in almost every Azeris household in Iran.

Apart from the quality of their game Tractor Sazi gains their huge fan following because of politicization of the Iranian soccer league by non-Persian teams and their fans. Fans of Tractor Sazi always tend to be most active and aggressive during the football matches particularly between the Azeri dominated Tractor Sazi and Persian dominated Perspolis and Eseteghlal.[78] In almost every game these fans express their demands of establishing the institution of instructions and television broadcast in their native Azeri language.[79] In every match inside or outside of Iran thousands of Azerbaijani fans accompany their team, often they wave the Turkish flag, keep pan-Turkic symbols and shout politically flavoured slogans which express their moderate to radical demands such as establishing school teaching in Azeri to emphasising their distinctiveness to Persians, to political autonomy.[80] Apart from these, usually during

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[77] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 26.

[78] ibid,26.

[79] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 7.

[80] Souleimanov, Emil (2011), "The Evolution of Azerbaijani Identity and the Prospects of Secessionism in Iranian Azerbaijan", *Connection,* 11 (1): 81.

matches fans of Tractor Sazi openly shought pan Turkic slogans. These slogans are: "Tabriz, Baku, Ankara, our path leads elsewhere than the path of the Persians", "Azerbaijan is ours and Afghanistan is yours", all people have right to study in their own language", "down with Persian fascism", "long live a free Azerbaijan", "to hell with those who do not like us", "we are proud to be Turks" etc. This is unprecedented phenomenon considering the conditions in Iran.[81]

Whenever there is a match between Azeri team and Persian team, hateful, defamatory slogans can be heard from both sides. Persian generally chant defamatory and derogatory slogans such as "*Tork-e Khar*" (Turkish Donkey) to which Azeris respond "*Fars-e Maimoon*" (Persian Monkey). Generally, these verbal fight converts into bloody physical clashes, in which police mostly sides with Persians.[82] Among the Pan-Turkic symbols the well-known hand gesture of the Wolf's head is also significant which radical Turkish nationalist groups use to express their distinctiveness to the Persians. Easily this gesture can be observed at the soccer stadium in Tabriz as well as other places outside of Iranian Azerbaijan. On many occasions the slogans flavoured with Azeri nationalism are also heard outside of Iran. For instance, in 2013 during Asian League match, when Iranian Azerbaijani team Tractor Sazi was playing against one of the team from United Arab Emirates, in Abu Dhabi stadium fans from Tabriz unfurled a banner with words written in English: "South Azerbaijan is not Iran" and started to chant nationalistic and anti-Iran slogans.[83] In response this group was attacked by Iranian security delegates who were present at the scene. The incident was captured by GunAz TV, and later got viral on the internet and social media.

These incidents usually led to the polarisation between Persians and Azeris. In Iranian society the polarisation on the basis ethnic and linguistic lines is quite visible as well as nationalistic tensions between Persians and Azeris is on the rise.[84] This has also led

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[81] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 26-27.

[82] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 7.

[83] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 26-27.

[84] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 7.

to the sense of Turkic awakening, many Azeris have begun to claim their Turkic identity more strongly than in the past. New wave of 'self' and 'others' on ethnic and nationality lines is growing among the younger generation of the Azeris of Iran. In fact, the experiences of a new generation are different with Iranian state in comparison to the old generation who have gone through the Islamic revolution and experienced a long-standing war with Iraq. In the time of modern technology exchange of ideas across the world is accessible. Despite having a boundary among the Turks of Turkey, Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran the modern communication channels connect them. The exchange of ideas shapes and reshapes the sense of belongings in a new technological world.

Expression of Nationalism through Environmental Movement

Among the different methods of nationalist expression, the environmental movement also has become significant to put forth the nationalist agenda among the Iranian Azeris. The deteriorating condition of Lake Urmia resulted in several demonstrations and protests against Iranian government; this movement has assumed strong ethnic overtones. The lake itself lying on the border between the Iranian provinces of West and East Azerbaijan, is a natural wonder, and has been classified by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve.[85] Due to over-exploitation of the lake particularly the construction of Dams is leading to the drying up of the lake which will harm the areas surrounding the lake. Although there have been several demonstrations to preserve the lake, but Iranian officials have not taken any serious consideration regarding this matter. Azeri nationalists blame that the regime wants to destroy the region deliberately.

Negligence of the state has accelerated the ecological protests and demonstrations. During the mid-2011 at a demonstration a banner was with slogans of: "Lake Urmia is drying up; Iran has ordered its execution", and "Urmia is thirsty, Azerbaijan must take a stand or lose the Lake" were common.[86] Due to the unwillingness of the regime to preserve the lake ecological protests has become nationalistic in nature.

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[85] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 45.

[86] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 8.

Surrounding the poor condition of the lake some conspiracy theories have emerged. Azeris nationalists claim that Iranian government have carefully planned geo-engineering project to convert the fertile land of southern Azerbaijan into salty desert.[87] Souleimanov and Kraus (2017) argued that "the strong winds in this region carry salt to places many miles from the dried-up surface, destroying the local flora and fauna, and also causing health problems for human beings".[88] It is estimated that the 60 per cent Lake has dried up, and many people from the region have fled due to health complications and problems with raising crops.[89] It may be the beginning, in the future this situation is going to affect the entire region, which comprises 6.5 million people, which may lead to the potential large-scale out-migration. The ecological effects arising from Lake Urmia are translated into the nationalist language, which is strengthening the common identity of Azeris and their "otherisation" of dominant Persians.

Impact of Syrian Civil War on Azeri Nationality

Since the last two decades Turkish identity has been perceived as a prestigious identity among the urban young Azeris . As technology (print, digital and social media) has expanded, the inter-state communication among people have become easier than before. Co-ethnic Turks of Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkey are able to get routine information and are able to be influenced and to influence each other through these mediums of communication. Souleimanov and Kraus in their work have shown the role of the Turkish satellite on the cultural influence of Turkey on Iranian Azeris. Souleimanov and Kraus say that "the reception of Turkish and (and Azerbaijani) satellite television, formally banned in Iran has played a significant role in advancing Iranian Azerbaijanis' ethno-linguistic and cultural emancipation".[90]

Souleimanov and Kraus's (2017) found out that urban areas have ever increasing number of people who claim an ethnolinguistic Turkic (*Turk or Torki*) identity instead

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[87] ibid, 8.

[88] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 45.

[89] ibid, 45.

[90] ibid, 8-9.

of previous local indeed as "Tabrizi" and "Ardebili" or regional identity as "Azeris" and even national identity as "Iranian".[91]

As among the urban educated Azeris the idea of 'Turk' nationalism is growing; its reflection has been witnessed in the   Syrian civil war also. On many occasions particularly during the soccer matches Tractor Sazi fans have organised protests against the Iranian engagement in Syrian civil war. These Iranian Azeris have this understanding that Iran's intervention in Syria is indirect war against the Turkish interest in that country. On 9 December 2011 at Tabriz soccer stadium, Iranian Azeris burned down the picture of Bashar-al-Assad and protested against the Iran's support to Assad.[92] Once again it was viewed by the Azeris that Iran is supporting an enemy of Turks in an armed conflict.[93] In fact, these incidents have been analysed by James Dorsey as another impulse which is re-strengthening the Azeri nationalism, at the same time proxy war between Iran and Turkey in Syria could lead to the secessionist tendencies among the Iranian Azeris.[94]

Since 1990 the economic and political rise of Turkey have given impetus to many Iranian Azeris to rediscover their ethno-linguistic and cultural roots and reconsidered their Turkic heritage as source of pride.[95] A group of Urban and Secular have been inspired by Turkey's liberal political system and they view Turkey as modern, militarily powerful, and an advanced country. On several occasions particularly during football matches, Tractor Sazi fans used to demonstrate pro-Turkish slogans and wave the Turkish flag. These incidents are interpreted by the Iranian authorities as a conspiracy of Turkey against Iran and these forces of Iran labelled as agents of Turkey in Iran.[96]

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[91] ibid, 30.

[92] Youtube, December 9, 2011, http://youtu.be/0Ib8vMsd1tM.

[93] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 51

[94] James, Dorsey, (2011), "Iranian Azeri Soccer Protests Raise Spectre of Turkish-Iranian-Syrian Proxy War," Middle east Soccer, [Online web] Accessed on 21 Jan 2021 URL: http://mideastsoccer.blogspot.cz/2011/11/iranian-azeri-soccer-protestsraise.html.

[95] Souleimanov, Aslan, Emil, and Kraus, Josef (2017), "Iran's Azerbaijani Question in Evolution: Identity, Society and Regional Security", *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program,* 5.

[96] ibid, 9.

However, the tendency to sympathise with Turkey and support Turk nationalism is confined to the urban educated and secular minded Azeris, and the rural population still uphold the Shi'ite identity. Among the Iranian Azeris the Syrian civil war has deepened the division within the Iranian Azeris. On one hand urban youths expressed their sympathies towards Turkey and the West and blamed the Assad regime and its ally Russia and Iran for the massacre of innocent Syrians. On the other hand, the rural population of Iranian Azeris supported Iran's action in Syria. They praised Iran's effort to rescue fellow Shi'ite.[97]

Souleimanov and Kraus claim that "one of the most important causes for new flourishing Azerbaijni nationalism in Iran is declining self-identification with theocratic state and religion and strengthening of ethnic nationalism throughout the country".[98] A young generation of Iran in particular and Azeris in general are disenchanted with restrictive rule of clerics. This dissatisfaction was re-strengthened during the bloody clashes over the re-election of conservative president Ahmadinejad in 2009.[99] Nastaran Moosavi in his work "Secularism in Iran" (2007) acknowledge that the younger generation is more inclined towards the secular environment, they identify with theocracy to a far lesser extent than the generation of their parents. Throughout the society especially in urban areas there is disillusionment about theocracy and its fundamentalist manifestation. Many educated Iranians hesitate to identify themselves with theocracy and religion, instead among them there is a growing tendency to admire the west.[100]

Regime's Responses to the Manifestations of the Azeri Identity

Throughout the modern history of Iran, it has been observed that both regimes have suppressed ethnic demands of various linguistic minorities. Pahlavi explicitly and Islamic Republic of Iran implicitly have promoted a kind of Persian supremacy over Iran, where Persian has been essentialized to construct Iranian national identity. Demands of the linguistic and ethnic rights of the minorities constantly met with violent and coercive suppression. Civic and political rights of the ethnic minorities

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[97] ibid, 7-8.

[98] ibid, 8-9.

[99] ibid, 30.

[100] Moosavi, Nastaran (2007), "Secularism in Iran" (ed.) in Barry, A. Kosmin and Ariela, Keysar, *Secularism and Secularity*, Contemporary International Perspectives, Hartford: 143-145.

have been taken as a threat to Iranian integrity because of their ethnic and cultural differences. Suspicion has always been in the mind of the ruling Persian majority regarding Azeris. From 1945, during the movement of independent Azerbaijan, and in the time of making Islamic Republic of Iran after the revolution of 1979 to till date, Iranian regime responded violently and coercively to ethnic demands of minorities.

However, after the 1990 Azeris witnessed a relatively free Iran, where the linguistic and ethnic manifestations were tolerated to some extent, particularly during the moderate president Khatami (1997-2005). But the later phase became intolerable to such manifestations of Azeri identity in particular and ethnic identities in general. Any anti-regime protests were suppressed and responded with harsh repression. State interventions became severe, especially since the 2009 presidential elections riots.[101] Apart from these oppressions, systemic state led violence has increased against the ethnic minorities in particular and minorities in general. In the ethnic regions, extra-judicial killings are in rife. In 2013, Human Rights Documentation Centre recorded 529 executions of the minorities across the Iran.[102] It simply shows that one person is executed every single day in Iran. Since Rouhani became president in 2013, within one year more than 370 out of 529 people were executed. The state led practice of enforced disappearances is a common phenomenon in minority regions. The general minority perception of the regime has also affected the Azeris as ethnic minority.

Any kind of ethnic and linguistic manifestation and demonstrations become subjects of state repression. The Basij militia is usually deployed and used to deal with demonstrators. According to the UNPO report of 2014 anti-government demonstrators becomes easy prey to arrests and quasi-legal or illegal abductions, face harsh interrogations, torture and imprisonments. Apart from these mechanisms, pro-regime vigilant group *Ansar-e Hezbollah,* actively involved in suppressing the anti-government demonstrations. This group concentrates on enforcing Islamic morality among the citizens and deals with suppressing anti-regime opposition and even the signs of protests.[103] At the university and educational level there is constant effort to

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[101] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 8.
[102] Unrepresented Nation and Peoples Organization (UNPO), (2014), "Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 23 March 2017.
[103] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 8-9.

recruit Basij members and increase the Basij followers among the students. These groups keep watch on Azeri activists and their activities. The University of Tabriz often met with hard raids and investigations of Azeri students. These raids and investigations include beating, arrest and violent interrogations of the students and damage of their property. These incidents usually come in the local press in south Azerbaijan therefore incidents taking place in Azerbaijanis dealt differently.[104] According to the Iranian authorities and academicians, there is separatist tendency growing among the fans of Tractor Sazi, who are leading the politicisation of their demands. These cells of the separatist groups usually met in northern Azerbaijan where Iranians do not have visa requirements. Tractor Sazi has been understand as a defender of Azeris' rights and freedom in Iran by its fans. In order to prevent these separatist tendencies among these activists and fans of Tractor Sazi Iranian government has allegedly attempted to infiltrate the network through agents in order to identify and persecute those fans who are most politically engaged.

Moreover, during the year of 2006, a cartoon controversy regarding depiction of Azeris as Cockroach in a state run newspaper of Iran was not related to mere a cartoon but demonstration against it has serious nationalistic expression which was responded violently by Iranian forces. More than ten thousand protestors came on road met with state suppression, four Azeris were killed (Azeri nationalists claim twenty people were killed), forty-three were injured more than hundred people were detained[105]. Iranian regime aggressively responded to wash out this ethnic brushfire by closing the newspaper and arresting the cartoonist. The Revolutionary Guard Corps, anti-riot units and Basij Militia attacked and crackdown the ten thousand of Azeri protestors who took on the street in the Iranian cities of Tabriz, Ardebil, Urumeih, Maragheh, and Zenjan.[106] Intelligence agency of Iran launched a massive detention campaign, rounding up relatives of Azeri Turks who previously have been jailed for Turkish nationalism.

Ali Asghar Ahmadi, the Iranian deputy interior minister for security affairs himself admitted that "demonstrations in Tabriz were far more than protests against a

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[104] ibid, 10.

[105] Koknar, M. Ali (2006), "Iranian Azeris: A Giant Minority", *The Washington Institute,* [Online web] Accessed on 12 June 2018 URL: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/iranian-azeris-a-giant-minority.

[106] ibid.

newspaper insult". In fact, there is huge resentment among Iranian Azeris regarding the economic and social difficulties. The resentment is fed by the attitude of Persians towards ethnic Azeris. An attitude well captured in the derogatory phrase "Tork-e-Khar" (Turkish Donkey), usually Persians use in reference to Azeris, whom they regard as the "muscle" of the Iranian economy to be dominated by the Persian "Brains"[107]

Any anti-regime activities met with vigilant and violent suppression, and persecution of the activists. Due to the lack of the data, it is very difficult to estimate how many Azeri activists are in the prison. However, most of them get lighter sentences of a few months, but there are some cases which show that people have suffered with serious imprisonment. Among these, alleged imprisonment of journalist Mantipour for eight years in 2008 is one of the important examples to analyse the state's crackdown on activists and journalists.[108]

Since 2002, there have been open expressions of ethnic symbolism and protests for greater autonomy, and the rise of the Azeri ethnic nationalism. At the same time state machinery-watch and the process of suppression also has increased. A Turk activist Siamak Mirzavi was arrested without a warrant by the ministry of intelligence on 14 December 2016. Moreover, he was sentenced for 10-year imprisonment and two-year exile in January 2017 on charges of 'acting against national security' and 'insulting the leader' in connection with his participation in a gathering to mark International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2016.[109] Although he posted bail he continued to be kept in prison illegally. In this regard Mirzavi himself wrote:

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[107] ibid.

[108] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 10.

[109] Minority Rights Group International and Centre for Supporters of Human Rights (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 21 April 2019 URL: file:///C:/Users/Vinod%20Kumar/Desktop/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf 16.

The arrest, detention, or sentencing of a person should be based on legal charges. How did you find that I am creating a network and acting against national security? […] Security agents accused me of creating a network, while they could not find any name or evidence for it. I have fought for my father's mother tongue and the right to education and training in my mother tongue with only a pen as a weapon. From Lake Urumieh, I have fought for the region's economic development and its natural identity. And I have fought against the legal system of mono-linguism, extreme centralism, and the lack of economic development of non-central regions of Iran. I have fought against the lack of freedom of the press and parties and the lack of freedom of expression and association. [These efforts] are not in conflict with the security and integrity of the country, but are nothing but demands for the unity, reform and peace of the country".[110]

The Azeri cultural and educational freedom which was granted during Khatami's period became difficult in later phases. Although *Verliq* and some few magazines are still working in the field of cultural expression, many journals, newspapers have been shut down by the state. Under Islamic republic there are several state-led policies and measures reported which have repressed the minority languages and their publications. For instance, Azeri Turk rights organisation in 2015 presented a report in which it is stated that it is difficult to obtain a license for books written in Azeri language, and private publications and institutions faced serious pressure and surveillance from the security organisations.[111]

However, Iran has signed UN Convention on the Right of the Childs (CRC) in 1991, which ensures the right of the children and prohibits discrimination against children and obliged government to guarantee the rights of children belonging to ethnic, religious, and lingual minorities to learn and practice their culture.[112] Iran ratified the convention with conditions, and the condition says that if the article of CRC is inconsistent with Islamic legal codes and Sharia, the Islamic Republic will not observe it.[113] Although, there is no such legal ban explicitly mentioned in the constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran on learning in the non-Persian language, but

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[110] ibid,17, and Full text of letter available at https://www.hra-news.org/letters/a-440

[111] Minority Rights Group International and Centre for Supporters of Human Rights (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 21 April 2019 URL: Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf 23.

[112] Radmehr, D. and Azari A. (2015), "Deprivation from Learning Mother Tongue and its Azerbaijani Turks Children in Iran", *Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran,* [Online web] Accessed on 2 Jan. 2017 URL: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/IRN/INT_CRC_NGO_IRN_19735_E .pdf, 4.

