THE IMPACTS OF THE SECOND WAR OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH
CONFLICT (2020) ON THE IDENTITY CONSCIOUSNESS OF IRANIAN
AZERBAIJANIS

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Submitted by **AIDA FARROKHPOUR** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in International Relations, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Ebru BOYAR
Head of Department
Department of International Relations

Prof. Dr. Işık KUŞÇU BONNENFANT
Supervisor
Department of International Relations

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Derya GÖÇER (Head of the Examining Committee)
Middle East Technical University
Department of International Relations

Prof. Dr. Işık KUŞÇU BONNENFANT (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of International Relations

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bayram SİNKAYA
Yıldırım Beyazıt University
Department of International Relations

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Aida FARROKHPOUR

Signature:

ABSTRACT

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FARROKHPOUR, Aida

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Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Işık KUŞÇU BONNENFANT

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I aim to analyze the recent war of Nagorno-Karabakh in this thesis by taking ethnic identity and violence into account as a loop where the existence of one, can affect or precisely awaken the other. The conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh has its specific causes and effects like every other conflict in the international arena. However, this thesis narrowed down the impacts of the second war considering the ethnic self-awareness of Iranian Azerbaijanis. Regardless of the ethnic nature of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it influenced the identity of Iranian Azerbaijanis and raised awareness of their similar ethnic identity elements to Turks in Azerbaijan. Therefore, this thesis seeks to analyze the ethnic identity awareness of Iranian Azerbaijanis through the second Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by tracing the discourse of ethnic identity and the concept of nation-state in the context of Iran within the framework of its minority policies.

Keywords: Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Ethnic Identity, Ethnic Conflict, Nation-State, Nationalism, Iranian Azerbaijanis

ÖZ

İKİNCİ DAĞLIK KARABAĞ SAVAŞININ (2020) İRANLI AZERBAYCANLILARIN KİMLİK BİLİNCİNE ETKİLERİ

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Bu tezde, etnik kimlik ve şiddeti, birinin varlığının diğerini etkileyebildiği veya tam olarak uyandırabildiği bir döngü olarak ele alarak, son Dağlık Karabağ savaşını analiz etmeyi amaçlıyorum. Uluslararası arenadaki her çatışma gibi Dağlık Karabağ sorununun da kendine özgü nedenleri ve sonuçları vardır. Ancak bu tez, İran Azerbaycanlılarının etnik benlik bilincini göz önünde bulundurarak ikinci savaşın etkilerini daraltmıştır. Dağlık Karabağ ihtilafının etnik niteliği ne olursa olsun, savaş İran Azerbaycanlılarının kimliğini etkilemiş ve Azerbaycan'daki Türklere olan benzer etnik kimlik unsurları konusundaki farkındalıklarını arttırmıştır. Bu tez, Dağlık Karabağ sorunu çerçevesinde İran Azerbaycanlılarının etnik kimlik bilincini, İran bağlamında etnik kimlik söylemi ve ulus-devlet kavramı içerisinde tartışmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dağlık Karabağ sorunu, Etnik Kimlik, Etnik Çatışma, Ulus-Devlet, Milliyetçilik, İranlı Azerbaycanlılar

To the victims of KHOJALI…

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Words cannot express my gratitude to my dearest professor and her invaluable patience and feedback. I also could not have undertaken this journey without my defense committee, who generously provided knowledge and expertise.

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ADP	Azerbaijan Democratic Party
MPRP	Muslim People's Republican Party
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The concepts of ethnic identity and ethnic conflict and their importance in the international arena are one of the topics in humanities that have recently come to the attention of researchers. This awareness along with the declining of the working class imposed a kind of racial interpretation and categorized people on the basis of membership in a racial group. This categorization led political movements in the European societies and opened the space for racism. According to Robert Miles, 'race' refers to a limited community that is beyond other racialized imagined communities. Therefore, 'Other' is always an inferior group that is identified by naturally constituted population 'We' (1993, p. 60 as cited in Fenton, 2011, pp. 13-14). Political movements against the 'Other' and the increase of the awareness of ethnic identity especially after the Cold War paved the way for the emergence of both ethnic conflict and new nation-states. An ethnicity can realize its national and ethnic status and find out how to progress only by gaining awareness of its identity. Competing with the 'Other' is one of the necessities of gaining power which causes friction between ethnic groups and sometimes leads to violence.

According to Fenton's evaluation, in the last decade of studies on ethnicities, the meaning of the 'nation', 'national', and 'nationalism' is not about the nationalism that has been covered earlier. There is also a similar pattern of ethnic and racial studies (Fenton, 2011, p. 14). Here in this thesis, I consider that both the nation and ethnicity are referring to the same concept because not only they are woven into each other but also, they define one another. By taking this consideration into account, I analyzed how the nation-state structure of a multicultural and multinational country like Iran can be affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, specially the second war in 2020.

The closeness of the Turkic population of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Iranian Azerbaijanis made it possible to evaluate that how conflicts can be internationalized.

'Ethnic Identity', 'Nation-State', and 'Ethnic Conflict' are this study's three key concepts to reach a better perception of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the Republic of Azerbaijan and its impacts on the Iranian Azerbaijanis in the context of Iran which has a complicated structure. This thesis's concern and case study are the second war of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 and how it raised the Iranian Azerbaijanis' identity awareness, so it is essential to analyze three different subjects. The first one is the concept of nation-state in the political context of Iran. The second one is this state's minority politics before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution to evaluate how non-Persian ethnicities especially Azerbaijanis have been suppressed and persianized by Persian nationalism. The last one is the identity of Iranian Azerbaijanis and its relation with the people in Azerbaijan.

