Geopolitical Analysis, Opportunities and Threats of the Ethnic Baluch from the Perspective of the Sociopolitical Gaps

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The emergence of new states outside Europe following the post-war decolonization and rising nationalism eliminated the analyses and assumptions which had founded the sociology based on the European tradition and classical positivist beliefs, which ultimately proved significant in denunciating the vainness of large-scale theories and their application on universal issues. The question of ethnicity in Iran has not been an exception. Iran is a multi-ethnic country with Fars people forming the majority of the population. Fars people mainly reside in the center of the country while other ethnic groups are settled along the borderlines. Ethnic groups settled along the borderlines have tribal extensions beyond the national borders. This status has brought about certain conditions in ethnic interactions with the central government. This condition may account for the major portion of Iran's geo-political issues and national, regional and international challenges. The present article deals with the issue of ethnicity using a hermeneutic method and postmodern approach aiming at investigating the failure of large-scale theories, a legacy of modernism and positivist method, in accounting for ethnicity issues. This article is to demonstrate that in postmodern dialogue the regional issues should be dealt with in the light of time and geography of that region.

Methodology

With regard to the theoretical nature of the research, the present study is an application research
bearing a descriptive-analytical design. The data was collected using library documents and was analyzed qualitatively.

**Results and Discussion**

Nowadays, historical approaches in humanities with their emphasis on detailedness call for particular theoretical structures for any particular society and refute the positions of the proponents of large-scale theories. Accordingly, every society is subject to a unique study. Based on this premise, a large-scale theory covering a wide range of occasional and location varieties cannot account for a particular society. With regard to this methodological debate, Baluch people's geopolitical issues can be studied more effectively under the theoretical framework of intersectional sociopolitical gaps. Sociopolitical gaps refer to the gaps which indicate the divergent lines of beliefs, interests, orientations and performance of different active social and political groups. These gaps can become neutralized in response to some opportunities and commonalities from other groups taking the form of inactive or intersectional sociopolitical gaps.

Authentic analysis of Iran's ethnic geopolitical issues requires the determination of research models based on sociopolitical gaps. The question of sociopolitical gaps in multi-ethnic societies like Iran is more demanding due to the effects of centrifugal forces. Based on this theoretical framework, it can be argued that the moderators of intersectional sociopolitical gaps are the critical converging factors of Iranian society. This is an abstract factor with no concrete reality the perception of which requires researching the social structure. Identifying these gaps may help us discover the sources of political disputes.

**Conclusion**

According to the findings of the present study, some of the existing gaps between Baluch and Fars people indicate the incongruities of central government in allocating the economic resources to peripheral geographical areas as well as the geographical habitat of Baluch people, which are discussed as the Center-Periphery gaps. This gap has always marginalized the language and culture of Baluch people comparing with the Fars people. Some other gaps like ethnic and religious gaps tend to be historical sustaining their features throughout history. That is, Baluch people have always had a tribal structure and because of their independence from the central government over different historical eras, especially before the establishment of modern government in Iran in 1304/1925, most of them have been Sunnite Muslims. Some other gaps like the tradition-modernism gap have been developed according to the dominant global dialogues. In this type of gaps, the tribal structure of Baluch people is eliminated, villages and towns develop and replace tribal life, the centrality of governmental power increases and a population balance between Fars and Baluch people, both Sunnite and Shiite develops. Due to some opportunities and commonalities between the Baluch and Fars people including the development of borderline markets, fishing, tourism, mythology and the symbols of national unity, language, higher levels of development comparing with Pakistani Baluch People, communication capacities and so on, these gaps become neutralized and function as
intersectional sociopolitical gaps and consequently become inactive. Indeed, these intersectional sociopolitical gaps in the Baluch ethnic structure tend to neutralize their inclination to separate from the center.

Keywords: Baluch, Ethnicity, Intersectional Sociopolitical Gaps, Dense Sociopolitical Gaps.