[113] ibid.

the nationalist and religious interpretation of the Iranian constitution causes hinder in the implementation of the CRC, and civil activist who demands the implementation of these laws are persuaded and severely persecuted.[114] Iranian Azerbaijani Human rights agency AHRAZ claimed that unlike the Pahlavi regime, the present central government is continuing with policy of 'Persianisation' and assimilation of Azeri language and culture, denying the ethnic identity of Turkic speaking ethnic minorities. Since 1990, when Azeris trying to distinguish and assert their identity and demonstrated through emphasis on learning Azeri language, Iranian government has confronted this group with arrest and police persecution. During the International Mother Language Day (February 21st), every year dozens of Azeri youths arrested in this kind of gathering and charged with "separatism" and are sentenced to long term imprisonment.[115]

Systematically Iranian authorities are trying to do away with the ethnic symbolism and ethnic diversity in Iran. An Azeri weekly journal known as 'Navid Azerbaijan' has claimed that more than 500 geographic names has been changed from Turkish to Persian since last 70 years from 1937 to 2006.[116] Moreover, in 2010, Iran broadcasting banned the regional channel from having programmes in Turkish for Azeri youths.

Level of Integration

Historically Azeris in Iran have been the ruling class of the country. From Safavids to Qajar most of the dynasties belong to the Azeris ethnic groups. Due to their political power, they have been dominating most of the state apparatus and economy, particularly trade and market. Even during the Pahlavi dynasty their power position to some extent remained intact, and there were many Azeris in the Majlesh, military, and other influential positions of state authority. Iran has never had a single city as its permanent centre of political power for any lengthy period of time,[117] but there has been a constant shift of power centres. During the rise of Safavids in Iran, Tabriz became the centre of power. However, these rulers belonging to different ethnic and

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[114] ibid, 4-5.
[115] ibid, 3.
[116] ibid, 7.
[117] Atabaki, Touraj (2005), "Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges", *Iranian Studies,* 38 (1): 24.

tribal groups contributed as well as promoted Iranian culture, secured the territorial integrity and maintained its formal religion.[118] After the establishment of the Qajar dynasty which was dominated by the Azeri ethnic community shifted its power to Tehran. So, this trajectory of power centre has incorporated Azeris in the affairs of the state and they have been a ruling community for a long period of time. In the Qajar rule, the infantry of *Nizam-e Jadid* in Tehran was recruited predominantly from the Qajar tribes, while infantry in Azerbaijan was recruited from the local Azeri tribes.[119]

Historically their share in the Iranian state, whether in the political or economic sphere, has been relatively better than other ethnic minorities. Even during the harsh ethnic policies of the Pahlavi dynasty, the economic condition of Azeris remained better than those of Arabs, Baluchs, Kurds and others. Historically, Iranian Azeris have proven their century-long loyalty to the Iranian state and have maintained the territorial integrity of Iran. At present even most of the Azeris are committed to work within the framework of Iranian political system to address their ethnic grievances.[120] As Azeris have been a ruling community in Iran, and the emergence of the leaders and their participation in the Iranian state affair is also one of the major reasons to remain loyal to Iran. Grebennikov (2013) argued that "Azeris loyalty is the consistent and successful co-optation of the Azeri leadership into political and economic elite by the Iranian state".[121]

Moreover, the religious commonness between majority Persians and Azeris is one of the major binding factors. *Shi'a* Islam is an important element which consolidates national identity of Iran. Due to the religious commonness, there is a strong tie between these two ethnic communities. The most significant example of this commonness and sense of belongingness is that, even after the emerging Azeri ethnic consciousness a large group of Azeri population is disassociating with the north Azerbaijan and believed that north Azeris are very close to eastern and Russian culture which is not Islamic. Particularly religious affiliation and their evolution

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[118] Ahmadi, Hamid (2010), "Unity within Diversity: Foundations and Dynamics of National Identity in Iran", *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 14 (1): 135.

[119] Abrahmian, Ervand (1983), *Iran Between Two Revolutions,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 38.

[120] Grebennikov, Marat (2013), "The Puzzle of a Loyal Minority: Why do Azeri Support the Iranian State", *The Middle East Journal,* 67 (1): 75.

[121] ibid, 64.

within the Iranian cultural context have significant role in maintaining close ties with Persians.[122] They have a strong *Shi'ite* Iranian consciousness rather than Pan-Turkish. The overwhelming majority of Azeris in Iran have shown very little interest in ethnically framed political instability and virtually no interest in separation or reunification with Republic of Azerbaijan.[123] Most of the Iranian Azeris have negative perception towards North Azerbaijan; they view it as economically stagnant, culturally disoriented, and politically corrupt.

Social relations also have an important role in the formation of group associations or ethnic identity. Social relations are more preferable within religion than in the same ethnicity with different religion. For many religious oriented Azeris, a marriage between the person belonging to a different school of Islam is unthinkable even though they belong to the same ethno-linguistic community.[124] On the other hand, marriage between two *Shi'a* from different ethnic groups would not be prevented by anything. There is constant migration in Iran; north-western Azeris have settled in different parts of Iran; it has resulted in marriages between Azeris and Persians. This process is also leading to the Persianization of the Azeris because of their separation from the Turkish speaking environment.

The role of Azeris in Iranian politics throughout the history of Iran has been significant, and whenever, there have been political reform, change and revolution processes they have played a determining role in shaping the political nature of Iran. In modern history, particularly from the constitutional revolution of 1906 to the Iranian revolution of 1979, Azeri intellectuals, clergies, and political leaders' contribution and their role have been significant. As Azerbaijanis are traditionally integrated in Iranian society therefore, they are not negligible. In contemporary Iran large numbers of Azeris are positioned in high state officials, clerics, army commanders, and have acquired a good amount of economy, as well as belong to the intellectual elites of the country. In present day Iran, the most prominent example among these are country's supreme leader Ali Khamenei, reformist leader Mir

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[122] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 2.

[123] Grebennikov, Marat (2013), "The Puzzle of a Loyal Minority: Why do Azeri Support the Iranian State", *The Middle East Journal,* 67 (1): 76.

[124] Souleimanov, Emil, and Pikal, Kamil (2013), "The Rise of Nationalism Iranian Azerbaijanis: A Step towards Iran's Disintegration", *MERIA Journal,* 17 (1): 2.

Hossein Mousavi and former Minister of Interior and Minister of Social Security Sadeq Mahouli belong to Azeri ethnicity.[125] Apart from these figures during the initial phase of the Islamic Republic Azeri numbers were considerable in the state affairs. First prime minister of the IRI, Mahdi Bazargan was from Azeri origin.

Although it is very difficult to find data regarding the socio-economic condition of Azeris in Iran, their historical and present political position shows that Azeris are in a better position than other ethnic minorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. As it was noted that during 1966-1976 the literacy rate, urban household, and their industrial based economic status was less than Persians but higher than the rest of the ethnic groups in Iran. Moreover, among all peripheral regions in Iran, Azerbaijan particularly Tabriz and Ardebil have been historical centres for commerce and major political activities. So, the historical contribution and their role in Iranian politics, as well as *Shi'a* religious belief, have ensured their better position in Iran among the dominant Persians.

An Assessment of Status and Integration of Azeris in Iran

However, traditionally Azeris have been very close to the state apparatus of Iran. Their role in Iranian politics has remained significant and considerable. It has been discussed that from the beginning to present, they have been the ruling class. This factor is one of the important aspects of Azeris integration in the society. Among the other aspects of Azeris integration is their position in the society; most of the economic centres traditionally situated in the areas inhabited by the Azeris such as Tabriz, and Ardabil have been centres of power also. Living in the Persian dominated country and their same religious belief has made close connections with Persians, and with the emergence of Iranian nationalism Azeris along with Persians have played a crucial role to construct an Iranian national identity. The role of Azeris in the Islamic Republic of Iran and their contribution to maintain the national integrity is very much visible. For instance, from the beginning leaders from Azeri ethnicity such as Ayatollah Ali Khamanei the supreme leader of Iran was very close to first supreme leader Khomeini, Mahdi Bazargan, Mossavi and others. This is the traditional continuity of power sharing of the Azeris in the Iranian politics which has made them loyal to the Iranian state, and the majority of the Azeris till date have adopted Iran as

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[125] ibid, 3.

their nation. Bureaucratic and other big posts in the military are held by many Azeris. The economic status of the Azeris is not vulnerable in comparison to others, the market, Bazar and commerce predominantly dominated by the Azeris. Traditionally many wealthy businessmen belong to the Azeri community, who have been influencing the Iranian economic system for a long time. Although Azeris have been politically and economically integrated in Iranian society, available data on poverty rate in different ethnic provinces shows that Azeri dominated provinces particularly East and West Azerbaijan constitute more than two times higher poverty rate in comparison to Tehran. This gap between Persian dominated provinces and Azeri dominated provinces needs an economic analysis. Most of the ethnic activists have always blamed the central authority's discriminatory policies against Azeri dominated provinces. The present situation of poverty rate among the Azeris can be analysed by the data mentioned in the report of "Minority Rights Group International and Centre for Supporters of Human Rights:

Table 4 (a)   *Percentage of Population below Poverty Line, Selected Provinces* 2014

Province	Urban	Rural
Country wide	33.4%	40.1%
Azerbaijan East	36.72%	25.06%
Azerbaijan West	38.65%	27.85%
Bushehr	45.62%	38.49%
Fars	32.55%	42.09%
Kermanshah	32.15%	35.36%
Khuzestan	32.22%	26.07%
Kurdistan	52.12%	48.97%
Lorestan	49.05%	56.08%
Sistan and Baluchistan	63.95%	76.53%
Tehran	17.43%	26.31%

Source: Minority Rights Group International and Centre for Supporter of Human Rights.[126]

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[126] Minority Rights Group International and Centre for Supporters of Human Rights (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 21

The above data shows that after Persian dominated provinces, the lowest poverty rate constituted by the Azeris in their respective provinces. The gap between Tehran and East and West Azerbaijan provinces is more than double but in comparison to Fars which is Persian dominated it is almost similar but with a difference of almost 5 to 3 per cent. Moreover, rest of the provinces populated by the other ethnic groups are highly under-developed and form an incomparable poverty rate with Persian and Azeri dominated provinces, particularly Kurdistan, Lorestan and Sistan and Baluchistan. In terms of Poverty rate Iranian state constitutes a great difference among the provinces.

Socially and educationally, conditions of Azeri are far better than other ethnic and linguistic communities. After Persians the most educated and literate population belongs to the Azeri community. Most prominent educational institutions are situated in Azeri areas after Tehran. Moreover, after Persian dominated Iranian provinces, the highest literacy rate is in Azeri populated provinces. From the following data taken from the statistical centre Iran, Azeris are in far better condition in terms of literacy rate than other linguistic and ethnic minorities in Iran.

Table 4 (b)   *Literacy rate of Selected Provinces (2016)*

Province	Literacy Rate
Country wide	87.&%
East Azerbaijan	84.7%
West Azerbaijan	82.0%
Bushehr	89.2%
Fars	88.8%
Kermanshah	84.5%
Khuzestan	86.3%
Kurdistan	81.5%
Lorestan	83.0%
Sistan and Baluchistan	76.0%
Tehran	92.9%

Source: Statistical Centre Iran of 2016.

April 2019 URL: file:///C:/Users/Vinod%20Kumar/Desktop/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf 23.

Most important factor of Azeri loyalty is the religious commonality between two major ethnic communities; Azeris and Persians. While following the revolution Iranian political elite developed a religious nationalism and undermined the linguistic aspect to construct the national identity of Iran. As Iranian population across the different ethnic communities felt the sense of commonness on the ground of religion. Traditional and religious minded people uphold this idea of religious commonness. In South Azerbaijan there are numbers of Ayatollahs', clergies and other religious *Ulemas* who support the idea of Islamic Republic. Although there is rise of the ethnic consciousness, and groups of secular ethnic nationalists have emerged, traditional and religious minded groups uphold the idea of Islamic Republic, Iranian identity and they do not support any kind of ethnic mobilisation and linguistic nationalism.

In fact, there are certain commonalities between the Persians and Azeris but at the same time there is linguistic and ethic difference also which has been major challenges for the Iranian state throughout the modern history of Iran. During the twentieth century Iran has witnessed the ethnic assertions, conflicts and threat of disintegration as well. The major grievances of Azeri community are related to the right to culture, education in the Azeri language and fair treatment of Azeri community. The ethnic policies of both Pahlavi and Islamic regime have been questioned by Azeris.

Disintegration of the USSR, and the establishment of Republic of Azerbaijan have given impetus to the Azeri nationalism in Iran. Moreover, the new development near the border of Iran has influenced the national consciousness among the Iranian Azeris. There has been a rise of politicisation of ethnic identity in Iran. Alam Saleh and Rasmus Christian Elling have warned that "Tehran's reluctance attitude to address the rising ethnic expectation may lead to a greater frustration among the minorities".[127] Moreover, growing mechanism of mass communication, regional political and social dynamics play an important role in increasing ethnic expectations of Azeri.[128] Rise of ethnic consciousness becomes a matter of serious consideration because most of the ethnic minorities in Iran are trans-national and the areas share borders with their co-ethnic inhabitants. Therefore, ethnic groups of Iran tend to evaluate the situation of

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[127] Elling, Christian, Rasmus and Saleh, Alam (2016), "Ethnic Minorities and the Politics of Identity in Iran", *Iranian Studies,* 49 (1): 170.
[128] ibid, 170.

their ethnic kin in the neighbouring countries and set their ethnic expectation accordingly. Iranian Kurds border their co-ethnic group in Iraq, Azeris in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Baluch in Pakistan. These external-internal dynamics frequently impact Tehran's domestic ethnic, regional as well as foreign policy.[129] As the consequences of the developments in the border areas, the Iranian ethnic communities have felt a new wind of ethnicism.

Following 1990, the ethnic manifestations, rise of the ethnic demands have been a constant phenomenon in Iranian politics. Azeri nationalists have adopted a new form for manifestation of the ethnic nationalism. The rise of soccer nationalism, Lake Urmia environmental movements are the examples of these new assertions of ethnic nationalism. Within Azeri community there are divergent views over the Iranian and Azeri national identity. Particularly the old and religious generation who have witnessed the revolutionary era have pro-Iranian and sympathetic view for Islamic Republic and are not interested in any kind of the ethnic assertion. A group of new generations such as soccer activists and the fan of Tractor Sazi team of Azerbaijan keep separatist views. From their slogans such as "Azerbaijan is not Iran" "Tabriz Baku Ankara" and "our path is different to those of Persians" and activities it seems that their views are different to the rest of the Azeris, and following the path of separation from Iran. Although, there is rise of the follower of Tractor Sazi team but the politics behind the soccer has less follower and majority of the Azeris have opinion with Iranian state. Moreover, the Azeri nationalist diaspora in Europe, Turkey and north Azerbaijan aspires for independent Azerbaijan in north Iran but their following in Iran is not visible. Apart from these two polar views, there are many groups and individuals who are supporting the ethnic assertion for the greater cultural, linguistic and autonomous movement within the framework of Iranian state.

After the establishment of the new independent Azerbaijan, Iranian Azeris have developed a different attitude towards this new political development across the border. It is claimed that some political groups of Azeris in Iran have gained power with the support of North Azerbaijan and Azeri nationalist movements. However, according to Khalili's study majority of the Azeris do not believe in the idea of independence from Iran, but they have grave concern over their cultural and linguistic

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[129] ibid, 170.

rights that need to be recognised by the Iranian state. Some other believe that nothing has changed for them as being Iranian Azeri, but they don't consider the option to joining the northern part of Azerbaijan since they have strong belief that the land had belonged to them for a long time and they are quite comfortable in the current situation.[130]

There are cross-border cultural relations between the south and north Azerbaijan but the long separation of Azerbaijan and different cultural developments in south and north Azerbaijan have produced different cultural orientation and opinions between south and north Azeris, which have also altered the ethnic commonness between both co-ethnic communities. From the various ethnographic studies, it is visible that the north Azeris have developed a secular tendency due to the long rule of the USSR, and the south Azeris are still religious which has created the ethnic dissimilarities between both communities. As it has been discussed that ethnicity is not fixed it is subject to change according to the new developments in the society. Same has happened in the case of Azeris of North Azerbaijan. They have developed different scripts of Azeri language, influenced from the secular and western culture and their aspiration for Azeri society is also diverse to those of Iranian Azeris. Moreover, cross border experiences of the communities show some problems between both co-ethnic communities. As Khalili shows in his work that Azeris from Iran often blame that they are usually mistreated and cheated by the North Azerbaijan's Azeris.[131] Through the analysis of the Azeri nationalist movement it is visible that Iranian Azeris have less interest in building a united Azerbaijan and make secession from Iran, the objective of Azeri movement against the central government is basically tend to gain basic rights for Azeri ethnic minorities within the Iran.[132] Same experiences one can hear from the Azeris of North Azerbaijan about the Iranian Azeris. These differences and developments are the major challenges for the Azeri nationalists who are aspiring for the integration of Iranian Azerbaijan with North Azerbaijan.

Systemic deprivation of Azeri regions through various state policies are also fuelling the Azeri ethnic assertion and sense of different nationality. Iranian suspicion towards

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[130] Khalili, Mostafa (2015-16), "A Comparative Study of Ethnic Identities among Azerbaijani Speakers in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan", *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies,* 34 (): 171.
[131] ibid, 173.
[132] ibid, 173.

ethnic assertion and Azeri deprivation both are in contradiction producing mutual mistrust towards each other. However, the national ruling class always tries to maintain and homogenize the nation based on language, ethnicity and culture. Similarly, a hegemonic design of nation has been promoted by the ruling authority of Iran particularly by Persians which denies the ethnic rights of the different linguistic minorities. There is denial of education in native language, and cultural rights to do away with Azeri symbols and nomenclatures by changing the old names of the Azeri historical places, roads and other symbols which express different ethnic identity of a particular place or region. Ethnicization and de-ethnicization have both been the political dynamics in Iran particularly since 1990. Iranian politics have gone through several political changes especially during the tenure of Mohammed Khatami's presidency in 1997-2005. Moreover, the political dynamic of North Azerbaijan, Influence of Turkey, and new technological developments have given impetus to Azeris to reconsider their ethnic identity as a source of pride. And the dynamics of religious bond has weakened especially among the educated urban youths which has traditionally been a major binding factor between Azeris and Persians in Iran.