To sum up, according to the fact that actions have reactions, I considered the suppression and assimilation of Iranian governments as an action and the second war of Nagorno-Karabakh as the trigger which increased Iranian Azerbaijanis' identity awareness. Here, awareness and Azerbaijani nationalism are the reactions.

1.1. Outline of the Thesis

The purpose of this research is to analyze the impacts of the second Nagorno-Karabakh war as an Armenian-Azerbaijani ethnic conflict on the identity awareness of Iranian Azerbaijanis. I chose to study this subject to understand how political acts, minority policies, and suppression can pave the way for nationalism and how an external conflict can trigger and impact the identity consciousness of a repressed ethnicity in the third country. Therefore, in line with this objective, I posed two questions:

- What are the Iranian government's minority policies, and what are their impacts on the Iranian Azerbaijanis?
- Has the Nagorno-Karabakh war affected the Turkic identity consciousness of Iranian Azerbaijanis, and if so how?

To answer these questions in detail and properly, after explaining the outline and methodology of the thesis in *Chapter I*, *Chapter II* represents an analytical framework based on studies and research about the terminologies of ethnicity, ethnic identity, the concept of the nation-state, nationalism, and ethnic conflict. Then, *Chapter III* provides a brief history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by reviewing *Gharebagh Dar Gozargah'e Tarikh* (Karabakh at the Crossroads of History) written by Samad Sardarinia. Besides, Chapter III focuses on the second war in 2020 to analyze it as an external cause of the identity awareness of Iranian Azerbaijanis. *Chapter IV* includes the Persian nationalism of Iran in the context of the Iranian nation-state by depending on *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism* of Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, and the minority policies of the government by reviewing Brenda Shaffer's book named *Iran Is More Than Persia* as internal causes of the so-called Azerbaijani identity awareness. There is a discussion of Iranian Azerbaijanis as one of the ethnicities in the state of Iran. After that, *Chapter V* includes the analysis of media to evaluate the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the impacts of the second war of Nagorno-Karabakh on the Iranian Azerbaijanis ethnic identity. Lastly, as a *Conclusion*, *Chapter VI*, sums up all these reviews and analyses to reach a conclusion.

There is one main problem in collecting data for this thesis. Because of the heavy censorship of the Iranian government and strong propaganda in circulating the pan-Iranian/Azeri ideology, the lack of academic publications and media that supports Turkic nationalism is considerable. Therefore, the analysis of this part is based on the small number of publications and media.

Although there are other ethnic groups in the Azerbaijan region of Iran, in this thesis, I use Iranian Azerbaijani, Southern Azerbaijani and Turk interchangeably because none of the ethnic groups identify themselves as Azerbaijani except the Turks. In addition, the governments of both Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan always refer to their nations as "one nation, two governments".

1.2. Methodology

The inductive approach is utilized in this thesis to analyze the qualitative data. This approach enables the researcher to study the detailed readings of raw data with a vast

point of view and reviews the history of the first Nagorno-Karabakh war in 1988 and the second Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020 to see how these political incidents impact the identity consciousness of Azerbaijanis in Iran. This thesis begins by reviewing and analyzing the concepts of ethnic identity, nation-state, and ethnic conflict to reach a better perception of ethnic identity and its significance in the government of Iran.

Media analysis that includes reviewing and evaluating both printed and electronic ones is the main method of collecting information throughout the research. In line with this, sources such as books, academic journal articles, newspapers, presses, photos, and pictures (mostly from Azerbaijanis' reactions and protests in Iran during the second Nagorno-Karabakh war) are also utilized. Despite several media Iranian resources which are propagating pan-Iranian ideology, according to the sophisticated political atmosphere, not only there is no well-known media belonging to Azerbaijani nationalism but also there is a very limited number of Academic publications. Therefore, almost most Azerbaijani nationalists are sharing their analyses and ideas via their personal accounts in social media like Twitter (advanced research) and Facebook. However, I tried to refer to those limited numbers of traditional media to indicate the Azerbaijani nationalist' ideology in Iran. Because, there are very limited studies about this subject, this thesis can be a good source for those who are interested in area studies.

Regarding the language of resources in this thesis, I reviewed Persian, Turkish, Azerbaijani Turkish, and mostly English websites, publications, and books. However, all in all, English is the main language of the resources of this study.

CHAPTER II

ETHNICITY, NATIONALISM, AND NATIONAL AWAKENING

2.1. Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity refers to the membership or to the commitment of an individual in a group with certain values like some beliefs, culture, and language. These values or the individual's sense of membership can change over time according to the members themselves or external influences (Phinny & Ong, 2007, as cited in Barbara & Philip Newman, 2020, pp. 149-182). Analyzing the meaning of ethnic identity in this part helps me to give a better view of how ethnic identity is important and how it can influence domestic and foreign policies along with triggering violence.

The concepts of ethnicity and ethnic identity were analyzed through different ideologies by several scholars throughout the history. The noteworthy point of the explications is that although they have been conducted with different views, they reached somehow similar answers. For example, without focusing on a specific ideology, Li Xi Yuan states that ethnicity is mainly comprehended as a cultural identity. In other words, it is the culture that provides the content and meaning of ethnicity including shared history, symbols, and ideology (Yuan, 2015, p. 152). On the other hand, Joane Nagel explicitly analyzes the meaning of ethnicity through the lenses of constructivism.

