

Cultural diversity terminology and de-securitize state- minority relation in Iran¹

(General summary version)

Abstract:

Terminology related to minority issues in international law has a broad impact on managing the cultural diversity such as the rights of racial, ethnic, national and language groups and also the security of the states, societal groups and in general human security. Lack of transparency about the meaning of words such as ethnicity, people, nation, indigenous and different legal interpretations surrounding them, provoke a grave difficulty in the course of coding and promoting minority rights. This global challenge has created much more serious confusion in countries like Iran where minority- state relation is highly securitized. Securitization of minority issues along with this terminology ambiguity in international law make the minority-state relation in Iran more complicated. This paper tries to show how the confusion around terminology affects the minority issues in Iran.

1) Introduction

The international community has paid particular attention to human rights issues (including minority rights) since World War II. Nevertheless, difficult questions remain about how 'minorities' are defined. Such questions including how international human rights norms should distinguish different types of minorities, for example whether "indigenous peoples" should have different rights from "national minorities," or whether "ethnic" groups have distinct statuses from "linguistic" or "religious" groups. International norms of minority rights have been struggling with the question of how to define minorities, and how to develop general principles while still recognizing the significant differences within and amongst linguistic, ethnic, sectarian or religious groups around the world. Such conceptual complexity (or confusion) is observed in a range of international law contexts, including the definition of genocide or the right to self-determination, and is an important topic of debate within academic multiculturalist theories and within the practice of international organizations (see Kymlicka 2007 for an overview).

2) Cultural diversity in Iran: from society to constitution

Regional structure of Iran is consists of 31 provinces (*Ostan*). At least 9 of them are named after the existing cultural groups or ethnicities (*ghom*) and just Khuzestan (the province that Arabs of Iran are inhabiting there) is named after one ethnicity that vanished in history.² This structure is less than 150 years old, So dispersion of cultural groups is not limited to these provinces, and this internal border system is not just based on cultural group differences.

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² Azerbaijan, East, Azerbaijan, West, Sistan and Baluchestan, Chahar Mahaal and Bakhtiari, Fars, Gilan, Kurdestan, Lorestan.

However, some of them have a relative majority of one cultural group. For instance, Lorestan, Kurdistan or Baluchestan mean the location of Lores, Kurds or Baluchis in Farsi.

3) Societal identity, s terminology in Iran

As Kymlicka state, some African Asian countries claim that some terms and category don't apply for them.³ It seems necessary to distinguish between social facts of societies and whatever states have been arguing about them. Further, any society might have different terms which based on people introduce themselves and mention their societal belongings. Is it possible and realizable to considered those societal belonging within ethnicity or minority legal terminology for that reason besides societal identity terms, as Kymlicka underline that, contemporary characteristic⁴ of the groupness could be helpful to comprehending identity issues in different societies. So we need to understand discourse and context together to figure out how ethnicity and minority define in any country

4) Cultural diversity of Iran in the eye of international system

I want to put this part on 3 unit, how UN bodies encounter cultural diversity in Iran, how some INGOS observe cultural diversity and how some mega database coding ethnicities in Iran.

5) Ethnic categorization in Iran: general and particular challenges.

Identifying what sort of groups are considered as a minority in international law, is related to the understanding of why and with what purpose minority rights shaped and constructed. although society by society might have different demography character, realization of minority rights foundation assist us in identify what sort of groups in every society should be labeled minority or ethnic minority under protection of international human rights system. In spite of accomplishment of political science and sociology regarding meaning and interpretation of minority and ethnic minority, they could not be a unique and utterly reliable source for identifying minorities that human rights try to protect them

6) Conclusion

Since the general attitude of international law has been changed and distinguish indigenous people from other minorities, those sort of problems in front of minority rights increased. As Kymlicka argued, for instance, at first Iranian Arabs introduce themselves as a national minority . after indigenous people declaration of UN and prompt indigenous people rights in the international system, they prefer to consider yourselves as indigenous people.⁵ So international has two dominant outlooks in this scope. boh of them leads some difficulties. Notably by focusing self-identification method that different part of UN system emphasis on that and because it is subjective mean to identify minority end ethnicity, we could see the one hand state refuse to recognize minority end even in some cases they refuse o use

³Kymlicka, Multicultural odysseys, p.267

⁴ "If we focus on the sorts of contemporary characteristics that typify these two types of groups, we can find analogous types of groups in other contexts" Multicultural Odysseys, p.267

⁵ Kymlicka, Will, Beyond the Indigenous/Minority Dichotomy?, n.2011.

ethnicity term, and on the contrary, ethnic elites and activists could manipulate and change the label arbitrarily. This discord has a deep root in the subjective or objective aspect of the meaning of nation and on this context about the interpretation of ethnicity or cultural/social identity. Unfortunately, international law also could not choose one single argument to define societal terminology as one legal system need.

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