Azeris constitute a major national ethnic minority in Iran and situated in a strategic location where it shares borders with major ethnic Turkish speaking groups such as Azerbaijan and Turkey. The cross-border relationships and the international environment definitely play an important role in the ethnic nationalism of Azeris of Iran. These factors influence the ethnic policies of Iran as well as foreign relations with North Azerbaijan. The existence of North Azerbaijan is a serious challenge for Iran. Moreover, the close ties of the Republic of Azerbaijan with Israel, US and Turkey is a serious threat to Iran for the rise of Azeri nationalism in Iran. In fact, separation and integration are part of the political journey of a nation state, it is subject to the political environment of the country and its relations with ethnic communities. Due to a long-time separation from north to south Azerbaijan the idea of ethnic similarity has become a complex matter. One can find several differences among both co-ethnic groups on religion, language and attitude. The old generation of Iranian emphasised on the *Shi'a* connection with fellow Persian aligning with the idea of Iranian statehood rather than Azeri ethno-nationalism. But the new generation is more into the idea of Azeri and Turkic connection and emphasised on Azeri nationalism. The different opinions among the Iranian Azeris over the question of

Azeri nationality divide a uniform voice to formulate a strong nationalist movement. In fact, the role of religion, that is *Shi'ism,* has been one of the major commonality and binding connection with majority Persians which is still playing an important role apart from other factors to maintain the sense of Iranianness among the Azeris of Iran.

The current relation of Iran with Azeri nationality is relatively more serious in the environment of globalisation where cross border connection is eased by digital communication systems. Here physical borders are no longer a barrier for cross-border communication. The rise of ethnic nationalism is to some extent growing. Although the majority of the Azeri of Iran tend to be loyal to the Iranian state, new developments after the 1990s have influenced young Azeri nationalists who have a sense of Azeriness, and discontentment with Iran with regards to their ethnic and cultural rights. The grievances of Azeris required careful attention to manage the national affairs. Communities in large numbers with huge territory and relatively well off in economic aspects have more potential to put forth their ethnic aspirations. Relative deprivation, threat to the cultural boundaries, differential treatments and other factors decides the gravity of the ethnic assertion. It is up to the political elites, political situation in the country and external environment which determines how ethnic groups articulate themselves and what demands are made. Azeris are living in the border areas, fighting for their distinctive identity, large in numbers with huge territory as well as relatively prosperous to other ethnic communities which have potential to be a nation. As it has been discussed that the ethnic construction and assertion are subject to change, it depends upon the socio-political environment of both inside and outside of the country. It is up to the political elites and intellectuals to decide how the growing sense of Azeris nationalism can be dealt with.

CHAPTER: 5

CONDITION OF BALUCH IN IRAN

The Present chapter deals with Baluch issues in relations to Iran by analysing the condition of Baluchs, particularly keeping their ethnic and religious identity at centre. It discusses the socio-economic and political situations of Baluchs in Iran. How their identity of 'Baluch' has been shaped and what kind of relations have been developed with the central authority of Iran? Moreover, it also deals with ethnic and religious contradictions with Iranian state. In this regard the Baluch movement and their struggle for nationality rights have been discussed, as well as the separatist movement of Baluchs. Chapter examines how *Shi'ism* since the Iranian revolution became an official religion[1] and being a different religious and ethnic identity group how the Baluchs' socio-economic and particularly the political condition has been shaped. Since ethnic minorities in general and Baluchs in particular have been placed under the *Shi'a* regime after 1979, how the relations between majority and minority, both religious and ethnic, becomes a significant domain of investigation. Islamic laws, ethnic superiority and dominations of Persians are in contradiction with the *Sunni-*Baluchs of Iran. On the basis of these differences, it has been analyzed how Baluchs are associating themselves with the idea of Iran, as well as their complexity of sense of belongingness with multiple identities.

Formation of Baluch Ethnicity.

Ethnicity is a modern phenomenon which arises with relations to other communities. Ethnicity is relational and a product of the distinctive character which defines their different character to others. It is a product of contact not of isolation. It arises with relationships to other communities, not a cultural property of a particular group. If in any society there is mono-ethnic setting, there is effectively no ethnicity, since there is nobody to communicate the cultural differences. Consequently, in order to identify the ethnicity, there must be a difference between 'us' versus 'them'. Moreover, Banton argued that there are certain cultural and physical attributes of ethnicity, and once the group is settled on the cultural attributes it responds negatively to the groups

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[1] Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, [Online web] Accessed on 12 Jan 2015 URL: http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch01.php.

which does not pose the similar attributes.[2] It is modern development in the identity formations which has emerged with interdependence and interconnection with different communities.[3] Ethnic identities tend to attain their greatest importance in situations of flux, change, resource competition and threat against boundaries. In a study at Chicago, it is investigated that the ethnic relations are fluid and negotiable.[4] Importance of ethnicity varies according to time and space and depends upon the political environment of a particular country. Claims of primordial and cultural roots of an ethnic identity can be consciously manipulated.[5]

However, in the contemporary time the world is highly dependent upon each other, there are rarely societies which exist with their homogenous mono-ethnic identity. Present nation system is highly centralised where a particular ruling class defines the idea of a nation and rest of the minority face some sort of discrimination and alienation. In this situation the idea of 'us' versus 'them' becomes important in the formation of ethnicity. Ethnicists always tried to claim their unique identity and blame authorities for their discrimination and poor condition in a particular nation state. Today's modern world has become smaller due to increasing technological and communication developments, and in this world multi-ethnic and multicultural encounters are increasingly becoming normalised. Here the governments and political elites seek to extend social benefits to various groups, immigrants and others on the basis of racial, ethnic, cultural and such bases. Most of the time ruling elite intentionally invite the manufacture of identities on the parts of the target populations.[6] This is what leads to conflict when competition over the scare resources such as education, employment, property and welfare settled on the basis of physical and cultural criteria that include some groups and exclude others.[7]

As it has been mentioned that ethnicity becomes important when there is resource competition and threat against boundaries. Ethnic groups reassert their identities and claim their differences. However, there are various theories of ethnicity and nation.

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[2] Banton, Michael (1986), "Ethnic Bargaining", (*ed*.) Hall, Raymond L., Ethnic Autonomy-Comparative Dynamics: The Americas, Europe and the Developing World, New York.

[3] Eriksen, Hylland, Thomas (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* London: Pluto Press, 6.

[4] ibid, 6.

[5] ibid, 6.

[6] Allahar L. Anton, (2001), "The Politics of Ethnic Identity Construction", *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research,*1(3): 205.

[7] ibid, 205.

But the identity process theory can give a better analysis of ethnic dynamics of Baluch. Identity Process Theory (IPT) says that "structure of identity should be conceptualised in terms of its content and values. In a particular structure this process contains two universal processes; first, assimilation and accommodation process and second is evaluation process. In the first process assimilation and accommodation process refers to the absorption of new information in the identity structure and adjustment which takes place in order to become a part of the structure. The evaluation process confers meaning of the content of identity.[8] This consolidates the existing ethnic identity while providing the meaningful rationale which conforms the claims one group made for the support of its distinctive identity.

While dealing with formation of Baluch ethnicity the above theoretical background is important to understand the dynamics of Baluch ethnicity. Through this analysis of identity formation, it can be analysed how Baluch ethnicity has been formed over a period of time, and why it has become so important? In fact, before the rise of the modern nation state most of the communities were dealing with their cultural and linguistic affairs in isolation and there was enough political autonomy, and economic independence, therefore the central authority of empire or state was not affecting their social, cultural and economic life. Even in Iran before the rise of the Pahlavi dynasty, most of the *Elkhans* were directly dealing with the British colonial market system, and were exercising immense autonomy in their respective region or provinces. Problem of ethnic identity arises with the emergence of the nation-state system accompanied by the modern technological, scientific, and communication developments which centralise the economic system, therefore it causes economic interdependence, and centralisation of political power. Eric Hosbawm argued that the emergence of capitalism, currency, fiscal policies of states, finance system have created economic unity.[9] This economic unity has been territorial. Moreover, he argued that "the basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity".[10] Nation state brought together different nationalities in a uniform political system, through economic laws and mechanisms of citizenship. One has to

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[8] Jaspal, Rusi and Cinnirella, Macro (2011), "The Construction of Ethnic Identity: Insight from Identity Process Theory", *Ethnicity,* 12 (5): 503-530.
[9] Hobsbawm, Eric (1992), *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780 Programme, Myth Reality,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 28.
[10] ibid, p 14.

be a formal member that is a citizen of a state which decides their fate in a particular nation-state.

The origin of the Baluch nationality is elusive and obscure. In fact, there is scarcity or even the absence of detailed historical literature and anthropological data about the origin and exact location of their initial homeland which has resulted into diverse and even contrasting opinions among the academicians and historians.[11] Modern historians have diverse opinions regarding the origin of the Baluch nationality. Majority of the western writers such as Rawlinson, Bellew Dames and Pottinger give the theory which argues that Baluchs belong to the different race who are not associated and belong to the Iranian region. On the basis of linguistic differences these scholars designate Brahui as a different race to the Baluch. Contrary to this racial theory of defining the origin of Baluch identity, Baluch historians like Dashti, Naseer, and others reject this racial theory and argue that the colonial history writings intentionally divided Baluch people on their linguistic bases in order to maintain colonial rule. Breseeg argued that whatever their origin may be, the Brahui regarded themselves as part and parcel of the Baluch identity, sharing a common culture, religion, historical experiences and unifying symbols. Even despite having scarcity of historical documents Baluch has been able to preserve their distinct identity.[12]

In fact, whatever resources are available and despite having so many variations of historians and academicians, Ahmed and Khan argued that Baluch as an ethnic and national community neither can be understood through primordial approach nor through the modernist approaches. It is ethno-symbolic approach which offers the best possible method to understand the Baluch as ethnic and national community.[13] Here the Rusi Jaspal's method identity process[14] becomes significant to understand the trajectory of formation of Baluch ethnicity. Through the process of assimilation and accommodation there have been absorption of different new identities into Baluch

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[11] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1): 40.

[12] Jetly, Rajshree, (2004), "Baluch Ethnicity and Nationalism (1971-81: An Assessment", *Asian Ethnicity,* 5 (1):

[13] ibid, 1.

[14] Jaspal, Rusi and Cinnirella, Macro (2011), "The Construction of Ethnic Identity: Insight from Identity Process Theory", *Ethnicity,* 12 (5): 521.

ethnicity. It is claimed that there are seventy-seven tribal groups among them linguistic differences are very much visible[15] still they claim to be Baluch.

Over a period of time there have been different groups merged with the Baluch ethnic identity. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century certain Kurdish tribes migrated to Baluchistan, and simultaneously almost at the end of sixteenth century Jagdal tribe took refuge in Bahu and Dashtiari that was western Baluchistan in the time of Malik rule in Makkoran.[16] Even in later periods the process of integration of various Baluch tribes continued till the nineteenth century. The integration and consolidation of Baluch national identity succeeded partly through the Nasser Khan's policies and partly through the British administrative classification.[17] On assimilation of non-Baluch tribes into Baluch ethnicity, a Pakistani nationalist writer Feroz Ahmed argued that even some of non-Baluch tribes were able to retain their language but were thoroughly assimilated, so it is very difficult to differentiate that these new tribes have any different identity.[18] Here Bresseg a Baluch historian claims that over the century's region came under the language and Baluch culture which have predominated the entire region, so that the majority of the population may be characterised as Baluch.[19] Most of the early immigrants have changed their tribal name such as Kurds to Mir-Balochzai and Saddazi (Jagdal) to Sardarzai.[20] Different tribal and linguistic differences among the Baluch and intermingling and assimilation of different groups into Baluch identity proved that present Baluch identity is not natural and given which primordialist approach advocates, but evolutionary in nature.

Baluch ethnic identity is shaped and reshaped by the political and economic condition of the region. Eriksen argued about ethnicity that it is subject to change, and it changes according to social environment. Here, ethno-symbolic and Identity Process Theory are well suited to understand the dynamics and nature of the Baluch ethnicity. Today's Baluch identity has taken place through the process of evolution,

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[15] ibid, 521

[16] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 105.

[17] ibid, 105.

[18] Ahmed, Feroz (1975), *Focus on Baluchistan and Poshtoon Question,* Lahor: Peoples Publishing House, P 16.

[19] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 106.

[20] ibid, 106.

accommodation, and assimilation of various different identity groups over a period of time which has taken centuries.

Trajectory of Baluch History

Historical narratives and use of history has been central to the modern nation building.[21] About the importance of history, it is argued that history is the heart of recent Baluch nationalist scholarship.[22] Contemporary Baluch nationalists give importance and more emphasises on their history and cultural bonds than their common ethnic origin[23]. Over ethnicity, G.P. Tate argued that whatever ethnological term may have attach to the Baluch in reality at last it mixed blood of nomads.[24] On the same line Brian Spooner suggest that "Baluch may have been generic term referring to all nomadic groups beyond the reach of settled authority".[25]

Through the prism of language and religion, Baluch nationality and ethnicity is difficult to understand. A vast majority of Baluch follow *Sunni* sect of Islam in Pakistan; therefore, religion does not play any role in distinguishing the Baluch identity in Pakistan.[26] In case of Iran majority follows *Shi'ite* sect of Islam and Baluch are *Sunni* therefore their belief also plays an additional role to distinguish with majority of the Persians. However, there are many linguistic differences among Baluch and Brahvi but culturally both claims to have a same culture. Despite these differences Baluch nationalist scholars such as Tariq Rehman claims that "the Baluchi and Brahvi languages are symbol of the Baluch identity, which is necessary for Baluch nationalism".[27]

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[21] Rehman, Tariq (1996), "The Balochi/Brahvi Language Movements in Pakistan", *Journal of South Asian and Middle East Studies*, 14 (3): 88.

[22] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 87.

[23] Baloch Inayatullah, (1987), *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan, vol. 116,* London: Coronet Books, 34.

[24] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 87.

[25] Spooner, Brian (1988), "Baluchistan: Geography, History and Ethnography", (ed.) Yarshater, Ehsan, *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* (Vol. iii), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 598.

[26] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 87.

[27] Rehman, Tariq (1996), "The Balochi/Brahvi Language Movements in Pakistan", *Journal of South Asian and Middle East Studies*, 14 (3): 88.

The process of consolidation of Baluch identity and nationalism has been described by both Iranian and Pakistani nationalist scholars such as Ahmadi and Feroz as the imagination of a particular elite group among the Baluchs. Definitely any national demands that come into political discourse are the product of the elite of that nationality or group. About ethnicity, Paul Brass says that the elite of the group transmit ethnic consciousness and makes political demands.[28] With same argument Iranian nationalist scholar Hamid Ahmadi argued that "the Baluch nationalism is the invention of the Baluch elites".[29] Ahmadi systematically avoided the role of cultural and historical importance in the rise of Baluch nationalism. He simply argued that "when Baluch elite deprived from their privileges and power by Reza Shah after 1928, they organised Baluch people on ethnic line".[30] He rejects the ethnic bases of Baluch nation. He emphasized that the Baluch are a part of Iranian nation and claimed with quoting of Firdousi's *Shahnameh* that Baluch are of Iranian origin. For the presence of ethnic and nationalist feeling among the Baluch, He holds colonialism, *Sardars* of Baluchistan and Reza Shah's policies responsible.

Pakistani nationalist scholar Feroz Ahmed argued that Baluch does not qualify as ethnic and national identity. He criticised that "Brahvi" and Baluch tribes are included among the Baluch are not integrated into a larger social or economic structure, and lack a sense of unity beyond the tribal identity.[31] He rejects any common historical, cultural and ethnic bases which are important for the foundation of any nation or national community for Baluch nationalism.

During the range of Alexander, the old name of the region was Gedrosia, which after him ruled by Parthian, and Sassanid empires.[32] However, it is contested whether Baluch people are the original inhabitants or they came from outside. However, orientalist version of Baluch history advocate that Baluch came as immigrants in Baluchistan during 11th century or according to some other sources even much later in

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[28] Brass, R. Paul (1991), *Ethnicity and Nationality: Theory and Practice,* New Delhi: Sage Publication. P 23-26.

[29] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 27.

[30] ibid, 27.

[31] ibid, 26.

[32] Kokaislova, Pavla and Kokaisl, Petr (2012), "Ethnic Identity of the Baluch People", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 13 (3): 48.

14th century.[33] This oriental history has been rejected by the Baluchi scholars such as Prof. Munir Ahmad Gichki. He is with strong opinion that "the Baluch history in Baluchistan is as old as Persian and Afghan history in the region".[34] Another Iranian Baluch writer Iraj Afshar (Sistani) argued that Baluch are inhabiting their homeland that is Baluchistan since ancient time. He opined that Baluch like other Aryan race such as Persian, Tajiks and Kurds belong to the same race.[35] Despite these two variations on Baluch's origin, there are multiple different views among the scholars on the subject.

From ancient history of Persia, it is possible to come to the conclusion that Baluch are the descendants of ancient Persian and Median tribes. Historical evidences suggest that Baluch have been the ancient inhabitants of the 'Maka' satrapy of Achaemenid Empire. Herodotus mentions that the different tribes (Marri, Mengal, Bugti, Buzdar, Bizenjo, Brahvi, Mazari, Dehwar, Rind, Hasni, Zehri and others) of Baluch carry different skills to survive in the harsh climate and mountainous region, and have a history of aggressive behaviour towards foreign invasions.[36] The Iranian poet Firdowsi (940-1020) in his book '*Shahnameh*' has mentioned that the Baluch as a group of people always ready for war. Baluch poets of the late 19th century, such as Rahm Ali Mari have composed the poem in which he glorified the leaders of the uprising and composed songs of patriotism condemning the pro-British *Sardars*, and declaring them traitors. The Baluch people have historically been hostile to attempts at inclusion in any larger units; even at time of partition (India and Pakistan) they had a demand of referendum in which independence would also be an available option.[37]

Baluchi customs and traditions are subject to the tribal laws. These strong Baluch customary laws and cultural values are important to them, and they have been able to preserve their distinctive ancient cultural identity and way of life with little change in the present era. Pirmohamad M. Zehi has mentioned about the Baluchi culture in the account of his travel to the province of Sakestan (present day Sistan and Baluchistan

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[33] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 91.
[34] ibid, p 91-92.
[35] ibid, p 92.
[36] Rai, Alok (1979), Struggle in Baluchistan, *Economic Political Weekly,* 14 (33): 1419.
[37] ibid, 1419.

in Iran), which holds strong significance to the culture of Baluch people. They have preserved their traditional dress code and way of life.