She elaborates on the connections between ethnic boundaries and ethnic identity and how they can create ethnicity in society. Nagel believes that ethnicity is not a stable legacy, but it is constantly created and recreated throughout history. Therefore, identity, culture, language, religion, and ancestry are the building blocks of ethnicity while the meaning of ethnic boundaries and the location is always negotiated and

revised both by ethnic members and non-members. In other words, major mechanisms in ethnic construction are debates over the placement of ethnic boundaries and the social worth of ethnicities (1994, p. 154).

Nagel believes that ethnicity is socially constructed and ethnic identity has significant relations with ethnic boundaries, but indeed regarding ethnic interests, paradoxes and exceptions cannot be neglected. One of these paradoxes is the white American population. Regarding the researches and studies in the 90s ethnic society of the United States, although language loss, intermarriage, and religious conversion weakened white American population ethnic boundaries, there was ethnic identification maintenance or even an increase among them (1994, pp. 152-154).

According to Gans, this contradiction is called "symbolic ethnicity" that is rooted in the past sentiments, traditions, and culture of the immigrant generation. For this analysis, Armenian Americans is an appropriate example provided by Bakalian. He states that the generations who were born in the United States preferred Armenian identity without participating in any activities that are related to Armenians or Armenian organizations. As Nagel claims, examining processes of ethnic construction can answer all these contradictions between ethnic boundaries and ethnic identity (1994, p. 154).

In negotiating the ethnic boundaries, Barth described the concept of ethnicity as a mutable one (1969) because ethnic identity is composed of views held by both the ethnic members and non-members. Therefore, ethnicity can be changed and constructed throughout history regarding conditions and other groups encountered (Nagel, 1994, pp.154-155). As an example, Nagel stated that according to Cornell and McBeth, there are different levels of identity in the United States: *sub-tribal* that includes clan, lineage, traditional, *tribal* that comprises ethnographic or linguistic, reservation-based, official, *regional* that refers to Oklahoma, California, Alaska, Plains, and the last one is *supra-tribal* or *pan-Indian* that includes Native American, Indian, American Indian (1994, p.155).

There is also another example that can interestingly express to what extent the character of identity can be negotiated and constructed. According to the United States Bureau of the Census, in 1980 and 1990, almost half of the Hispanics did choose "other" in response to the questions related to their race which were in Census or

Current Population Survey questionnaires. Those who are identified themselves as Hispanics chose "other" among the choices like: black, white, American Indian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Chinese. Therefore, The Census Bureau registered the majority of them as "white" (Nagel, 1994, p.155).

As it is mentioned formerly, ethnic identity can be either optional or compulsory. According to the example of Hispanics in the United States, since they are white Americans, there are many options for them to choose as their ethnic identity. One of the main choices is their ancestries. While white Americans have ancestors from different parts of Europe, they can either choose their ancestors' ethnic identity or choose to be American. Alternatively, African Americans do not have much choices except black identity. Although they have intra-racial distinctions including skin color, language, religion and culture, the structure of the U.S society makes these ethnic distinctions unimportant. Ethnic option differences among the blacks and whites in the United States reveals that how external limited ethnic categories and boundaries can be imposing. These forced boundaries can be either official or unofficial (Nagel, 1994, p.156).

Nagel argues that both informal ethnic meanings and formal ethnic meanings can shape ethnic groups and impacts interethnic relations. She adds that formal and official ethnic categories and meanings are mostly political and as the policies are coming from the sovereignty, they are more powerful. Therefore, these political policies can considerably influence the ethnic identification (1994, p.156). Political policies can produce and define ethnic identities, cultures, and boundaries. Nagel introduces three ways in which ethnicity is 'politically constructed'. The first one is immigration policies, the second one is ethnically-linked resource policies, and the last one is political access that is defined along ethnic lines (Nagel, 1986, as cited in Nagel, 1994).

As a matter of fact, producing new ethnic groups through immigration is the first way (Hein, 1994, as cited in Nagel, 1994). Therefore, it is one of the main engines in creating and constructing ethnic identification. Generally, immigrant groups are suitable for labor market position therefore, this competing environment gradually makes them to blend into the local people whether accidently or politically. Politically, through immigration policies that are considerably important in the political construction of ethnicity, states can redesign ethnic boundaries to impact the fabric of

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a region. For example, European countries like Sweden and Germany used policies of immigration for economic benefits. However, the outcome of foreign policies of the United States during the Cold War was the immigration of the Asians and Latin Americans. In both examples, the immigration populations created permanent ethnic minorities (1994, p.157).

Acknowledging an ethnic formation or recognizing an ethnic group politically is another way that can be used by governments to reshape the boundaries of the targeted ethnicity or promote new ethnic groups. As a matter of fact, the political recognition of an ethnic group has some consequences. One of them is, when ethnic categories are officially recognized, policies can strengthen their ethnic boundaries and increase the repression and discrimination against the non-official ethnic groups. On the other hand, these repression and discrimination would also increase the self-awareness of the targeted non-official ethnicities (1994, pp. 157-158). For instance, in Malaysia, minority groups like Chinese and Indians protested many times because of the political advantages granted for the Malays majority (Means, 1976 as cited in Nagel, 1994). As it is mentioned before, resource competition and interest can reshape ethnic boundaries and result in instability and conflict (Banton, 1983 as cited in Nagel, 1994). Therefore, adapting individual ethnic identification bring personal and public advantages (Hechter, 1987a, 1987b as cited in Nagel, 1994). For example, in the states with electoral systems, large ethnic groups have more voting blocs. In this case, they would have more influence in every political and economic dimension because of their constitution (Lauwagie, 1979 as cited in Nagel).