However, before the 19th century Baluchi language was not in written form, the official written language was Persian but 'Baluchi' was still spoken at the Baluchi courts. It is after the creation of Pakistan, Baluch scholars adopted Urdu Arabic script. A literary culture has been developed by the Baluchi scholars. Mir Gul Khan Nasir published 'Gulbung' which is considered to be the first collection of Poetry in Baluchi language in 1951. Sayad Hashomi is called as 'the father of 'Baluchi' language, he wrote a comprehensive guidance on the usage of Urdu Arabic script and standardised it as Baluchi Orthography in Pakistan.

Folk Music has always played a significant role in Baluchi tradition, by singing lullabies to children and praising warriors also have a significant role in musical tradition. This folk music culture has been one of the instruments to transfer knowledge from one generation to other generation. However, Baluch did not have literary culture in their own language before the 19th century but their myths, memories, customs and traditions have been preserved and transferred from one generation to another by folk music culture.

It was after Arab invasions and spread of Islam in the territory, and surrounding the geographic term Makran appeared which was in ancient time known as Gedrosia.[38] During the 12th century Baluch territory came under the Khwarazm Empire, and in 13th and 14th century northern Baluchistan was part of the domain of Genghis Khan and later Tamerlane.[39] Scholars such as Dames and Pottinger claims that Baluchs started tribal unity during the 11th century when 44 tribes gathered under the chieftain of Mir Jalal Khan, who further united five major tribes: Rind, Lashri, Korai, Houth, and Jato.[40] However, there are rarely any documents which substantiate the confederacy of Mir Jalal Khan. It is the only traditional folklore of Baluch that considers him as a legend and founding father of Baluch nation.[41] Regarding the

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[38] Kokaislova, Pavla and Kokaisl, Petr (2012), "Ethnic Identity of the Baluch People", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 13 (3): 48.

[39] ibid, 49.

[40] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1): 45.

[41] ibid, 45.

Baluch rule in the region Baluch historian M. K. B. M. Baloch argued that in fifteenth century one of the Baluchi leader Mir Chakar managed to unite different tribes to set up an empire which comprises modern day Baluch territory.[42] Janmahamad (1989) argued that the Rind and other two powerful tribes managed to form a large Baluch confederacy stretching from Kirman to the west and Indus-river to the east.[43] However, it was a large confederacy but short lived. Internal tribal conflict resulted into wars, which made them unable to maintain the tribal harmony.

Inayatullah Baluch claimed that first Baluch confederacy was formed in 12th century and country was known as 'Baluchistan'.[44] It is believed that Baluch emerged as nation with the establishment of Qelat confederacy by Mir Ahmed Khan in 1660.[45] Another Baluch Historian Breseeg (2004), emphasise that Mughal emperors such as Babar and Akbar have mentioned the name 'Baluchistan' for this region in their commentaries.[46] In Baluchistan's history, the 17th century can be marked as a milestone when Brahui and Baluchi tribes founded the Khanate of Qelat, as a result of struggle against the Great Mughals. The rulers of Qelat fought with their neighbours, Kalhurs of Sindh and Gilzais of Afghanistan. The Khanates' borders were continuously changing. Initially the confederacy was confined to Sarawan and Jhalawan areas of Baluchistan.[47] It was under the rule of Mir Nasser Khan Noori 1 who consolidated and expanded the Qelat confederacy with regular army.[48] Khanate was often subject to either Iran or Afghans of Qandahar till the period of Nasir Khan. He was the ruler when Baluchistan realised a powerful state in Baluch history.

During 1839, an agreement was signed between British colonial empire and Khan of Qelat. According to the agreement Khan of Qelat guaranteed a safe transportation for British at the bordering area of Afghanistan, in return British Empire promised for the

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[42] Kokaislova, Pavla and Kokaisl, Petr (2012), "Ethnic Identity of the Baluch People", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 13 (3): 48.

[43] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1): 45.

[44] Khan, Basit, Abdul and Muhammad, Ayaz (2018), "Evolution of Baluch Nationalism (Origin to 1947): A Historical Discourse", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55 (1): 1-16.

[45] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1): 45.

[46] Khan, Basit, Abdul and Muhammad, Ayaz (2018), "Evolution of Baluch Nationalism (Origin to 1947): A Historical Discourse", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55 (1): 3.

[47] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1) 46.

[48] ibid, 46.

preservation of sovereignty and the borders of territory of Baluchistan. From here Baluchistan gradually began to lose its influence in the region which led to the degradation of Baluchistan. Due to wide spread influence of Britain in the region, Persia remembered its vital interests in Baluchistan. In order to protect their respective interests in the region, Persia began to intensify its interference in Baluchistan. Both Qajar and Pahlavi regimes of Iran actively tried to bring the Baluch tribes under the control of central authority of Iran.

At the end of 19th century an agreement was taken place between Iran, Afghanistan and Britain which resulted into the formal demarcation of the Baluch territory. A large part of Baluchistan was remained under the suzerainty of British umpire till 1947. In 1928, *Sardars* of Baluchistan were forced to submit to the Iranian government, resulted West Baluchistan (today Sistan and Baluchistan province of Iran) came under the suzerainty of Reza Shah Pahlavi's Iran.[49] Baluchs raised several rebellions but due to treachery of some leaders and disorganisation they were cruelly suppressed by the Iranian government. Sardar of Barakzai and Sardarzai tribes were the leading figures of the anti-Shah rebellion.[50]

An Overview of Baluchs in Iran

However, over the origin of the Baluch have multiple opinions, but majorly Baluchs considered to be indigenous of the region called Baluchistan, the area divided among Pakistan's province of Baluchistan, Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchistan as well as a small part of Afghanistan. Approximately Baluchs constitutes 10 million across the world; in Iran population of Baluchs is estimated around 1-2 per cent of the total population of Iran, that is somewhere around 1.5 million or 750,000 people.[51] In Iran, Baluchs are concentrated in the Makran highlands; an area that includes some of the most desolate regions in the world. Around 60 per cent Baluchs resides in the western province of Pakistan that is Baluchistan, 25 per cent inhabit the Sistan and Baluchistan province of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a significant number of Baluchs also live in Sindh and south provinces of the Pakistan as well as rest of the Baluchs

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[49] Rehman, Ur Zia (2014), "The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan", *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre,* 1.

[50] Boyajian, Vahe 1999/2000. On Baluchi Separatism, *Iran and the Caucasus,* 3 (4): 390.

[51] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 38.

are found in Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and in some parts of the Africa.[52] Moreover, around 800 Baluch live in India particularly in Uttar Pradesh.[53]

One of the driest places of Iran is Baluchistan, the region is covered with desert, arid mountains and soil which is hard to cultivate.[54] The Baluchs speak a language which is associate to Indo-Iranian language that is to some extent related to Persian and more closely related to Pashtu which is one of the major languages of Afghanistan and Pakistan.[55] Some other scholars on ethnicity such as Kokaislova, Pavla and Petr argued that the Baluchi language belongs to the North-western group of the Iranian languages and it is very much similar to the Kurdish language.[56]

However, majority of the Baluchs are rural, fortified settlement and living as semi-nomads.[57] Majority of the Baluch follow *Sunni* tradition of Islam in *Shi'a* majority Iran. This religious difference on the line of *Shi'a-Sunni* has been one of the major sources of tension especially in the areas which are ethnically mixed especially in the provincial capital of Zahedan. Moreover, these religious contradictions explicitly have exposed and came to forefront after the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war.[58] Baluchs in Iran have been a resistive force in Iranian Politics throughout the modern history.[59]

Baluch nationalists trace their nationalism from a two thousand years long history, but historians dated the Baluch nationalism to the anti-colonial movement, when the princely state of Qelat encompasses in modern day Pakistan. Russian Revolution, Indian independence struggle and other contemporary movements inspired Baluchs

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[52] The Baloch, [Online web] Accessed on 23 Nov. 2018URL :
https://www.scribd.com/document/62294879/baloch 1.

[53] Kokaislova, Pavla, and Kokaisl, Petr (2012), "Ethnic Identity of the Baloch People", *Central Asia and Caucasus*, 13 (3): 46.

[54] ibid, 39.

[55] Rashidvash¸ Vahid (2013) "Iranian People: Iranian Ethnic Groups", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 3 (15): 222.

[56] Kokaislova, Pavla, and Kokaisl, Petr (2012), "Ethnic Identity of the Baloch People", *Central Asia and Caucasus*, 13 (3): 46.

[57] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 39.

[58] Rashidvash¸ Vahid (2013) "Iranian People: Iranian Ethnic Groups", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 3 (15): 222.

[59] Wimbush, Enders (1980), "Iran's Ethnic Factions Threaten to Split the State", *The Rand Corporation*, Santa Monica, California, 2.

for the independent Baluchistan.[60] When India and Pakistan got their independent status, Baluchistan also declared its independence. With the creation of Pakistan, Qelat was forcibly annexed by the Pakistan. Since the annexation of the Khanate of Qelat, Baluch nationalist have encountered with series of armed conflict with Pakistan, among these conflicts the 1948, 1958, and 1962 are most significant in the modern history.

Number of nationalist and militant organisations of Baluch from Pakistan to Iran such as BLF (Baluch Liberation Front), BLA (Baluch Liberation Army), BPLF (Baluch People's Liberation Front), *Jandullah, Jaish-ul-Adl*, *Harkat Ansar* and many others are continuously fighting for 'Greater Baluchistan' expanding in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.[61] However, the militant groups based in Iran as *Jandullah'*s aim is not entirely clear, but in an interview in October *Jandullah* leader Rigi said that his organisation does not have aspiration of secession or total independence from the Iran but simply wants the state to preserve the culture and faith of the Baluchs and respect the human rights. Moreover, Mullah Omar *Jaish-ul-adl* leader said that he is primarily concerned with security of religious and national rights of Baluchs in Iran.[62]

From Shah to Islamic Republic, Baluchs have been harshly victimised because of the combination of religious differences or being Sunni in *Shi'a* majority Iran.[63] Analysts on Baluch issues such as Zia Ur Rehman believes that the religious and cultural repression along with lack of development in the region have stimulated popular support for insurgencies in Iran. In response to these insurgencies led by Baluch Iranian armed forces often carried out extra judicial killings of Baluchs.[64]

Iranian Baluchs claim a particular territorial identity based on a distinct culture and ethnicity.[65] In case of Baluchs of in Iran religion has pivotal role to determine the ethnicity, *Sunnis* in general and Baluch-*Sunni* in particular are marginalized in the

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[60] Grare Frederic (2013) *Baluchistan State versus the Nation,* Washington DC: The Carnegie Papers, 7.
[61] ibid, 7.
[62] Ashaq, Hussain (2013), "Religion in Iran", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2 (3): 1-8.
[63] Rehman, Ur Zia (2014), "The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan", *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre,* 2.
[64] ibid, 2
[65] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 39.

power structure of Iranian society.[66] Majority of the Baluchs remained aloof from the Iranian revolution of 1979 because primarily it was dominated by *Shi'a* radicalism.[67] Moreover, during the revolution Baluch militants took control over Baluchistan in 1979. At that movement most of the Baluch organisations such as MUP sought for autonomy but did not seek for complete separation from Iran as the Baluchistan Liberation Front.[68] Although Khomeini allegedly promised MUP leaders for equal treatment of *Sunnis* and *Shi'ites* and there would be no discrimination on the ground of *Sunni-Shi'a* division, in return for his endorsement of Islamic Republic.[69] Despite that, some Baluch groups boycotted the referendum of March 1979. Abdolaziz, representative from MUP in Expert Assembly, protested that the prescribed constitution did not have any provisions about local autonomy, as well as *Sunni* or ethnic minority rights. Moreover, his most important concern was any particular school of Islam must not be enshrined as national religion.[70] Boycott of the second referendum in 1979 intensified the conflict between Baluchs and the revolutionary guards. As soon as *Shi'ite* Islamists forces consolidated their power, Baluchs of Iran who were particularly politically active began to fled to Pakistan, the Gulf States and Europe, and some were imprisoned as separatists. Dissent was crushed through intimidation and heavy military presence.[71]

Rise of Baluch Nationalism

The trajectory of Baluch history shows that it is very difficult to analyse which method and theory of nationalism is appropriate to understand the Baluch as a nation. What the dominant modern discourse suggests about the origin of the nation. Baluch nation is not well suited with modernist approach to study. Modernist theorists such as Gellner, Kedourie, Anderson and Hobsbawm have opinions that nationalism laid the foundation and formation of the nation, not vice versa. They believe that through the modern capitalist, industrial, technological and development of print media are prerequisite conditions for the emergence of the nation and nationalism. These developments came much later, even after the nineteenth century in Baluchistan.

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[66] ibid, 42.
[67] ibid, 49.
[68] ibid, 49.
[69] ibid, 49
[70] ibid, 49.
[71] ibid, 49.

Ahmed and Khan argued that Baluch as nation existed prior to the industrial revolution, printing press and capitalist mode of production.[72] This approach of Baluch nationalism endorses the primordial method of study to nation and nationalism. The primordial approach says that a nation is natural and is given since ancient time. According to this approach national identity is permanent and unalterable. Through primordial approach Baluch nation and nationalism is misleading to understand. Although there are certain claims that Baluch are original inhabitants of that particular territory, but historical evidence hardly substantiates this claim. Some other arguments suggest that over a period of time people from different regions have settled in Baluchistan with different linguistic, and racial differences.

Ethno-symbolic approach is significant to study the Baluch nationality. It is claimed that this approach is the most suitable approach to understand the Baluch question. As Anthony D. Smith believed that the "modern nations as extended forms of older communities called ethnic (ethnic groups) and modern nationalism as being built on these pre-existing ethnic and cultural groups".[73] However, Baluch history is not available in written form, but folk, myths, oral narratives, and symbols have preserved their distinct identity. Through these ethnic basis Baluch have claimed their distinct nationality; history, culture, identity and resources have shaped Baluch nationalism. Ahmed and Khan argue that "Baluch nationalism itself as old phenomenon that goes back prior to the formation of Pakistani federation".[74] In fact, theoretically it is visible that through modernist and primordial approach Baluch nationalism is difficult to analyse but symbols, myths, folk, and oral tradition of history are the important factor to shape and reshape the Baluch nation and nationalism.

Dynamics of Nationalism in Baluchistan

Eastern Baluchistan was the centre for Rind-Lashri tribal confederacy during the end of fifteenth century. For seventeenth century, or before British arrival, Khanate of Qelat ruled over the whole Baluch country including present Baluch territory in

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[72] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1).
[73] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1): 48.
[74] ibid, 48.

Iran.[75] During the colonial time especially Baluchistan and Afghanistan became the buffer zone of two strong powers; Britain and Russia. This weakened the power of local Baluch Khans as ruler of Qelat.[76] Colonial rule replaced the Khan with agent as a head of the confederation and divided Baluchistan into many administrative units with administrative and financial authority resting with British.[77] It is argued that in today's Baluch factionalism, tribalism, animosity between tribes which leads to tribal conflicts, traditional economic means and feudalism, has root cause in colonial history.

Historians suggest that the Baluch nationalism emerged with arrival of British in Baluchistan in 1839[78], and evolved over a period of time. Before annexation of Baluchistan, it remained a semi-autonomous state by a treaty in 1876 between the British government and Khan of Qelat.[79] Before the partition of India Baluchistan comprised with Qelat, Lasbela, Kharan and Makran, princely state under the British Raj.[80] In the twentieth century the domination of alien forces such as the British and Persians motivated the rise and development of Baluch   nationalism in the early twentieth century.

Baluch nationalists were inspired by the political upheavals in Turkey, Russia and the freedom movement of India. Some of the Baluch leaders started a movement for Independent Baluchistan. New educated Baluch intelligentsia from British Indian universities got inspiration from the Indian independence movement and imagined Baluchistan as an independent nation state. Yusuf Ali Magasi, and Abdul Aziz Kurd were the early leaders of the Baluch national movement. A secrete political organisation 'young Baluch' was formed by the Magasi and Kurd which remained underground till 1929.[81] After few years the organisation was renamed as "*Anjuman-e-Balochan*". During the 1937, a formal political party "Qelat State National Party"

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[75] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, viii.

[76] Ahmed, Manzoor and Khan, Gulawar (2017), "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* 31 (1): 47.

[77] ibid, 47.

[78] ibid, 48.

[79] ibid, 48.

[80] Veena, Yogeena, How Baluchistan became a part of Pakistan-A Historical Perspective, Islamabad: News Nation.

[81] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 191.

replaced the *Anjuman.* Over the limitation of the party Breseeg (2001) argued that "the party persuaded the Khan to abolish a number of taxes levied on tribes by pro-British *Sardars,* but within the state, party could not ignore the strength of *Sardari* system or the designs of British Government. Both of these (British and *Sardars*) were obstruction to national liberation that is to the establishment of an independent Baluchistan".[82] During this time in Baluchistan a nationalist intelligentsia was active who were trying to spread the national movement across the Baluchistan.

Following the independence of British India and formation of Pakistan in 1947, British accepted and recognised the sovereign and independent status of Baluchistan through "Standstill Agreement".[83] Standstill resulted in signing 3point. M. A. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali singed agreement from the Pakistan side and Prime Minister Sultan Ahmed from the side of Qelat in the presence of Lord Mountbatten on 4th august 1947 in Delhi.[84] These three points are following;

> "First; Government of Pakistan recognises the independent and sovereign status of the State of Kalat, which has treaty relations with the British Government and whose status and position is different from the other princely states of India. Second; Legal opinions will be obtained to decide whether Pakistan can be the successor to those treaties and to the ones on leased areas. Third; After obtaining the legal opinion, there will be further talks between the representatives of Pakistan and Qalat. In the interim period, there shall be a standstill agreement between Pakistan and Qalat in relation to the areas under lease to the British Government".[85]

Qelat was declared independent on 5 August 1947, and formally "Standstill Agreement" was announced on 11 August 1887 which accepted the sovereign status of Baluchistan.[86] After the formal announcement Khan of Qelat proclaimed independence on 15 August 1947.[87] Struggling since the 1920s, it was a historical movement for the Baluch nationalists. 'Baluchi' was made as the state language. On

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[82] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 191

[83] ibid, 191

[84] The Democracy Forum, (22 Feb. 2017), Press Release with title "Was Baluchistan's Accession to Pakistan Lawful" [Online Web] Accessed on 2 August 2018 URL: https://www.thedemocracyforumltd.com/press-release/was-balochistans-accession-to-pakistan-lawful/.

[85] ibid.

[86] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 182.

[87] ibid, 182

December 12, state of Qelat decreed that Baluchi language should be taught in Schools.[88] As a head of the state Khan of Qelat made his visit to Pakistan to address the Baluch people living in Karachi on October 1947. Contrary to the diplomatic tradition he was not received by the Pakistani Governor General or by the Prime Minister.[89] Baluch writer Inayatullah Baloch wrote that "it was a clear signal of a shift in Pakistan's policy towards Khanate".[90] Khan was advised for the merger of Baluchistan into Pakistan by M. A Jinnah.

Baluchistan's *Dar-ul-Awam* (Lower House) and *Dar-ul-Umara* (Upper House) refused the proposal. In September 1947, the leased area which was directly controlled by the British was discussed according to the "Standstill agreement" but it failed to come on those principles. After that Pakistan started a military campaign against the Khanate to compel Khan to join Pakistan. The weak Baluch military forces, unprepared to face Pakistan, Khan asked help from Britain, and new independent India also, but he failed to get support and could not maintain the sovereignty of Baluchistan. Taj Mohammed a Baluch Historian wrote that "the independence moves, however, came to an end when the Khan of Qelat, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, hearing of the movements of troops in Pasni and Jiwani and fearful of further consequences, acceded to Pakistan on March 27, 1947".[91]

It is interesting to note that initially in the imagination of Jinnah 'Pakistan' was not clear, he himself advocated to the British for independence of Baluchistan. In 1936, Khan of Qelat Mir Ahmad Yar Khan retained a barrister, M.A. Jinnah to defend the Qelat's claim to independence in post-colonial India.[92] Breseege wrote that "Defending the case of Qelat State, the future of Pakistan, Jinnah wrote to the Cabinet mission in 1946: "Several representatives of the British have described Qelat as a sovereign and independent state".[93] During the process of the decolonisation of the region, Baluch nationalism went through several ups and downs and a strong sense of nationalism spread among the Baluch.

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[88] ibid, 183.
[89] ibid, 184.
[90] ibid, 184.
[91] ibid, 185.
[92] ibid, 135.
[93] ibid, 135.

Costal part of Baluchistan province which covered around 180,000 square kilometre area is extremely rich with oil, gas and mineral resources, along with considerable strategic importance.[94] It provides strategic location to Pakistan while sharing its border with Afghanistan and Iran. Among the three naval bases of Pakistan, two are based in Ormara and Gwadar located in Baluchistan coastal sea. Gwadar is expected to provide Pakistan a warehouses and industrial facilities to more than twenty countries.[95] Thus, Baluchistan is both economically and strategically important which Pakistan never undermines and compromises with Baluch nationalists. Among three countries which are sharing Baluch territory only Afghanistan has been advocating the cause of Baluchi self-determination. In fact, it has been an asylum and shelter for Baluch nationalists and their campaign for Baluchistan. Afghanistan militarily is not enough capable to challenge its neighbours; and in any case, its support to Baluchistan has been a strategy of its foreign policy towards Pakistan.[96]

Baluch Nationalism in Sistan and Baluchistan

For Baluch nationalism, social development, inter-ethnic exchange, submission to different historical situations, Persian domination in Iran and Punjabi in Pakistan have caused very different kind of situation. However, Baluch nationalist movement was prevalent in Reza Shah's time and is prevalent in Islamic republic of Iran, but the centre for the Baluch nationalist movement and Baluch nationalist activities has been the Eastern Baluchistan which is known as Pakistani Baluchistan.[97] Cross border nationalism has historical, cultural, lingual, territorial relation with binding nationalism of "greater Baluchistan" comprising the old territory of Baluchistan, extend from Pakistani part of Baluchistan to Iranian and Afghanistani Baluchistan.

The Idea of Baluch nation and their self-determination have been denied by both Iran and Pakistan. Both the states claim that the 'Baluch' does not qualify as a nation, they are tribal society with traditional tribal features therefore they lack legitimacy for the

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[94] Grare Frederic (2013), *Baluchistan State versus the Nation,* Washington DC: The Carnegie Papers, 46.

[95] ibid, 46.

[96] Entessar, Nader (1979), "Baluchi Nationalism", *Asian Affairs,* 7 (2): 101.

[97] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, v.

right to self-determination and self-rule.[98] On the other hand, the Baluch nationalists and Baluch writers such as Inayatullah Baloch claimed that Baluch constitutes a national community in its real sense; they have been claiming a well-defined territory for centuries. Breseeg argued that "apart from common ethnic bond and common Historical experiences, the Baloch posse a common cultural heritage includes language, religion, and all other manifestations like food, dress and perhaps their entire way of life".[99] From the seventeenth century it is claimed that until 1928 and 1948 respectively Baluch have preserved the independent status of Baluchistan. During these centuries state of Baluchistan has maintained their diplomatic relations with Mughals of Indian Empire, Ottoman Empire, Persian, Oman and Afghanistan and British India.[100] Here a brief colonial history of present Iranian Baluchistan is important to revisit.

Historically Western Baluchistan has been the important site of Baluch historical and cultural development. Baluch historians and writer claims that it was from here that their ancestors move towards eastern part and consolidated their power in eastern Baluchistan in 13th century.[101] According to Sellig "Western Baluchistan was not only the cradle of culture and history but also a cradle of Baluch nationalism.[102] In the region, first Baluch confederacy was formed by the Mir Jalal Khan in 12th century.[103] When British invaded Afghanistan they captured the Baluchistan also in 1839, and they stalled a friendly Khan[104] who can protect the British interests in the region.

In 1839 Baluchistan came in British control and in 1977 they established 'Baluchistan Agency' to deal with Baluch princely state as part of its Indian empire.[105] Aijaz Ahmad (1973), Argued that "By 1854, Khan of Qelat sold his loyalty to the British in

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[98] Harrison, S. Selig (1996), "Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan", (ed.) in Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity,* New York: Oxford University Press, 298.

[99] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2-3.

[100] ibid, p 2-3. and see also Baloch, Inayatullah (1987), *The Problem of "Greater Baluchistan": A Study of Baluch Nationalism,* UK: Coronet Books.

[101] ibid, 130

[102] Harrison, S. Selig (1980), *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptation,* Washington: Carnegie, Endowment for International Peace, 3.

[103] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 131.

[104] Pillalmari, Akhilesh (2016), "A Brief History of Baluchistan: How did the Baluch Nation Came to be", [Online Web] Accessed on 23 Jan 2019 URL: https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/a-brief-history-of-balochistan/.

[105] ibid

lieu of an annual salary of Rs. 50000".[106] In 1876, most of the Khans and *Sardars* accepted the British as the final arbiter for the internal disputes and all parties signed a treaty for the effect of the same. To govern these areas, British introduced the 'Sandman system' in which Baluch rulers had complete autonomy over their subjects but they themselves working under the supervision of British.[107] Therefore, Sir Robert G. Sandeman known as founder of British Baluchistan.[108]

Region has been badly affected by the great game of Britain and Russia. As it has been discussed that the British Empire in India needed to be secured through these routes which was strategically important for Britain to overcome the threat from Russia. Iran lost two important battles from Russia, resulting in the loss of their northern territory, that is present Caucasus region. Till the 1860, Khan of Qelat had been claiming sovereignty over the entire Baluchistan[109] latter which is known as "Greater Baluchistan" which comprises Baluch areas in Iran and Afghanistan also. The Baluch nationalist writers argued that "in order to compensate for the lost areas, Persia persuaded a policy of expansion towards Baluchistan".[110] When British expanded to eastern Baluchistan, during the same time Persia captured western Baluchistan. In 1869, Ebrahim Khan captured Chabahar, and in 1871 Persia claimed authority over Gwadar. In 1872, Ebrahim Khan annexed Chabahar permanently which was under the protection of Hosyn Khan of Geh.[111] In the same year, Ebrahim Khan also defeated Syed Khan Kurd, Sardar of Sarhadd. From then Ebrahim controlled most of the settlement in Makaran, Sarhadd up to the present border, but effectively he was not able to control all tribes.[112]

Britain recognised the Persian claim over the western Baluchistan. On November 1971, regarding Persian expansion over the western Baluchistan, British major General F J Goldsmid who was serving in the region wrote in his final report of the proceeding to the secretary of the state for India that "these tracts, had the power to be

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[106] Ahmad, Aijaz (1973), "The National Question in Baluchistan", *Pakistan Forum,* 3 (8/9): 10.

[107] ibid, 10

[108] Khan, Basit, Abdul and Muhammad, Ayaz (2018), "Evolution of Baluch Nationalism (Origin to 1947): A Historical Discourse", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55 (1): 9.

[109] Baloch, Inayatullah (1987), *The Problem of "Greater Baluchistan": A Study of Baluch Nationalism,* UK: Coronet Books, 167.

[110] ibid, 28-29.

[111] Spooner B. (1988), "Baluchistan: Geography, History and Ethnography", *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* 3 (6): 598-632.

[112] ibid, 38.

independent, would be independent: not having power to be independent, they are as fair prey to the strongest neighbour".[113] In the colonial documents 'Persian Baluchistan' was replaced with western Baluchistan.

The boundary division of present Baluchistan into several parts began in 1871. The Goldsmid line was drawn in 1871, and demarcated in 1896 which gave legitimacy to Iran over western Baluchistan. On 12 November 1893, Durand line was declared through a treaty between British India and Afghanistan, which was signed by Sir Mortimer Durand on the behalf of British India and from the side of Afghanistan by the Amir Abdul Rahman.[114] Before that in 1894 Durand line was demarcated by the British which divided Baluchistan between British Baluchistan and Afghanistani Baluchistan.[115] Further Baluch Afghan Boundary constituted in 1895. Colonel McMahon concluded with demarcation of Duran line from Gomal to *Koh-i-Mulk Siah*.[116]

Baluch Resistance after Boundary Demarcation in Western Baluchistan

The division of Baluchistan lead to the frequent revolts against both British and Qajar rule. In 1896-7 Baluch rebellions ousted the Qajar army as well as they killed British representative in the region.[117] In 1896, Iranian Qajar King Nasir-al-Din Shan was assassinated, this prompted Baluch chiefs to take this opportunity to re-establish their rule in western Baluchistan. Initiating with demands of autonomy and reduction of taxes, Baluch rose against the Iran particularly in Sarhadd, Saravan and Bampur under the leadership of Narui tribe's leader Sardar Hossein Khan.[118] Hossein Khan attacked Pahra (Iranshahr). Following this incident, revolts spread in Lashar, Bamposht, Dezzak and Sarbaz. Breseeg claimed that in these revolts several Baluch groups who had been neutral and *Gajars* (Baluch who called themselves Persians) in earlier times,

[113] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 132.

[114] Syed, Haider, Javed (2007), "The British Advent in Baluchistan", *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture,* 28 (3): 53.

[115] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 47.

[116] Syed, Haider, Javed (2007), "The British Advent in Baluchistan", *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture,* 28 (3): 53.

[117] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran Nationalism and Ethnicity in Iran After Khomeini*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 40.

[118] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 135.

they also joined the revolts. A large Persian military was sent to crush rebellions, but Persian army was defeated.[119] This uprising lasted till two years but finally Hossein Khan was defeated by the Persian Army. According to spooner and Pikulin (qtd Bresseg, 2001), "the revolt continued and spread and was only crushed when Hossein Khan was bought off by being made ruler of Boluk with the right to collect taxes".[120] A Baluch leader from principal family had right to collect taxes over all the western Baluchistan.[121] In return of this right and legitimacy Baluch leader acknowledged all Persia's claim over the western Baluchistan.[122] Contemporary Baluch nationalists see him asa traitor. Even after his defeat and treachery, revolt was continuing.[123] Throughout Qajar rule till 1921, Baluch kept their struggle alive. Even after bloodshed and suppression from the Persian side, Baluch kept their political influence on Baluchs and their semi-independent status. About their independent status, Baluch Historian Hosseinbor (Qtd in Breseeg, 2001) wrote that "the Qajar rule in the country was more nominal than real and was directly limited to Bampur, then the capital of Baluchistan. The rest of the country remained independent or semi-independent, to be disturbed only by periodical military expeditions sent for levy taxes".[124] About this situation Pikulin wrote that until the 1928 the Persian authority over the region once again only nominal.[125]

In 1898, after the death of Hossein Khan, his son Sayad Khan succeeded to retain that legitimacy and control over the forts of Geh, Bent, Kaserkand and ports with the same rights as his father was enjoying. Meanwhile he expanded his territory to Sarbaz, and

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[119] Spooner B. (1988), "Baluchistan: Geography, History and Ethnography", *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* 3 (6): 38 [Online Web] Accessed on 29 Jan. 2019 URL:
https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1140&context=anthro_papers.

[120] Spooner B. (1988), "Baluchistan: Geography, History and Ethnography", *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* 3 (6): 38 [Online Web] Accessed on 29 Jan. 2019 URL:
https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1140&context=anthro_papers. Also see Pikulin and Bresseg (2001)

[121] ibid, 40

[122] ibid, 40

[123] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 135.

[124] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 136.

[125] Spooner B. (1988), "Baluchistan: Geography, History and Ethnography", *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* 3 (6): 38 [Online Web] Accessed on 29 Jan. 2019 URL:
https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1140&context=anthro_papers, 40.

he joined with Mir Bamram Khan Baranzai, the ruler of Dezzak.[126] When constitutional movement of Iran was started in 1905-06, Baluch's raiding activities started rapidly. However, in around 1910, Sayad Hossein was made governor of the western Baluchistan by Persia, but Bahram Khan continued his fight against Persian forces.

In between Jamal al-din Afghani's idea of Pan-Islamism influenced Baluch Sardars, Khans and Khalifa to fight against the British forces. Bahram, Khan, Barkat Khan of Jask, Khalifa Khair Mohammed proclaimed Jihad against British during the World War I in 1915. In Western Baluchistan on October, 26 Baluch on the call of Kalifa cut down the Sadiech telegraph line which was the most important communication line between the Makaran and Karachi.[127] He was checked by the pro-British Khan's and *sardars* among the Baluch such as Sayad Khan and others. Subsequently, with defeat of Bahram Khan, Jihad movement was eased and gradually Khalifa came under pressure.[128] Situation of War forced the British also to compromise with Bahram Khan. Colonel Dew came with a treaty proposal to settle the dispute and it was accepted by the Mir Bahram Khan. The treaty was signed in 1916, which gave legitimacy of Bahram's authority over western Baluchistan, and in return he suspended British hostility.[129] In between, other Baluch chiefs were fighting with British forces in other parts of the region.

Mir Bahram Khan was died in 1920, he was succeeded by his nephew Mir Dost Mohammed Khan, who declared himself as "Shah-e-Baluchistan". He consolidated his power and expanded his territory; he denied the boundary created by the Anglo-Persian Commission of 1905[130] and resisted Persian hegemony in Western Baluchistan. Janmohammed (Qtd. in Bresseg, 2001), argued that "he declared independence and established close relations with other Baloch rulers in eastern

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[126] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 136.

[127] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 138.

[128] ibid, 139.

[129] ibid, 139.

[130] Spooner B. (1988), "Baluchistan: Geography, History and Ethnography", *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* 3 (6): 38 [Online Web] Accessed on 29 Jan. 2019 URL: https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1140&context=anthro_papers 48.

Balochistan, particularly Kalat".[131] He also tried to establish links with Sultan of Muscat, king Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union".[132]

Struggle after 1928.

Oppression from Persia forces led to the Baluch migration to the east. Destruction, suffering of war and migration as well as new *Sardari* system (Sandeman system) stimulated the Baluch nationalism.[133] As British forces faced the World War I, a famous and influential Baluch figure Mir Dost Muhammed Khan centralised Baluch power and fought with British.[134] But subsequently emergence of Reza Shah Pahlavi and his nationalist campaign brought down the Dost Mohammed Khan. In 1928, entire Baluchistan brought under the control of Persia. Till 1935 there were numerous revolts against the Iran, but western Baluchistan irreversibly annexed into Iran. During this time a strong anti-Anglo-Persian sentiment was highest in its form among the Baluchs.

The first strong nationalist campaign began against the state military recruitment in 1929, which was labelled as armed munity.[135] In fact, in 1930, some underground Baluch nationalist leaders launched 'Quit Baluchistan' movement.[136] Already the execution of Mir Muhammad Dost Khan led a general resentment among the Baluchs against the British in Eastern Baluchistan and against Persia in western Baluchistan.

It was during the World War II when Anglo-Russian forces invaded Iran, Baluchs had opportunity to lead their movement. Consequently, Baluch rebellions got control over the Western Baluchistan. After the end of war, Reza Shah's son Mohammed Reza Shah reinstate Iranian authority over the Western Baluchistan, and he began with more aggressive policies of integration. Reza Shah was fearful about the eastern Baluch nationalist movement which was influencing Iranian Baluchs. He persuaded with ruthless policies against any expression of Baluch identity. He tried to prevent

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[131] ibid, 48

[132] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 140.

[133] ibid, 155.

[134] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran Nationalism and Ethnicity in Iran After Khomeini*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 40.

[135] Khan, Basit, Abdul and Muhammad, Ayaz (2018), "Evolution of Baluch Nationalism (Origin to 1947): A Historical Discourse", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55 (1): 11.

[136] ibid, 11.

politicized Baluch intelligentsia. Therefore, sharply he limited the education in Baluch area, made Persian language compulsory in Baluch Schools, and prohibited Baluchi language. He prohibited any literary production even possession in native language, but underground publication could not curtail. Underground publication from Karachi and eastern Baluchistan were continue floating to Iranian Baluchistan.[137]

Under the regime of Second Pahlavi Shah there were several rebellions[138] fighting against Iranian authority. Among them revolts of Dad Shah Baloch were most significant for Baluch nationalists. He started his rebellious activities from 1944 when he attacked government outposts in which he killed some Iranian officials. In 1957, he attacked a Jeep in which two American military aid officials along with two Iranian officers were Killed. This incident brought Dad Shah to international attention. From there, Dad Shah's support base widened, and the character of movement drastically translated into nationalist movement. Baluch nationalists and anti-imperialist forces attracted toward Dad Shah. After this attack Iran and Pakistan lead a Joint military campaign against Dad Shah and his associates. Although Dad Shah was killed by the Iranian forces and labelled as a bandit, but today Baluch nationalists revere him as national hero.[139]

After the annexation of Baluchistan in 1928, Mir Yusuf Ali Khan Magasi from Jhal-Magasi region is considered to be a chief exponent of organising the modern Baluch nationalist movement. He formed *'Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochan wa Balochistan'.*[140] Moreover, Baluch nationalists through the *Anjuman* were proposing certain fundamental changes and reforms in the Khanate system with objectives to attain the ultimate unified and independent Baluchistan. Moreover, in between Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd published a proposed map for greater Baluchistan. This proposed map was comprising Western Baluchistan which is in Iran and Qelat, Baluch Principalities, and parts of British Baluchistan with some parts of Punjab and Sindh.[141] The *Sardari* system was criticised by the nationalist forces, and *Anjuman* demanded the abolition

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[137] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 212-13.