Having access to politics is the last way through which ethnicities can be reshaped or constructed and respectively gain political and economic advantages. In addition, competition among ethnic groups over controlling logistic territories and governments is one of the reasons of ethnic conflict (1994, p. 159).

All in all, according to the facts that are represented formerly, external factors and forces can have significant influence on ethnic boundaries and shape, reshape, and even discard ethnic identities (1994, p. 161). By explaining the difference between ethnic identity and ethnic boundaries, Nagel gives us an implicit description of how ethnicity is constructed and what factors can influence it. Ethnic identity is created, defined, and discarded through ethnic boundaries, informal ascription and

governmental policies. In other words, ethnic boundaries are like components of a construction named ethnic identity. While the fabric of these components could be shaped and reshaped internally by the ethnic members according to their economic and political interests or externally by governments through their ethnic policies.

2.2. Nation-state and Nationalism

The nation-state is another important concept that I try to analyze in this thesis to evaluate how nations shape and to what extent political incidents can stimulate a nation to rise and be independent. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 is one of the turning points throughout history.

This treaty stabilized the considerable changes in the map of Europe that had happened during the wars, altered the balance of power, and established modern nation-state sovereignty. In other words, after this peace treaty, Roman Catholic Church and the Papacy lost their power in united Europe. Instead, the national sovereignty of each European state solidified under its religion and ideology. Eventually, the incipient states found out that by supporting the aristocrats, they gain financial aid to build a powerful military and economy. The relationship between the aristocrats and the states was a mutual beneficiary. For being more powerful in the competitive international arena, states tried to make the aristocrats feel accountable for the government's success. However, this relationship not only raised the feeling of nationalism eventually but also according to some critics, paved the way for modern capitalism (Farr, 2005, pp. 156-157). While the wealthy class supports the government, they are also motivated by economic self-interest. Therefore, they were very loyal to their state. According to Hans Morgenthau's examination, loyalty, political and national identity help the nation-state model sustain. He believes that the influence of aristocrats' economic power on the government to protect their own wealth and position, gave birth to the nationalism that flourished with the 1789 French Revolution. In addition, this also created a kind of personal connection that whenever it faces a challenge, it could lead to conflict (Morgenthau, 1973, pp. 248-253).

I found essential to study the concept of the nation-state, in order to analyze the minority policies of the two last Iranian governments. I deliberately focus on these

governments because the ideology of pan-Iranian and assimilating non-Persian ethnicities originated in the Pahlavi dynasty. By analyzing nation-state and Persian nationalism, I want to take the gist of how minority policies besides an external trigger can influence the identity awareness of Iranian Azerbaijanis.

According to Gellner, while in feudalist societies, the obligations are distributed, in modern societies, the power, and the politic is centralized (1981, p.753). I deliberately mentioned this statement to indicate the disadvantages of Persian centralization. His way of defining the nation and nationalism challenged other previous definitions. He analyzed nationalism in terms of both positive and negative social foundations but here, to evaluate imposing Persian nationalism better, I only focus on the negative social foundations. Gellner argues that when the process of modernization is uneven in a state, it leads to nationalist movements of deprived groups. In this case, the oppressed groups use their distinctive identity as a reaction to the unequal policies. He believes that nationalism is not about the awareness of identity because there was no nation before nationalism except for some distinctive criteria. In this case, what existed before nationalism? What about ethnicities and ethnic identity? (Kumar, 2010, p. 396). Gellner classified human societies into three phases historically: pre-agrarian, agrarian, and industrial. It is illogical to analyze the concept of nationalism in pre-agrarian societies because there was neither state at that time nor the concept of the nation-state. It is also impossible to analyze nationalism in agrarian societies because there was no common culture among the elites and the masses. In industrial societies, the situation is rather different. There should be a common language and culture that can facilitate communication with the nationalist ideology (Gellner, 1964, p. 168).

Kumar has four reasons to criticize Gellner's point of view. First, by referring to Benedict Anderson's statement, he states that Gellner's theory of nationalism is problematic because it is merely instrumentalist and functionalist. Although he thinks that there is no nation before nationalism, without a shared high culture (among the group members), there would be neither nationalism nor modernization (Anderson, 1991, p. 207). Second, Kumar calls Gellner's theory, teleological. In this way of understanding, the focus is on the industrialized society in which the needs transformed into the causes of modernization without considering the involvement of people.

According to Kumar, Gellner completely ignores the energy, time, and passion of those who are involved in the emergence of nationalism. Third, despite Gellner's argument that I mentioned formerly, nationalism can occur in societies that are not industrialized and contrariwise. For example, the process of industrialization in Western Europe was without nationalism and on the other hand, the nationalist movements of the Balkans and Latin America in the 19th century happened without industrialization (Mouzeli, 1998, p. 158, as cited in Kumar, 2010, p. 399). Fourth and last, the nationalist analysis of Gellner is not sufficiently political. Instead of evaluating how politics can be a decisive factor in choosing which ethnic identity can be nation (Kumar, 2010, pp. 398-400).

Although Gellner answered all these critics like he elaborated that modernization is a kind of mechanism in a state that the lack of it in some regions can cause the feeling of discrimination and nationalist movements, I think modernization can just be one of the mechanisms. In other words, nationalism can emerge out of distinctive policies in underdeveloped states with any kind of imposing ideologies. Kumar agrees with Gellner's statement that nations have not always existed but, he stated that the construction of nations out of ethnic materials should not be neglected. He argues that Gellner does not recognize the link between ethnic identity and nation (2010, p. 400). In addition, Kumar argues that although there is a connection between the ethnicities and nations, there are significant differences too. Such as: a clear territory, a united culture and economy, and legal rights. Therefore, these considering differences need serious studies (Smith, 1998, p.196).

All in all, I think Kumar as an Indian scholar who has had British colonialism, analyzed nationalism in a way that is more helpful to me to evaluate both Azerbaijani and Persian nationalism. Kumar believes that nationalism has a dialectical nature. It is both inclusionary and constructive for 'We' and exclusionary and destructive for 'Other'. By constructive, he explains that suppressed and deprived groups can be united under the name of nationalism to rebuild their own economy and welfare, while by destructive, he explains that powerful groups misuse nationalism to marginalize the weaker ethnic groups (Kumar, 2010, p. 393). According to Smith, a nation refers to a group in which the members share the same culture, experiences, interests, responsibilities, and territory. He defines nationalism as an ideology that belongs to a

potential or actual nation that tries to be independent and sovereign (Smith, 1983, p. 171). He adds that recognizing the ethnic roots of a modern nation is essential because it illustrates the collective commonalities. These collective commonalities, especially a heroic past can be inspiring for a modern nation and provide a secure base for it. According to Smith, as time passes, the ethnic roots of the nation become evident and the groups of people intend to define themselves in ethnic terms (Smith, 1986).

There would be a trivial problem in the constructed nation out of an ethnic which is the disagreement among the ethnic members on selecting the authentic expressions and cultural elements for nationalist reconstruction (Kumar, 2010, p. 403). For the question of how particular nations have emerged, Smith answers that ethnic groups constructed out of myths, symbols, values, memories, and traditions ended up in shared experiences of cohabiting for several generations. The emergence of ethnic groups was based on the cultural and industrial nature of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe. All these paved the way for ethnic identity to be the basis of government formation that later provided the context for nations to emerge. These shared traditions, symbols, myths, etc. became an effective resource for nationalists to form nations.

2.3. Ethnic Conflict

As the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is an ethnic conflict in which there is a connection between the Turkic people of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Iranian Azerbaijanis, I try to provide a brief introduction to the nature of ethnic conflict and how it can impact the domestic policies of a third country.

Ethnic conflict is somehow inevitable in countries with separate ethnicities. According to Vanhanen, members of an ethnic group have same characteristics. For example, they have same cultural rituals or carry same gene. Genetically, the members of ethnicity are closer to each other genetically than the outsiders, especially when the different ethnic groups are in distant geographies and rarely have intergroup marriages (1999, pp. 58-59). Ethnic groups are nongovernmental actors that play a considerable role in the government's policy-making. Because each ethnic group has different interests, to have more political power and influence policies, the ethnic members tend to favor their group members rather than the others. Therefore, when these actors try

to favor their group members and compete for more economic and political interests in the political arena, there would be confrontations and frictions that could result in conflicts. According to Vanhanen, the instinct of existence makes a human being favor their relatives and calls this action; "ethnic nepotism" (1999, p. 66).

We should not neglect that ethnic conflicts have different natures. Therefore, I provide some examples from the analyses of political and social scientists on the nature of ethnic conflicts. Horowitz classifies them into five groups "relatively peaceful economic and political conflict to separatist ethnic movements, then military and guerilla organizations, and sporadic violent conflict and civil war" (Horowitz, 1985, p. 3-6). Gurr is a social scientist who interestingly classified ethnic conflicts through quantitative analysis by calculating the numbers of people involved with the conflict and its destruction (Gurr, 1993, pp. 93-99). Vanhanen also classified ethnic conflicts quantitively into relatively peaceful institutionalized ethnic interest conflict, violent struggle, civil war, and ethnic cleansing. He states that institutionalized ethnic conflict and coercive conflict are the two main dimensions of ethnic conflict (1999, p. 60).

Although he classified ethnic conflicts into two main groups, he states that several sources and references of ethnic conflicts in various countries indicate their significance. Therefore, the scores of institutional and violent ethnic conflicts can be combined in an "Index of Ethnic Conflict" because both of them refer to the same phenomenon (1999, p. 62). After World War II, civil war and ethnic civil war is the most common form of war because democratic peace theories seemed promising to put an end to international wars but were unsuccessful in bringing civil and domestic peace. Through this assumption, Vanhanen believes that democratization does not eradicate ethnic conflict but institutionalizes them (Havard Hegre et. al 1997 & Ellingsen, 1996). In this part, I referred to this assumption to provide an explanation of how the concept of institutional and violent conflicts differ and at the same time how they both measure the same phenomenon from two different points of view.

As I mentioned formerly, the existence of multiple ethnicities in a country can be problematic. Due to different ethnic parties and organizations, certain ethnic discrimination and inequalities in governments are inevitable and result in ethnic conflict. By taking these into account, Vanhanen provides some criteria to measure the institutional dimension and evaluates its significance in domestic ethnic conflict

quantitatively. Although he states that his analysis is based on domestic ethnic conflict, he believes that because of the involvement of the external actors most of the time, separating domestic and interstate ethnic conflict is rather difficult.