[138] ibid, 213.

[139] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran Nationalism and Ethnicity in Iran After Khomeini*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 41.

[140] Khan, Basit, Abdul and Muhammad, Ayaz (2018), "Evolution of Baluch Nationalism (Origin to 1947): A Historical Discourse", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55 (1): 11.

[141] ibid, 12.

of the *Sardari* system. Since *sardars* were the ally of the British they were intolerable to these nationalist forces. Inayatullah Baloch argued that the Mir Ahmed Yar Khan was sympathetic towards the policies of *Anjuman.*[142]

During this time, in order to penetrate the national sentiment among the different parts of the Baluch, these leaders began with literary methods. In 1929, Magasi wrote an article in Weekly Hamdard Lahore with title "*Faryad-e-Balochistan*" (cry of Baluchistan), in which he appealed all the Baluch to unite themselves for liberation and unity of Baluchistan.[143] It is said that this article of Magasi was first literary document in the history of Baluch nationalism. As Magasi belong to a wealthy family he financed and supported several Urdu language Baluch nationalist newspapers. On 20th November 1931, he published one pamphlet, "*Shamsgardi*" condemning the undemocratic method of the Shams king of Qelat. Moreover, in other pamphlet in 1933 "*Baluchistan ki Awaz*" (voice of Baluchistan), he informed to British parliament about the socio-economic condition of Baluchistan.[144] Magasi visited London regarding the reforms in administration of Baluchistan, but the British government denied to introduce the reforms. Consequently, under his leadership Baluch nationalists inclined to arm resistance against the British government. but his unexpected death due to earthquake in Quetta in 1935, proved a greatest loss for Baluch national Movement.[145]

Another important development in the Baluch nationalist movement emerged when 'Qelat National Party' which is commonly known as national party formed in 1939 at Sibi. Nationalist leaders Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd was elected as President, Malik Faiz Mohammed Yusufzai and Mir Gulkhan Nasir, vice president and secretary respectively.[146] Unlike *Anjuman, the party's* ultimate objective was liberation of Greater Baluchistan, end of *Sardari* system and reforms in British administration. Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd used to keep a map of greater Baluchistan in his office. Party's influence was increasing among the Baluchs. It was because of the opposition from

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[142] ibid, 12.

[143] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, p 160-61.

[144] ibid, 161.

[145] Khan, Basit, Abdul and Muhammad, Ayaz (2018), "Evolution of Baluch Nationalism (Origin to 1947): A Historical Discourse", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55 (1): 12.

[146] ibid, 13.

the National Party British failed to gain Jiwani port in 1939.[147] As traditionally the British had many friendly allies among the *Sardars*, interests of both were hampered by these nationalists. Therefore, *Sardars* led by Nawab Mohammed Khan Shahwani, demanded a ban on the Party and arrest of leaders. in July 1939, Prime minister of Qelat asked Mir Gul Khan Nasir and Abdul Karim Shourish to leave Qelat.[148]

After that Party continued its struggle from Quetta and underground in Qelat. Ban was withdrawn after the World War Second. However, in 1947, with the partition of British India, merger and later annexation of Baluchistan into Pakistan was opposed by Party. The Baluch remained with commitment of "Greater Baluchistan" even after the annexation.

From Mir Chakar Khan to Mir Ahmed Yar Khan there has been a long struggle for liberation and unity of Baluchistan. History of their struggle suggests that their distinctive culture, tradition, and history has been contributing to form a national community. Moreover, their opposition to foreigners and protection of their territory and culture has been significant marker of Baluch History for centuries.

As a result of Indian independence from Britain, two nations, India and Pakistan came into existence. The Muslim league movement that given the birth to Pakistan as separate state to India originated in the Muslim areas of pre-partition India. Pakistan was imagined not exactly in the areas where present day Pakistan is constituted, and where the Baluchs, Pashtuns, and Sindhis live.[149] In fact, neither the Pashtuns nor the Baluchs supported Muslim League movement for creation of Pakistan. The Muslim League placed Lahore Resolution on 23 March 1940 with intention to incorporate these ethnic groups and pledged that the projected state of Pakistani would be a confederation in which provincial units would be autonomous and sovereign. National government would be confined to defence, foreign affairs, foreign trade communications and currency of the proposed Pakistan state, but it was failed to attract them.[150] After the creation of Pakistan on 14 August 1947, one day after the

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[147] ibid, 12.

[148] ibid, 13.

[149] Harrison S. Selig (2009), *Pakistan the State of the Union,* USA: Centre for International Policy, 13.

[150] ibid, 13.

Khan of Qelat declared his state as independent. Pakistani rejected their independence, even did not abide by the Lahore declaration of independence, and within nine-month Qelat was forcibly annexed in Pakistan.[151]

Map 5 (a) Territory of Baluchistan

Source: Sonia, Gaffari[152]

Since the Baluch territory was divided between Pakistan and Iran, both the countries cooperated with each other to bring down the Baluch resentment in various degrees. During the Baluch insurgencies in the 1970s, Shah of Iran provided every possible means to crush Baluch insurgent groups. Because any undesirable Baluch nationalists' advancement would influence Baluch nationalism in Iran and hamper the Iranian integrity. Tehran sent a helicopter to Islamabad between 1973-1977 to put

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[151] Grare Frederic (2013), *Baluchistan State versus the Nation,* Washington DC: The Carnegie Papers, 24.

[152] Gaffari, Sonia (2009), "Baluchistan's Rising Militancy", *Middle East Report,* 250 (): 40-43.

down the Baluch insurgencies in Pakistan.[153] By both the regimes Baluch question has been made internal issues of stan and Iran, and try to cut off the Baluch from external patronage. Breseeg (2001), argued that "Tehran and Islamabad have reinforced the inter-Baluch division along the Iran-Pakistan border in an attempt at divide and rule, through various agreements and transit control since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran".[154]

Baluch Question during Iranian Revolution

During the revolution a large chunk of Baluchs from the urban elite expected that it would bring the end of the tyranny of the Pahlavi dynasty, and Baluchs would get larger democratic space and autonomy. Different forces or groups were engaged to bring the Shah down, among them *Shi'ite* forces under the leadership of Khomeini succeeded to capture the power. Following the revolution new constitution was drawn on the basis of Twelver *Shi'a* Jafari school of Islam. Baluchs follow *Sunni* belief and in a new constitution they even did not get the status of recognised religious minority. Religion in general and *Shi'a* Islam in particular became the new national identity. Baluch lumped together as Muslim and their ethnic identity did not get recognition in the new constitution. Baluch nationalist agitated against the new constitution, and at many places in Sistan and Baluchistan there were ethnic conflicts and outrage against the new Islamic Republic.

After the Revolution some Baluch nationalist organisations re-emerged in Iran, among them "*Sazeman Democratik Mardom Balochistan*" (Balochistan People's Organisation) one of the important organisations. Other groups formed by *Maulavis* and religious oriented intellectuals *Hizb-e Ittehad al-Muslimin* (Muslims' Unity Party).[155] These organisations were demanding a larger autonomy from the Islamic Republic. Alongside these organisations one more organisation named *Balochistan-e Raji Zrombesh* (Balochistan National Movement), a militant guerrilla organisation formed in mid-1970.[156]

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[153] Harrison, s. Selig (2009), *Pakistan the State of the Union,* USA: Centre for International Policy, 50-51.

[154] Breseeg, Mohammad, Taj (2001), Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, xvii.

[155] ibid, 291.

[156] ibid, 291.

However, there were several promises made to Baluchs during the revolution, but under the new regime Baluch did not get what they were expecting. New regime rejected the political, cultural, and religious rights of Baluch and other nationalities. Some Baluch organisations and tribes engaged with new insurgencies but badly organised, resulting in suppression of the political activists and organisations. These nationalists forced to leave the country during 1980.[157] Karachi became a centre for them, and from there these nationalists continued their secret activities of national struggle.

The history of Baluch national movement has been the history of national struggle and treachery. National struggle in the sense that Baluch has been fighting against the alien forces and foreign rule for centuries. Over a period of time, they have been able to construct a national community and have preserved their distinct identity as Baluch, who are different to the Persians in Iran and Sindhis and Punjabis in Pakistan. From the Nasser Khan to present day, Baluch have a history of violent conflicts with Persia, Afghans, other kingdoms, empires, British colonialism and Pakistan. Treachery in the sense that among the Baluch, Khans, *Sardars*, and leaders have been compromised with alien forces and have acted against the nationalist forces for their petty political and economic gains. As it has been mentioned, there are many Baluch poetries which praise their national heroes and condemn the traitors. Sayed Khan fought against the Bahram Khan and compromised with Persians. Magasi and the National Party's nationalist movement against the British was crushed with support of local Khans and *Sardars*.

The Nature and Limitation of the Baluch Nationalism across the Border

A relentless struggle began from here (with annexation of the Qelat in Pakistan) that is still continuing. Numerous political and militant groups were formed and still fighting for independence and autonomy, from Pakistan to Iran. When Qelat was forcibly annexed in Pakistan a series of conflicts with various intensities broke out between the Pakistani armed forces and Baluch nationalists, followed in 1948, 1958 and 1962.[158] They fought against Pakistan in 1958, in protest against Ayub Khan's

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[157] ibid, 292.

[158] Grare Frederic (2013), *Baluchistan State versus the Nation,* Washington DC: The Carnegie Papers, 7.

martial law. Many progressive sections supported the Baluch side, and almost all progressive Baluchis participated in the fight against the Ayub Khan's martial law.[159] Moreover, a continued struggle remained from 1963 to 1969, when Ayub Khan declared Pakistan as a "one unit" with an administrative fiat, that, in effect the Baluch national question had been swept under the constitutional carpet.[160] In between 1950s to the 1970s most of the Baluch Political elites accepted the political reality of Pakistan, but they were committed for the elected democratic governments at both provincial and national levels that would be instrumental to achieve autonomy for minority nationalities or region within the framework of secure constitutional arrangement.[161]

Grare (2013) argued that "the organisations composing the nationalist landscape and its different sensitivities that exist today, reflects the historical, political, and sociological evolution of Baluch nationalism as well as the movement's spectrum of motivations and strategies".[162] However, most of the active organisations and parties promote full independence but many of the Baluchis have diverged stance.[163] There are several organisations and parties are active from radical to moderate ideological stands such as BPLF, BLA, and BLF, Republican Party, Baluchistan Republican Party and others. The Baluch Liberation Army (BLA) is one of the militant organisations associated with Marri tribe. Balach Mari was leading the BLA, but he was killed in 2007. Since then, his brother is leading this militant organisation. BLA is committed or have aspiration to achieve independence of a "greater" Baluchistan which stretch from Pakistan, Iran to Afghani part of Baluchistan.

Baluch Republic Party is also one of the organisations aspiring for greater Baluchistan which is led by the Brahamdagh Bugti, who comes from Bugti tribe. Moreover, about the Baluch Republic Army it is presumed that this group is a militant wing of the Baluch Republican Party. Another organisation named Baluch National Movement also stands for the independence of a greater Baluchistan. This organisation rejects

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[159] Ahmad Aijaz 1973. The National Question in Baluchistan, *Pakistan Forum,* 3(8/9): 16.

[160] Rai, Alok (1979), Struggle in Baluchistan, *Economic Political Weekly,* 14 (33): 1419.

[161] Lifschultz Lawrence 1983.Independent Baluchistan? Ataullah Mengal's 'Declaration of Independence, *Economic and Political Weekly,* 18 (19/21): 735-752.

[162] Grare, Frederic (2013), *Baluchistan State versus the Nation,* Washington DC: The Carnegie Papers, 6.

[163] ibid, 6.

any institutional mechanism of Pakistan and refuses to participate in any kind of political process with establishment.

Ghulam Mohammed Baluch, one of the leading figures, was found dead in 2009, the Pakistani armed forces primarily considered to be responsible for his killing, which drew condemnation from the UN. He has played a significant role in uniting a number of Baluch nationalist groups under a single umbrella. Along with radical organisations and militant groups, there are many moderate organisations with different aims. The National Party, led by Abdul Malik Baloch with moderate and centre-left ideology, claims to represent the Baluch middle class in Pakistan. The party takes part in the electoral process, but it boycotted the 2008 elections. Furthermore, the Baluchistan National Party which has been controlling the provincial government since 2002 also boycotted the election polls in 2008. The Party is considered to be a moderate organisation; it envisioned only considerable autonomy for the province of Baluchistan within the Pakistani framework. Recently they put forth their demand for an increment in Baluchistan's share of revenue in provincial resources. Despite being a liberal organisation a large group of members of the BNP have been killed by Pakistani authorities, now the party radically put forth their demands of referendum on self-determination.

During 1960, Baluch Student Organisation was formed which over a period of time produced and trained many Baluch nationalist leaders. It is a composition of several factions that support the BLA, Baluch National Movement, the National Party and the Baluchistan National Party. Moreover, BSO did not interfere or prevent the independent functioning of different organisations. Present time, the BSOP-Azad faction, a hard-line movement aligned with the BLA, is a dominant wing of the BSO.[164]

By analysing the divergent stances of the different organisations and parties it can be argued that there is a lack of uniformity of goals and aims among Baluchs; some of them are aspiring for greater Baluchistan and reject the framework of Pakistan, but some are confined to the autonomy of the province. These differences on the issues of Baluchistan are the products of both internal social structure and external suppression.

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[164] Grare Frederic (2013), *Baluchistan State versus the Nation,* Washington DC: The Carnegie Papers, 6.

Baluch Insurgencies in Iran

The emergence of Baluch nationalism has been seen since the establishment of Pakistan as a state, but frequent rise of militant activities in Iran has been witnessed since the establishment of the Islamic republic of Iran. However, Iranian state claimed the rise of militancy is intimidated and supported by the external power, but the roots of new *Sunni* militancy among the Baluch of Iran is lies in the domestic socio-political structure.[165] The major source of conflict between the Iranian/*Shi'a* authorities and *Sunni* Baluch has been the religious factors. Sonia Gaffari has argued that "historically, unrest in Baluchistan has revolved around religion rather than ethnic factors such as language".[166] Since the establishment of the Islamic republic and the dominance of the *Shi'ism* in the system accelerated the communal tension of the *Shi'a* and *Sunni*. When *Shi'ism* became state ideology major governmental and high-ranking offices are allowed to only *Shi'as* of the country. Baluch were also one of them who violently opposed these provisions in the new constitution. As Baluch society is mostly dominated by the tribal laws and religious guidance of the *Sunni* clerics, their role in society becomes significant. One of another factors lies behind the strengthening the *Sunni* clerics political role in Baluchistan is the non-recognition of tribal leaders and their forced exiled by the Islamic Republic of Iran. This political vacuum was filled by these clerical leaders.

Baluch participated in large numbers in Khatami's presidential election, the turnout of voters was higher from the province of Sistan and Baluchistan than anywhere else. It was because of Khatami's campaign for equal citizenship rights irrespective of creed and ethnicity. Moreover, in 2005, moderate presidential candidate Mostafa Moin in his election campaign promised that he would address the ethno-linguistic grievances of the ethnic minorities, and would appoint *Sunni* cabinet members. His largest percentage of vote came from Baluch region.[167]

At the same time various anti-*Sunni* policies were introduced By Islamic Republic, which makes Baluch-*Sunnis* more suspicious towards the institutional mechanism of

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[165] Gaffari, Sonia (2009), "Baluchistan's Rising Militancy", *Middle East Report,* 250 (): 41.
[166] ibid, 41.
[167] Gaffari, Sonia (2009), "Baluchistan's Rising Militancy", *Middle East Report,* 250 (): 41.

Iran,these polices boosted the *Sunni* radicalism.[168] Soon after the establishment of the IRI, there has been constant attack on the *Sunni* religious institutions. In 1993, the government ordered the destruction of the Sheikh Feiz mosque at Mashhad. This mosque was a centre of networking medium of communication for *Sunni* clergies from Iran to Afghanistan.[169] It was the Ahmadinejad regime when most of *Sunni* faced severe persecution across the country. In 2007, Iranian authorities demolished the Abu Hanifa Mosque in Azimabad, which was the second largest *Sunni* seminary in the province. It becomes a serious matter across the *Sunni* society. Militants such as Abdolmalek Rigi blamed *Sunni* clerics because of their moderate stance on the Baluch question in Islamic Republic of Iran.

Sunni religious educational institutions have become the subject to closure by the state authorities. Due to religious repercussions many *Sunnis* Baluch find place at seminaries in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, from where they are exposed to political views which is difficult in Iran. It has been witnessed that following the revolution, the conflict has intensified over the religious aspect between the Persian dominant authorities and Baluch minorities. Rise in militant activities is caused by both ethnic as well as religious discrimination by the Iranian authorities.

Jandullah

Post-revolutionary Iran has witnessed three major militant groups active in Sistan and Baluchistan; *Jandullah, Jaish Ul-Adl* and *Harkat Ansar*, which carry out militant struggle against Iranian interests. The most prominent organisation operating in the region is Jandullah, also known as People's Resistance Movement (Jonbesh-e Moqavemat-e Mardom-e Iran) led and founded by the Abdolmalek Rigi, in 2002[170], belonging to a powerful Baluch tribe. He was educated from Pakistani madrasa where he was in touch with Afghani militants. During the US war on Afghanistan, Rigi got an opportunity to form a militant organisation for the rights of Baluch in Iran. From various studies it has been estimated that more than 2000 militants are active across the western Baluchistan. Since 2003, attacks on Iranian forces and government officials have increased, and it mounted in 2005.

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[168] ibid, 41.
[169] ibid, 41.
[170] Rehman, Zia Ur (2014), "The Baluchi Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan", *Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre,* 3.