I think Vanhanen provides a worthwhile evaluation. Therefore, I aimed to analyze his set of collected facts from a qualitative point of view. What he tried to prove twenty-three years ago is that behind every ethnic conflict in countries with multiple ethnicities, there is the tendency of ethnic nepotism. He thought it is possible to appease ethnic conflicts by applying ethnic and minority policies that can adjust and compromise the interests of different ethnic groups.

He scores different countries from 0 (the lowest degree of institutionalized ethnic conflict) to 100 (the highest degree of institutionalized ethnic conflict). According to his calculations on the scale of institutional ethnic conflict, zero means in the political representation of a country, there is neither significant ethnic organization nor significant ethnic inequality. While hundred means the share of ethnic parties and organizations is more than 90%. As well as the scale of institutionalized ethnic conflict, on the scale of violent ethnic conflict, Vanhanen scores different countries from 0 (the lowest degree of violent ethnic conflict) to 100 (the highest degree of violent ethnic conflict). On this scale, zero means although there is some tension among ethnic groups, there is no information regarding ethnic demonstrations, riots, or violence. While hundred means there is genocidal ethnic violence and ethnic war dominates policy-making completely.

At the end of his study, he states that because institutional ethnic conflict and violent ethnic conflict measure the same phenomenon, he combines the scores of the two dimensions and creates an Index of Ethnic Conflict in an appendix (Appendix 1). He adds the scores of both previous scales and values (EC) from 0 to 200 in 183 countries. In Appendix 1, he creates criteria including; Racial division, National language, Religious division, Ethnic heterogeneity, Institutional conflict, Violent conflict, Ethnic conflict, Residual ethnic conflict, and Predicted ethnic conflict to evaluate domestic ethnic conflict. He explains that although it will be argued he has attempted to quantify an unquantifiable phenomenon or There are significant estimation errors in his study, by applying the same scales and same criteria the significance of ethnic conflict is measurable in all countries (1999, pp. 61-73).

As I referred to Vanhanen's statement formerly, it is difficult to separate domestic and international ethnic conflict. Today, because democracies have outnumbered autocratic regimes, there is an increase in the autonomy of ethnic minorities. This increased awareness and autonomies among ethnic groups make those primordial confrontations emerge even more violently. Ethnic conflict has domestic and international effects. Domestically, it affects internal politics and the economy, while internationally it affects regional and global security and stability. Therefore, the internationalization of the issue of ethnic conflict depends on various political interests. Hence, how this matter can be one of the key concerns for policy-makers is understandable (Carment et al., 2009, pp. 63-65).

In the following, I began with an analysis of the related and common questions about the intervention of the third party in ethnic conflict. The internationalization of the ethnic conflict has significant importance, especially after the Cold War in the field of international politics. Therefore, there are lots of questions about its reasons and dynamics yet to be answered and analyzed.

While scholars like Vanhanen (1994), Sambanis (2001), and Reynal Querol (2002) argues that ethnic distinction and ethnic polarization initiate internal conflicts, Carment, Collier and Hoffler (2000) argues that most conflicts are originally triggered by non-ethnic factors such as economic and political issues, and then they gradually appear as ethnic conflicts. Therefore, ethnic differences are inadequate to fuel a conflict (Carment et al., 2009, pp. 65-66). In economic theories, socioeconomic factors such as deprivation, poverty, lack of investment, and slow economic growth have the main role in initiating internal violence. (Collier, 2000, Collier and Hoffler, 2000 as cited in Carment et al., 2009, p. 65). While in political theories, the main focus is on the factors such as discrimination, inequalities, repression, and collapsing institutions. In other words, the conflict arises as a response or reaction to the source. Like Carment, Gurr also believes that all these factors are insufficient to initiate a conflict because the domestic structure and the characteristics of the complainant group have also a considerable role (Gurr, 2000).

In my opinion, analyzing the factors of violence and conflict through economic and political theories is quite acceptable, but considering that ethnic distinction cannot trigger internal conflict is somehow questionable. Both economic theories and political

theories indicate that by implementing related policies, there would be a kind of inequity in society. According to "ethnic nepotism", it is advantageous when the majority members of ethnicity are in the power. In this case, because of the ethnic and identical closeness, the rest of the members would be beneficiaries automatically. Therefore, in the multiethnic state, alongside "ethnic nepotism", minority policies will stimulate the other ethnicities to react to the inequities and repressions as what is going on in the multiethnic country of Iran right now. Depending on the governments' and the ethnicities' characteristics, these reactions are rated from peaceful protests to violent riots.

When ethnic conflict outbreaks in a state, one of its international challenges is "security dilemma". According to Herz, "security dilemma" is a classic realistic vision during the interstate tensions (Herz, 1951). It means that, because states are responsible both for their own and their citizens' security, they enter the self-help zone to gain power as much as possible (Carment et al., 2009, p.66).