However, the organisation was blamed by the Iranian authorities as "bandit of drugs smuggling", but their real intention became clear when they captured five Iranian security forces and in return, they demanded the release of Baluch prisoners condemned by the Iranian Revolutionary Court.[171] At the beginning, the first priority of the Jandullah was to negotiate the freedom of Baluch prisoners. To some extent situation was improved during the Khatami's presidency due to his moderate liberal views over the ethnic and minority rights.[172] In 2005, Jandollah's first militant attack inside Iran was over the visit of president Ahmadinejad, in which one security personnel was killed and many more were injured. Moreover, in 2006, in one more militant attack, near Tasooki, 22 people were murdered. Rigi and his organisation always tried to present themselves as the strongest voice of Baluch People in Iran. From his official blog he threatened that nobody from Baluchistan would cooperates with Islamic Republic.[173]

Socio-economic Profile of Baluchs in Iran

As Baluch of Iran located in the periphery with harsh climate and land are subject to the various socio-economic disabilities. Their different ethnicity and religious belief contributed to the discrimination and persecution by the central authorities. Minorities in general and Baluchs in particular remained subject to entrenched discrimination, they face problem of access to education, employment, adequate housing, political and government offices.[174] Majority of the population is involved in agriculture with the highest poverty and illiteracy rate in the country. Economically, Baluch regions has been systematically kept under-developed by both the regimes Pahlavi, and Islamic Republic. City of Zahedan has been the major centre for the Iranian authorities to control over the entire Baluch region. Iranian regimes have economically invested in Zahedan only.

As scholars who dealt with theory of core and periphery, suggest that regimes intentionally keep disturbed areas under-developed so that the forces against core

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[171] Gaffari, Sonia (2009), "Baluchistan's Rising Militancy", *Middle East Report,* 250 (): 41.

[172] Manghebati, Gelareh (2015), Almost Iranians: The Forgotten People of Iranian Baluchistan Exploring Armed Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism in Iranian Baluchistan after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Thesis: Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba, 35.

[173] Gaffari, Sonia (2009), "Baluchistan's Rising Militancy", *Middle East Report,* 250 (): 41.

[174] Amnesty International, (2018), Iran 2017-18 [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2019 URL: "https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/.

could not materialise their political objectives. Baluch ethnicists always blame that the Iranian government intentionally keeps their region under-developed because of the different ethnic and religious character. Glenn and Hooglund (2018) argues that "with the exception of Zahedan, neither the monarchy nor the Islamic Republic has invested significant funds in local development projects".[175] In highland areas, there is limited agriculture used to be practices where relatively sufficient ground water is available for irrigation. During the late 1990 there was prolonged drought which badly affected the entire province, therefore a large group of Baluch left their villages and resettled in Zahedan and other parts of Iran.[176]

Bad economic condition and impoverishment of the region promoted the illegal source of income in border areas of the Iranian Baluchistan. As a result of negligence of the region by central authorities, Glenn and Hooglund argued that "since 1980s a major source of income for residents has been smuggling goods, especially illegal narcotics into Iran from Afghanistan and Pakistan".[177] The cross-border relationship has led to trafficking in the areas therefore Baluch as community is stigmatized as social evils. Poverty and unemployment have contributed in the drug abuse and illegal business.[178] Throughout the Islamic regime the condition of Baluch has not changed, the poverty level has remained almost the same. During 1980, the poverty level in Persian central provinces was 20 per cent, in the Azeri provinces was 30 per cent while Areas populated by the Baluch was suffering with 70 per cent of the Poverty rate.[179]

Among all the ethnic minorities, Baluch are in a very vulnerable condition. Economically the region is facing the highest poverty. The poverty status of the different provinces has been shown in the following table. It is clearly visible that Baluch constitutes the highest number among the strata below poverty line, whereas the least poverty has been found in Tehran which is predominantly inhabited by the

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[175] Curtis, E. Glenn and Hooglund, Eric (2008), *Iran: A Country Study.* Washington: Chief Federal Research Division Library, 95.

[176] ibid, 96.

[177] ibid, 96.

[178] Centre for Civilian Rights, Minority Rights Group International, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2018 URL: https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf, 29.

[179] Aghajanian, Akbar (1983), "Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 15 (2): 218.

Persians. In Tehran the population under the poverty line is around 17 per cent and in Sistan-Baluchistan province it goes to more than 63 percent. This disparity is more than three times that of Persians. Apart from the Persians, the second best condition and least poverty has been found among the Azeris according to the data given below.

Table: 5 (a)   *Percentage of population under poverty line, selected provinces (2014)*

Province	Urban	Rural
Country-wide	33.4%	40.1%
Azerbaijan East	36.72%	25.06%
Azerbaijan West	38.65%	27.85%
Bushehr	45.62%	38.49%
Fars	32.55%	42.09%
Kermanshah	32.15%	35.36%
Khuzestan	32.22%	26.07%
Kurdistan	52.12%	48.97%
Lorestan	49.05%	56.08%
Sistan Baluchistan	63.95%	76.53%
Tehran	17.43%	26.31%

Source: Centre for Civilian Rights, Minority Rights Group International, Centre for   supporters of Human Rights[180], 2018.

The Areas inhabited by the Baluch and Kurds display a huge disparity between the Persian and other marginalised ethnic minority groups.

There are various reasons behind the poor condition of the Baluch, in Iran, as it has been mentioned, but various studies show that under the Islamic regime's systematic discrimination is happening against the ethnic minorities particularly Baluch, because

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[180] Centre for Civilian Rights, Minority Rights Group International, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2018 URL: https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf, 29.

of their different ethnicity and religious belief. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, Baluch has become double minorities with intense discrimination.

Despite having resources and areas close to the sea and ports in the southern part of the country, Baluch have to deal with poverty, unemployment, drought, migration and lack of support from the central authority of the country.[181] According to the national report of statistical centre of Iran, the province of Sistan and Baluchistan are among the five lowest ranked provinces in term of non-food per household expenditure.[182]

In 2015, Vice Chancellor of Zahedan University claimed that 'Sistan and Baluchistan are among the three provinces in Iran suffering with highest food insecurity'.[183] Health condition of the region is poor. According to the First Millennium Development Goals Report of 2004, almost 50 per cent underweight rural children live in Sistan and Baluchistan, Khorasan, Hormozgan, Fars and Kerman.[184] Around twenty percent children under the age of five years suffer with malnutrition, and severely underweight and 44 per cent pregnant women suffer with iron deficiency.[185]

According to Iran's statistical centre of 2017, among the all-provinces unemployment rate is highest in Sistan and Baluchistan province of Iran. Overall unemployment rate in the country is 10.4 per cent in urban areas and 21.8 in rural areas. While Sistan and Baluchistan has been recorded 13.6 urban and 14.8 per cent in rural areas.[186] The economic condition of the region is severely under poverty which has been manifested in several social and political problems. By 1994 only three medium sized factories were established in the Baluch region. Till now there is little increment in the factories or industries in Sistan and Baluchistan.[187]

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[181] Manghebati, Gelareh (2015), Almost Iranians: The Forgotten People of Iranian Baluchistan Exploring Armed Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism in Iranian Baluchistan after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Thesis: Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba, 28.
[182] ibid, 28.
[183] ibid, 28.
[184] Islamic Republic of Iran, The First Millennium Development Goals Report 2004: Achievements and Challenges, 13.
[185] Manghebati, Gelareh (2015), Almost Iranians: The Forgotten People of Iranian Baluchistan Exploring Armed Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism in Iranian Baluchistan after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Thesis: Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba, 28.
[186] Centre for Civilian Rights, Minority Rights Group International, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2018 URL: https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf, 29.
[187] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 72.

However, Iranian constitution and international norms guarantee the right of all Iranians to receive education, but there are various legal and practical constraints which make Baluch helpless to receive education. Being *Sunni* believer, Baluch face a systematic discrimination in the field of education. The region constitutes the population of least literate people. The highest literacy rate has been seen in the region which is dominated by Persians. Although, condition of other regions inh abited by Azeris, literacy rate is quite better than Baluch. In Tehran the literacy rate goes to 92.09 per cent, in the Azerbaijan region 84.07 per cent in the east and 82.0 per cent in West Azerbaijan. While in Sistan and Baluchistan it remained only 76.0 per cent.[188] The overall literacy rate of the country goes around 87.6 per cent.[189] The educational facilities in the province are neglected by the state. According to Nasrin Hazareh Moghadam (2014), Baluchistan, a largest province of Iran, Baluch students have the lowest per capita educational space in the country. His statistics take into account the mud bricks schools with 452, in need of immediate attention for renovation or repair. There is unfair distribution of the budget to the provinces inhabited by Baluch. Most of the educational subsidies provided by charities that build schools and provide supplies to students.[190] There is serious educational crisis in Baluchistan has been noticed by many organisations and institutions as well as activists and academicians.

The average rate of students who remain in Schools is the lowest in Sistan and Baluchistan. It is around only 60 per cent in these provinces, while national average is 90 per cent which is 30 per cent lower to those of national average.[191] This situation of educational crisis in the region has become a serious concern for many activists and officials who in turn have warned the Iranian state. For most of the Baluch students, higher education has remained an unattainable dream. some Baluch professors at the university of Sistan and Baluchistan have claimed that out of 20,000 students only 500 are Baluchs.[192]

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[188] Centre for Civilian Rights, Minority Rights Group International, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2018 URL: https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf, 31.
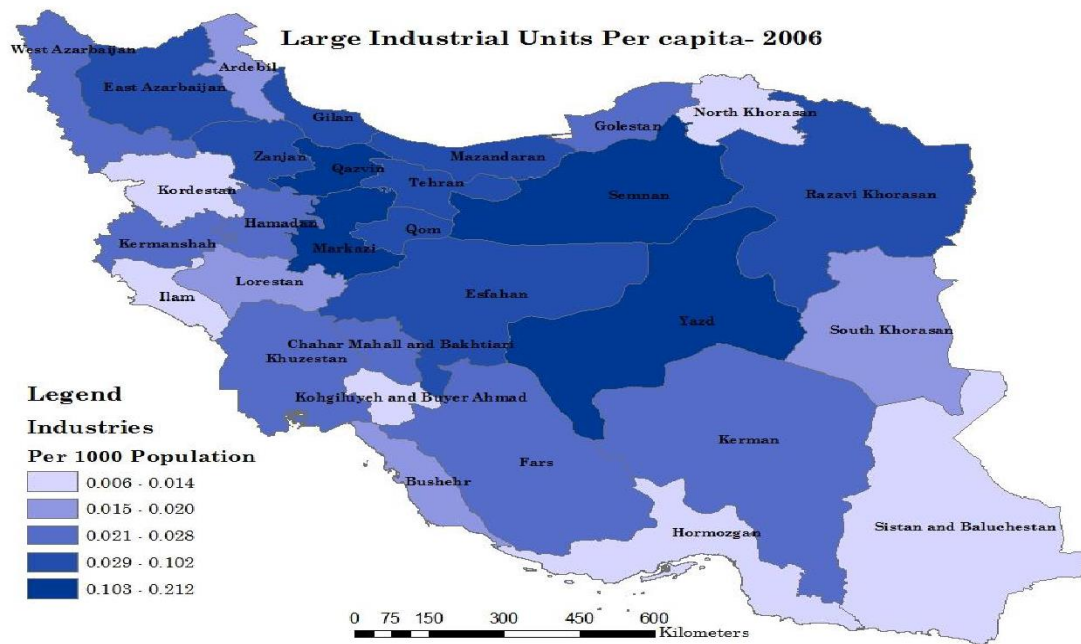
[189] ibdi, 31.

[190] Manghebati, Gelareh (2015), Almost Iranians: The Forgotten People of Iranian Baluchistan Exploring Armed Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism in Iranian Baluchistan after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Thesis: Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba, 28.

[191] ibid, 28-29.

[192] ibid, 29.

Map 5 (b) *Large Industrial Units Per-capita (2006)*

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran[193].

According to this data mentioned in the map, major large industrial units are located in the areas dominated by the Persians and secondly dominated by Azeris. Major areas which are least industrial are Sistan and Baluchistan, North Khorasan, Kurdistan and Ilam.

Table 5 (b) *Unemployment Rate in Iran (Province wise)*

Province	Unemployment Rate 2020 (1398[194])
East Azerbaijan	9.1
West Azairbaijan	8.7
Ardebil	9.0
Esfahan	10.4
Alborz	13.0
Ilam	8.7
Bushehr	10.4

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[193] Moradi, Sanam (2014), *Mellat and Qowm: A Political Geography of 'Nation' and 'Ethnicity' in Iran,* M. A. Thesis, London: Oxford, 56.
[194] Iranian calendar

Tehran	10.8
Chaharmahal & Bakhtiyari	13.9
South Khorasan	7.6
Khorasan-e-Razavi	9.0
North Khorasan	8.8
Khuzestan	14.6
Zanjan	5.2
Semnan	8.0
Sistan and Baluchistan	15.2
Fars	7.6
Qazvin	8.2
Qom	10.4
Kurdistan	12.2
Kerman	10.8
Kermanshah	14.2
Kohgiluyeh & Boyerahmad	9.9
Golestan	11.1
Gilan	9.6
Lorestan	14.7
Mazandaran	8.9
Markazi	8.3
Hormozgan	14.2
Hamedan	5.3
Yazd	15.1
Total (Iran)	10.5

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran[195]

[195] *Statistical Centre of Iran (2020), [Online web] Accessed 2 Dec. 2020 URL: https://www.amar.org.ir/Portals/1/releases/lfs/LFS%20Summer%.pdf201399.

According to the above recent data of 2020, it is visible that the highest unemployment rate is in the province of Sistan and Baluchistan. In Sistan and Baluchistan Province 4.3 Per cent unemployment rate is higher to the national unemployment rate which is 10.5 per cent.

There are multiple reasons behind the backwardness of the Baluch and the region. The problems of identification and documentation have made many Baluchi as stateless, therefore their claim on education and other state led welfare programme becomes difficult. According to the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (7 May 2018) almost one million Iranians do not have birth certificate or other proof of citizenship, among them 400000 are children.[196]

Baluch in Iran have been neglected, and traditionally the older generation had little interaction with the state and its institutions. As many Baluch did not register their births, marriages and did not realize their official and legal identification cards or proof of citizenship, their children are affected because new births of Baluch cannot be registered when their ancestors themselves do not have proof of citizenship.[197] Their identification problems are also because of the lack of birth registered offices in small villages and towns as well as lack of transportation facilities.

Apart from these conditions, there have been structural discrimination and conditions responsible for the Baluchs' educational backwardness in particular and backwardness in general. The region always remained in the location where wars have been continuing, situated in the periphery, most importantly the dominance of Persian language and culture over other linguistic and ethnic regions. Although constitution has given the linguistic rights to the different linguistic groups, but there is systematic discrimination against the other languages, and the dominance of Persian language is rampant that make difficult conditions for non-Persians to attain higher education. Moreover, there is no support and encouragement for different linguistic

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[196] Centre for Civilian Rights, Minority Rights Group International, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2018 URL: https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf, 32.
[197] ibid, 33.

groups to educate their children in their own language.[198] The students who are aspiring for education, or particularly higher education, face a serious problem.

Analysing Discrimination against Baluchs

Baluch of Iran are not only ethnic minority but also a religious minority. When *Shi'ism* becomes core ideology of the state, the discrimination against other religious adherents to some extent has become quite general. The people of the region have distinct Baluch identity in term of language, religion, culture, attire, diet and oral tradition.[199] As most of the *Sunni*'s belongs to the different ethnic groups such as Baluch' becomes subject of double discrimination as well as double suspect. *Sunnis* frequently becomes the subject of both religious and ethnic discrimination because majority of the *Sunni* of Iran belongs to different ethnic minorities like Baluch Kurds and Turkmens.[200] As *Sunni* Muslims are facing a varying degree of repression, since the establishment of the Iran as Islamic Republic, it becomes difficult for Baluch to avoid state led discrimination because of their identity. *Sunni*s have been considered a threat to Iran while many Christians are enjoying their religious rights. As it has been noticed that there are many Christian churches in Iran, but at many places of Sunni inhabitants not even have a single mosque.[201] There is systematic discrimination against the Sunni minority prevails in Iran.

Across the Tehran there is not even a single *Sunni* Mosque, it can be seen as one indicator of unofficial discrimination against *Sunnis* in Iran.[202] Even though a considerable size of *Sunni* population is located in Tehran. *Sunni* religious leaders and preachers are under constant pressure and are subject to many restrictions and their teaching and preaching of *Sunni* religion are under surveillance Iranian authorities. There are many restrictions on their travelling to other parts of the country and their

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[198] Centre for Civilian Rights, Minority Rights Group International, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, (2018), "Rights Denied: Violations against Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iran", [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2018 URL: https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Rights-Denied-Violations-against-ethnic-and-religious-minorities-in-Iran.pdf, 30.
[199] ibid, 31.
[200] Crane, Keith, Lal, Rollie, and Martini, Jeffrey (2008), "The Challenge of Ethnicity and Identity Politics", *RAND Corporation,* 37-57.
[201] Manghebati, Gelareh (2015), Almost Iranians: The Forgotten People of Iranian Baluchistan Exploring Armed Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism in Iranian Baluchistan after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Thesis: Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba, 31.
[202] Crane, Keith, Lal, Rollie, and Martini, Jeffrey (2008), "The Challenge of Ethnicity and Identity Politics", *RAND Corporation,* 43.

participation in religious conferences. On several occasions *Sunni* Mosque has been demolished by the Iran's central authority in Sistan and Baluchistan as well as other part of the country, and has imprisoned those who opposed it.[203] It has been reported by the Amnesty International that there is continue discrimination against *Sunnis*, it also includes restrictions on *Sunnis* for holding separate prayers for Eid al-Fitr celebration as well as exclusion from high-ranking position.[204]

As Iran has been dominated by *Shi'ism,* the surrounding world which constitutes *Sunni* majority has been seen as a real or perceived threat to the Iranian nation. Apart from the regional threat the international environment also causes a threat to Iranian state. Since 1979, Iran has been facing challenges from the US, UK and other western powers. As many Iranian officials have stated that during ethnic unrest of 2005-07 in Iran, there was support and presence of the foreign actors who wanted to destroy Iranian state. In the Baluchistan region US, UK, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and *Sunni* extremist organisations (including Al-Qa'eda, and Taliban) involved in the insurgency occurred in Baluchistan region in 2005-07.[205] Apart from these actors there are many Baluch militant as well as moderate organisations which are involved in the Baluch nationalist activities around the southern border of Iran. This volatile condition is antagonised by the Islamic ideologies, which make Baluch vulnerable in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Any cross-border and internal assertion of *Sunnis* becomes a serious concern for the Islamic Regime in Iran. Iranian Baluch policy, usually based on securitization of the region, therefore any ethnic and linguistic demands from Baluch are seen as a separatist activity.