During the tension, it depends on the third state's structure and its characteristics how to take actions in response to the foreign conflict. Beyond the political and economic issues, I think the third state (or the neighboring country) worries about its security and sovereignty can be analyzed through two points of views. The first type of worriedness is about the external borders. In case there is none or trivial ethnic connectivity between the third and the tensioned country, the third country would worry about its border's security in order to control or prevent the stream of immigrants. The second type of worriedness is about the internal security. In case there is a strong ethnic connectivity between the third and the tensioned country, the third country would worry about a similar tension inside its borders. Especially if the third country has minority policies and repressing its minorities.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

3.1. Tsarist and Soviet Period

Here, a brief historical background to the conflict can shed light on contemporary reality. Nagorno-Karabakh is a mountainous region located in Transcaucasia within the southwest of current Azerbaijan and inhabited by ethnic Armenians. According to Yamskov, Transcaucasia was one of the restless regions in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Yamskov, 1991, p. 631). During the Russo-Persian Wars 1804-1813 and 1826-1828, Iran ceded its northern territories to the Russian Empire through the treaties of Gulistan and Turkmenchay. According to the treaty of the Gulistan in 1813 and the treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, Iran agreed to cede Baku, Shirvan, Nakhichevan, Ganja, and Yerevan to the Empire of Russia. In these treaties, the Aras River separated the Azerbaijani Turks of Caucasia from the Azerbaijani Turks of Iran (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998). Russo-Persian Wars did not happen one of a sudden. These wars happened because of a long grudge and strife between the two empires since 1682 (Panahi Semnani, 1988, p. 224 as cited in Sardarinia, 2005, p. 320).

According to Sardarinia, during the Russian occupation of the Caucasia region, Iran not only lost a part of its land but also opened the door to its enemy (2005, p. 321). This occupation is also considered a disturbance of the global balance of power (Taherzadeh Behzad et al., 2012, p. 113 as cited in Sardarinia, 2005, p. 321).

The basis of the dispute between Iran and Russia that led to bloody events in those years was over Georgia. Using the dissatisfaction of the Georgian leaders, the Russian government planned to annex this land to its territory. Six months after the murder of Agha Mohammad Khan in Shusha, King Heraclius of Georgia died and his son George XII succeeded him. He inclined toward Russian politics. Because he was a spendthrift man, he went under the burden of debts to Russia and promised to hand over Tbilisi to

Russian government in case he could not pay off on time. He fell into debts and Russian Empire occupied Tbilisi. In 1800, George XII signed a treaty with Paul I of Russia. According to its articles, he and his family along with the Georgian lords were exiled to Saint-Petersburg. In addition, General Tsitsianov, a pro-Russian, was assigned to the government of Georgia officially in 1801.

All these events aggravated the Georgian people and led Prince Alexander, George XII's brother, to start a revolution against the pro-Russian government but the local leaders considered it impossible without the help of Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, Prince Alexander (Georgian) tried to do so but, both Iran and Ottoman Empire were struggling with their domestic issues. Even after the death of Paul I in 1801, despite the plans and helps of Caucasian leaders to expel the Russians from Georgia, the Russian puppet government under the control of Alexander I could suppress the movements. Meanwhile, Tsitsianov could seize Ganja with the help of Armenians in 1802 and after that began to march toward Yerevan (Iran Publication Office of Political and International Studies, 1984, p. 14).

Seizing Ganja paved the way for Tsitsianov to occupy the rest of the khanates in Azerbaijan. Before entering Caucasia, Armenian leaders learned about Tsitsianov's plans and immediately informed him of their decision to participate in this attack. In addition, Tsar Alexander I had advised Tsitsianov earlier in a letter: "It is necessary to make maximum use of Armenians in any possible ways in your attacks on Azerbaijan and its other khanates. Especially the Armenian Priest Daniel, who has proven his honesty and loyalty to Russia many times" (Eghbali Ashtiyani, 2005, p. 777 as cited in Sardarinia, 2005, p. 323).

Sardarinia states that as soon as Tsitsianov entered Caucasia, he told Javad Khan to surrender but Javad Khan refused it and defended the castle with his three sons and two brothers for a month. During the time of the siege, Tsitsianov contacted the Armenians living in the city and made many promises to them. Therefore, not only Armenians manipulated the city's water channels to make the water impossible to drink but also, they reported the parts of the fortress that had weaker defense shields to the Russians (Kerimova & Esedov, 1993/2001 as cited in Sardarinia, 2005, p. 325). Both the betrayal of Armenians and the limited number of Javad Khan's soldiers resulted in the fall of Ganja in 1802.

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After the occupation of Caucasia by the Russian empire, most of the Muslims of the region immigrated to the other side of the Aras River because of the Russian imposing policies. Immigrating Turks to Iran and Armenians from Iran and The Ottoman Empire to Caucasia changed the ethnic nature of the region in favor of the Russian empire to suppress the Turkic identity of Azerbaijan. Statistically, before the Russian occupation, the East of Armenia was populated with 20 percent of native Armenians, while after the occupation this percentage changed to 50 percent. Despite all of these suppressing policies, according to the census of 1832 taken by the Russian empire 68.8 percent of the Karabakh population were Azerbaijanis and 32.3 percent were Armenians (Sardarinia, 2005, pp. 391-393). While these policies gradually influenced society and resulted in conflicts between Turks and Armenians. After 1872, the discrimination of the Russian empire in the region's economy and the closeness of the Russians to Armenians raised Armenian nationalism (Sardarinia, 2005, p. 449).

After the 1917 October Revolution in the Russian empire, the newly born yet non-official government tried to occupy Caucasia, especially Azerbaijan. At the same time, although Armenian majorities in Karabakh had accepted the Azerbaijan governance, in 1919 they began several mutinies (Sardarinia, 2005, p. 478). Therefore, the Red Army took the chance and began to attack Azerbaijan in 1920 which resulted in a large scale of death casualties. Gradually, under the power of the USSR, Karabakh became the autonomous oblast of Azerbaijan in 1923 and its name was officially changed to Nagorno-Karabakh in 1937 (Sardarinia, 2005, p. 494).