Internal Conflicts of Baluchs

The internal social structure of Baluch society is one of the major reasons in which Baluchistan as an independent formation and sovereign lands were appearing and disappearing. Baluch society is fragmented into different tribal as well as linguistic and dialectical groups. The national question of Baluch further becomes complicated

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[203] Manghebati, Gelareh (2015), Almost Iranians: The Forgotten People of Iranian Baluchistan Exploring Armed Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism in Iranian Baluchistan after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Thesis: Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba, 32.
[204] Amnesty International, (2018), Iran 2017-18 [Online web] Accessed on 12 March 2019 URL: https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/.
[205] Elling, Christian, Rasmus (2013), *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and Ethnicity after Khomeini,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 104.

by the fact of inner divisions and exclusivity. Baluch society is constituted with eighteenth major and numerous minor tribes and clans, among them Mari and Bugti are the largest two tribes in Baluchistan.[206] In fact, the inter-tribe differences and their overlapping interests have been the weakness for common national feeling and consolidation of the entire Baluch community. This situation of Baluch ethnicity left the doubt among many scholars that the different social and political formations of Baluchs, without national consolidation, could ever be able to unite under one flag and could be able to form their own independent state.[207] Historically it has been seen that the different Baluch tribes during the struggle against the external forces particularly against Britain and Iran had sided with foreign forces rather than their own close Baluch tribal associates. Even when Khanate of *Qelat* was formed by different Baluch tribes it was not with common association of Brahuis and Baluchs, and many other tribes also remained outside of this alliance.[208] Moreover, during the 1973-1977 conflict between Baluch nationalists and Pakistani military forces, Bugti tribes were not in support of nationalist forces.

In fact, tribal differences in Baluch society have produced divergent stances of different groups as well as fractured leadership. Baluch nationalist movement has not been uniformed in either its strategies or its goals. For many, Baluch nationalism does not extend beyond specific tribal loyalties.[209] Among the different Baluch tribes Mengal, Marri, and Bugti tribes are most powerful and large in number. Although the leaders from these tribal groups are capable of raising large arms and armies, mutual suspicion is so prevalent. It has been noted through various sources that during the 2004 insurgency many tribal leaders did not turn against the state, mainly the Bugti tribe fought wholeheartedly. The military forces targeted specifically the Bugti tribal chief, Nawab Akbar Bugti and Bugti tribal areas, and Pakistani military were been able to negotiate with other tribal leaders, and successfully they prevented other Baluch tribal leaders from joining in a common cause against the Pakistani

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[206] Ahmad, Aijaz (1973), "The National Question in Baluchistan", *Pakistan Forum,* 3(8/9): 5.

[207] Boyajian, Vahe (1999/2000), "On Baluchi Separatism", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 3 (4): 395.

[208] ibid, 390.

[209] Kupecz, Mickey (2012), "Pakistan's Baloch Insurgency: History, Conflict Drivers, and Regional Implications", *International Affairs Review,* 20, (3): 97.

government.[210] The social fragmentation of Baluch society and sectarian attitude of tribal leaders cleverly has been manipulated by the Pakistan government.

One of the fundamental weaknesses of Baluch nationalism is that Baluchs in real sense are a minority in Baluchistan itself. Due to warlike situations many Baluch migrated to the Gulf as well as Western countries. Moreover, a large chunk of Baluch people lives in Karachi and western districts of Sindh as migrant labourers.[211] They have become even lesser since the arrival of some 750,000 Afghan refugees, mainly Pashtuns in Baluchistan.[212]

The conception of ethnicity is very complicated in Baluchistan. If a rigid cultural criterion for differentiating ethnic groups applied for Baluch, a number of groups will fall under the category of non-Baluch such as Brahuis, Makranis, Lassis, in the North-Eastern districts as well as Pusthuns who are Pathans rather than Baluch.[213] However, such fragmentation has no place in the literature of Baluch nationalism. Baluch nationalists reject this demarcation of Baluch based on cultural criteria. In response to such fragmentation Baluch nationalists have produced and emphasised on convergent origins of these different sections of a single people. Baluch vehemently oppose and resist such attempts to divide the Baluch community and stridently proclaim their unity. They argue that it is the conspiracy of the dominant ruling groups which emphasise and try to exploit these differences to disrupt Baluch unity.

The problem of Baluch ethnicity and their poor condition is enmeshed in its territorial composition, historical trajectory, socio-economic and religious structure. Since the Baluch region of Iran came under the Iranian suzerainty, Baluchs have been a resistive force for Iranian authorities. As Baluchs and their territory are scattered among Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, a cross-border association and nationalism of Baluchs becomes a serious concern for Iranian territorial integrity and security. Baluch nationalism in Iran has been in contradiction to the Iranian national identity. Baluch insurgencies and ethnic assertion have always been met with coercive and violent responses by Iranian state. Although the poor condition of Baluch in Iran is

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[210] ibid, 98

[211] Ahmad, Aijaz (1973), "The National Question in Baluchistan", *Pakistan Forum,* 3(8/9): 5-6.

[212] Hyman, Anthony (1986), "Pakistan in Uncertain Times", *The World Today,* 42 (7): 118-121.

[213] Alvi, Hamza (1989), "Nationhood and Nationalities in Pakistan", *Economic and Political Weekly,* 24 (27): 1527-1530.

rooted in its historical and geographical structure, the contemporary socio-political arrangement systematically pushes them back. As Iranian state give primacy to *Shi'ism* and entire political system run on the premises of this belief, being a *Sunni* Baluch minority, they become subject of an intense discrimination. At present in the Islamic Republic, Baluchs have become minority in two senses; ethnic as well as religious. The socio-cultural, linguistic and religious rights of Baluch have been curtailed under the constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran. Even though *Shi'a* domination in Iran is not new, this communal division was blurred during the Pahlavi rule, but the condition of Baluchs remained the same. Sistan and Baluchistan is one of the most underdeveloped regions in Iran. Historically this region systematically has been ignored, policies of forced migration and population dislocation have been designed to alter the demography of the region. It is because of the cross-border Baluch nationalism and their contradiction to the dominant authorities. As Baluch constitutes a different ethnicity and religious community, they become more suspicious of established authorities. Here the idea of core-and periphery works systematically. In the peripheries any positive development is considered to be a threat, therefore dominant authorities intentionally keep the peripheral regions in perennial condition so that consistent migration becomes possible, consequently which led to the demographic shift and end of consolidation of ethnic nationalism.

CHAPTER: 6

CONCLUSION

Iran has been a land of civilization, glorious empires, centre of the rich culture and religions. Historically the political institutions of Iran, cultural practices, and religion have bound together a large chunk of diverse population and a vast territory for centuries. These pre-existing factors have played an important role for modern political elite and nationalist intelligentsia to build a nation state in Iran. Development of communication system, roads, bridges, and such infrastructure made able to state penetrate even the most backward regions, earlier which were very difficult to be controlled by a central authority. Modern reforms in military, education system, emergence of modern intelligentsia trained in western education, rise of urban middle class during the Qajar dynasty and especially Pahlavi regime introduced the consciousness of nationalism among the educated group of Iranians have built a strong foundation for modern nation in Iran. Throughout the range of Pahlavi dynasty, this nationalist project was campaigned through state led bureaucracy, policies and academic projects. Glorification of pre-Islamic past and heroes such has Cyrus, Darius and other historical figures were projected and glorified to form a Persian centric secular nationalism.

International environment for Iran, location of ethnic groups in the country, historical encounters with ethnic communities, cross border ethnic nationalisms are the factors which shape and reshape Iranian ethnic or linguistic policies. The ethno-religious policies of Iran since Pahlavi regime have been designed in ways which have created core-and periphery relations between dominant Persian and non-Persian ethnic groups. Political, economic and socio-cultural capital has been dominated by the *Shi'a* Persian core and Baluchs, Kurds, Arabs and other ethnic as well as religious minority groups remain in subordinate position or in periphery.

In case of Iran, these modern developments have centralised the Iranian authorities especially since the beginning of the Pahlavi rule in Iran. Before the establishment of the Pahlavi rule, authority and political power was decentralised. Local Khans and *Sardars* were governing their region with immense autonomy. Local societies were subject to tribal laws, legal matters were dealt with maulvis and other religious

authorities, and central authority was confined to the routine collection of the taxes only. In this situation, local culture, language, education was directly dealt by the local authorities. As Iranian state increasingly became a modern nation, the power and autonomy of different tribes and ethnic groups sharply declined.

As Iranian state adopted *Shi'ism* in the core of Iranian politics following the Iranian revolution, the ethnic identities become secondary and religion becomes sole binding factors of different ethnic groups. Azeris of Iran constitutes largest ethnic minority group and they are adherent of *Shi'a* religious belief. Their inclusion in the Iranian political, social and economic system is not merely because of their being *Shi'a.* Historically, Azeris have been the ruling class of the society who have governed entire Iran for centuries. Safavids dynasty, Qajar dynasty rulers were the ethnically Azeris who have preserved and straightened the Iranian identity. For centuries they have been in bureaucracy, polity, economy and immensely contributed to the field of trade and commerce. Tabriz, Ardabil and other cities populated by Azeris have been the centre of trade and commerce. In the contemporary time, their religious belief plays a positive role for them to make their position strong in Islamic Republic when there is inherent social exclusion of other non-*Shi'a* minority in the country.

Ethnicity based mobilisation and movement among the Azeris are the product of the modern political developments. As Iranian nationalism became a dominant discourse during the time of Pahlavi rule, ethnic assertions became more prominent in the same way. It is noteworthy as a result of this policy, ethnic nationalism and the quest for identity among Azeri Turks and Kurds of Iran raised.

Since last one hundred years, Iran has witnessed ethnic movements, revolts, and threat of secessionism from Azeris side. Emergence of Anjumans (councils), revolts of Sattar Khan who refused to recognise the sovereignty of Qajar Shah during the time of constitutional revolution and Khayabani's revolt of 1920, who seized Iranian Azerbaijan and renamed the region as Azadistan are evidences of rise of strong Azeri nationalism during the time of political upheavals in Iran. Moreover, with the Soviet support North Azerbaijan Democratic Party under the leadership of Ja'far Pisheravi established National Government of Tabriz in 1945. These dates of rise and fall of Pishervi's national government is considered to be significant among the Azeri ethno-nationalist. At the end of the Pahlavi rule and rise of Islamic Republic Ali

Shariatmadari's revolts over the nature of newly Islamic state is one of the most important historical pieces of evidences which shows the Azeris quest for greater autonomy, recognition and respect to cultural and linguistic differences.

The decade post 1980 have witnessed the new ethnic aspirations among a group of Azeri nationalists. Disintegration of Soviet Union, establishment of Republic of Azerbaijan, and emergence of moderate government in Iran influenced Azeri ethno-nationalists. Contemporary Azeri ethno-nationalists through various political and non-political means put forward their ethnic aspirations and desires. Football nationalism and environmental nationalism are the most significant aspects of today's Azeri nationalism. The symbols, slogans and demonstrations placed by the fans of Tractor Sazi teams are not confined to the linguistic and cultural rights or political autonomy but beyond that. Their slogans 'Tabriz, Baku, Ankara our path is different to those of Persian' and other, demonstration of Azeri flag and other Turkish symbols show the tendency of secessionism among these youths. The idea of Pan-Turkism is not supported by the majority of Azeris and the followers of Tractor Sazi are confined to the urban youths who are not considerable in numbers.

Apart from these groups, there are several minority rights groups, organisations such as AHRAZ and others who are fighting for the greater political, cultural, and economic space in the Iranian system. However, throughout the modern history of Iran, there have been several ethnic revolts and ethnic movements by Azeris, but the idea of secessionism has never gained much support of the majority Azeris. However, following 1990, ethnic movements and nationalism have increased among the Azeris but the militant activities by the Azeri are absent, contrary to Baluchs and Kurds. Although Azeris constitute the largest minority of the country, and share border with Republic of Azerbaijan, the sense of secessionism is not much strong. Still, Azeris are relatively in privilege and dominant position in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Their economic condition is better than the rest of the ethnic groups; they are politically well represented, culturally dominate large swaths of territory. From supreme leader to local administration, Azeris are in better position in relations to other ethnic groups. Socially, economically and politically, Azeris are well integrated in the Iranian society and have better status to other ethnic groups in Iran.

Baluch nationalists claim their different ethnicity, history, and descent; they have developed and maintained their distinctive identity to the Persians of Iran, Sindhis and Pathans of Pakistan. Moreover, Baluch have maintained their traditional political institutions and practices. Society mainly governed by the tribal laws and feudal system remained alive. Baluch ethno-nationalists across the region, on the basis of their distinctive cultural and linguistic identity, and history, have been able to express their nationalist agendas through modern literary culture.

As modern development began surrounding the emergence of the nation state, Baluch in particular and rest of the minority in general became subject of homogenisation led by the Persian core. Modern nation state is not confined to the political regulation of the country but it penetrates every aspect of human life, education, social and cultural, laws as well as economic affairs of individuals. However, contradiction over the territory was old but linguistic and cultural contradictions began with policies of integration and homogenisation of Baluch by the Iranian state. Pahlavi state, in order to build a strong nation state based on ethnicity, denied any cultural, linguistic rights to other ethnic communities. Pahlavi's ethno-nationalist policies marginalised Baluch in education, participation in administration, as well as crushed the regional autonomy of Baluchistan and Sistan which Baluch were enjoying before 1928. These policies of Pahlavi had negative impact over the socio-economic aspects of Baluch people. In fact, Pahlavi's ethnic policies were guided by the suspicion, and security views due to long standing Baluchs conflict with Iranian state as well as strategic location of the region surrounded by Pakistani Baluchistan, and Afghani Baluchistan.

However, in Pahlavi led nationalism, religion had little place. But in reality, it was dominated by the Persians-*Shi'a* majority. As Islamic Republic of Iran became a reality based on religion, the linguistic aspect of nationalism had no place in it. But in practice both the state followed same ethnic policies. Islamic Republic although talk about the linguistic rights of ethnic groups but not in a sense so that they can explore their cultural rights. It does not meet the international norms regarding linguistic minorities. Islamic regime put several restrictions over different linguistic expression. There is no safeguard to protect linguistic rights, promote education in Baluchi. Constitution only allows Baluchi language in preliminary education with addition to compulsory Persian. Other level of education is not possible with Baluchi language,

and therefore most of the children could not acquire secondary and higher education. In regard to ethnic policies both Pahlavi and Islamic regime deny the collective incorporation of the ethnic groups in respective constitutions. They have been incorporated individually, and constitution does not give recognition to the group identity of Baluch, therefore there is no state led mechanism to provide some measures to ensure their inclusion and participation in politics, administration and economy. Linguistic policies of Islamic regimes too make Baluch vulnerable in the field of education, which restrict their economic, political as well as cultural growth and development.

As Islamic regime assumes *Shi'ism* as core national identity of Iran, systematically Baluch became doubly marginalised in the country, first their being Baluch as different ethnic community, and second their being *Sunni* as different religious practitioners. However, historically, from 1928, the formal incorporation of Baluchistan and Sistan region in Iran Baluch has been marginalised and there has been systemic discrimination against Baluch. On the one hand, some non-Muslim religious as well as some *Sunni* school of thoughts have been recognised as religious minorities. But still there is minimal political representation of Baluch as *Sunni* religious group while other non-Muslim religious groups find one representative from their community. Many constitutional restrictions have been imposed on non-*Shi'as* to meet their greater participation in Iranian system. Non-*Shi'a* cannot be the president of the country or the supreme leader, and so many restrictions have been imposed to be elected members of Parliament on religious minorities. Since the establishment of the Islamic regime, Baluch ethnicity has acquired religious flavour, and communal conflicts between *Shi'a* and *Sunni* in the ethnically mixed areas of provinces have become common phenomenon. There are several cases of *Sunni* Mosque demolition in Zahedan and other areas of Iran where *Sunni* constitutes some considerable numbers.

Apart from the political representation, there are restrictions on administration and government jobs for non-*Shi'a.* Iranian administrative system applies the concept of *Gozinesh* which means selection to recruit administrative and government employees. This method systematically applies to exclude non-*Shi'as* from entering into the administration and government services. As it has been mentioned that in the

Baluchistan region most of the posts from governor to local administration is dominated by Persians, Baluch are hardly included in the local and provincial administration. Moreover, data of unemployment, and education has been mentioned which shows that highest poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy prevail in the area of Baluchistan and Sistan province of Iran.

Baluch ethnic minority group is religiously as well as ethnically different to the majority Persian nationals. They are very less in number, but Baluch ethnic problem sometime manifests in insurgencies. From Iran to Pakistan several Baluch organisations are active with diverse aim, but in their core is Baluch nationalism. BPLF, Jundullah and many other organisations are active for the Baluch interests in general and liberation of Baluchistan in particular. Modern Baluch ethno-nationalists have developed a nationalist language who are able to defend and define their nationality and distinct identity from Iranian Persians and Pakistani Sindhis and Panjabis. Baluch have been demanding for 'separate Baluchistan' since the independence of Pakistan. Some Baluch nationalist groups from Pakistan to Iran and Afghanistan aspire for a greater independent Baluchistan. The region often witnesses Baluch insurgencies and bloody encounters with Persian forces.

The first hypothesis of this study is that 'Azeris are a minority ethnic group in Persian dominated Iran. But their *Shia* religious belief is a major factor for their better politico-economic conditions in the Islamic Republic' is partially valid and partially invalid. Since Azeris of Iran historically have been the part of ruling class, and most of the commerce and trade centres of the Iran has been dominated by them, which are the fundamental reasons for their better position in Iran. Moreover, their similar religious belief shared with majority Persians have helped them to maintain their position in Islamic Republic of Iran.

Second hypothesis, 'Ethnic and religious differences are the major reasons for the marginalisation and discrimination of Baluch in the Islamic Republic of Iran', is also partially valid and partially invalid. In fact, this factor of their marginalisation has been persisting for a long time but this is not the only reason. Geographical location, historical trajectory are also major factors in their marginalisation. Historically Baluchistan region has been the rout for Europeans to access south-Asia and 19th and early 20th century Russian and British rivalry in the region destabilized the political unity of the region.

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