As the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics began to lose its power after the 1980s, Armenia began to assert territorial claims, which had previously created by Moscow with the change of its demographic structure. Armenia legally and historically claimed the lands of Azerbaijan and demanded them from the government of Moscow. After Mikhail Gorbachev became the head of state in the USSR in 1985, Armenian intellectuals started to develop their relations with Gorbachev and claimed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region was a historical Armenian land. On November 1987, On November 1987, Gorbachev's adviser of Armenian origin, Abel G.Aganbekyan, stated in a speech that he would be pleased if Karabakh became a territory of Armenia (Taşkıran, 1995, p. 122). Armenians in the Nagorno-Karabakh established the Karabakh Committee, under the leadership of communist Dashnaks and the Armenian

Communist Party, to remove Azerbaijani Turks from the region and annex it to Armenia (Şıhaliyev, 2002, p. 150). The USSR did not accept the Armenian's demands. In November 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR decided to abolish the autonomy of the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast and to connect it directly to the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. Despite the official announcement of the USSR, the Armenians in Armenia Soviet Socialist Republic and Nagorno-Karabakh neglect it and began riots in the region and killed Azerbaijani civilians (Armaoğlu, 2010, p. 934, as cited in Mehdizade, 2021, p. 37). As the conflicts became severe among Armenians and Azerbaijanis, the USSR and its Red Army invaded Azerbaijan on January 1990 and slaughtered Azerbaijani civilians which later referred as Black January (Aslanlı, 2015, p. 55).

In August 1991, the weakened USSR announced the independence of Azerbaijan. At the same time, the Armenians in Karabakh also declared Nagorno-Karabakh as Artsakh Armenian People's Republic. The Azerbaijani Parliament condemned this decision because it violated both the Azerbaijani Constitution and the USSR Constitution (Aslanlı, 2015, p. 403).

Although the Soviet government was becoming weaker and weaker, they invaded Baku On January 20, 1990, and massacred civilians which raised Azerbaijani's hatred towards USSR. This date is known as Black January (Kara Yanvar) in the history of Azerbaijan. In August 1990, Armenia announced its independence and claimed that Karabakh belongs to Armenia (Aslanlı, 2015, p. 55). The USSR officially collapsed in 1991 but, they still continued invading Azerbaijan with Armenian soldiers. One of the most catastrophic invasions happened on 26 February 1992 in one of the villages of Azerbaijan, named Khojaly. In this brutal invasion, 613 civilians were killed, 1275 were injured and 150 disappeared. After this catastrophe, Ayaz Muttalibov, the first president of Azerbaijan, who was elected after the independence of Azerbaijan in September 1991, signed his resignation in March 1992 under the pressure of the Azerbaijani Popular Front Party. Then, in May he fled to Moscow. On 17 June of the same year, Abulfaz Elchibay was elected by the Azerbaijanis (Aslanlı, 2015, p. 404).

Clashes between the two countries continued throughout March. The OSCE Council of Foreign Ministers convened in Helsinki on March 24, 1992, to carry out the solution to the Karabakh question. They established the "Minsk Group" which

consisted of Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Germany, France, Russia, the USA, Armenia, Belarus, Sweden, Italy, Czech, and the Slovak Federative Republic. On May 8, the Armenians first occupied Shusha, the most strategic city of Azerbaijan, and Lachin, which connects Karabakh to Armenia, approximately ten days later. On the other hand, Azerbaijan counter-attacked and managed to recapture some settlements from the Armenian forces. Although on 27 August 1992, a ceasefire was declared with the mediation of Kazakhstan with the signature of both sides, after a short time, Armenia unilaterally announced that it did not recognize the declaration (Aslanlı, 2015, pp. 404-406).

3.2. The Second War of 2020

The ceasefire signed in Bishkek in 1994 has been violated many times over 26 years, and many people have lost their lives. Nearly 9420 of the total area of the Republic of Azerbaijan lands remained under occupation. The OSCE Minsk Group, which was created to solve the problem, did not achieve any results in the liberation of Azerbaijani lands from occupation. On 2 April 2016, Armenia attacked Kalbajar of Azerbaijan. The assault killed two and injured ten civilians. This war lasted for four days and ended on 5 April by the ceasefire with the help of Russia. Later, the last days of September 2020 marked the beginning of a new war period. The Azerbaijani army launched a counter-military operation on the morning of September 27, 2020, to liberate its occupied territories against the Armenian army, which has repeatedly violated the ceasefire. This war has been a historical step for Azerbaijan. As Armenia succumbed to Azerbaijan's superiority at the front from the beginning of the war, it bombed the civilian settlements of Azerbaijan hundreds of kilometers away from the front line, targeting and murdering unarmed civilians, including small children (Mehdizade, 2021, p. 46).

The first attack of the Armenian side against Ganja took place on the 4th of October. In this attack, sixty people were injured and killed. On October 8, Armenia attacked a civilian area again, but it was without casualties. When Ganja was re-targeted on 11 October, only one day had passed since the first ceasefire agreement in Moscow. In this attack, ten civilians were killed and dozens were injured. The October

11 attack had great repercussions in Azerbaijan and the world, but the international community was weak in showing a significant and necessary reaction. The role of this callous attitude that does not care about civilian life should not be overlooked in the attack carried out by Armenia on October 17th because according to the Republic of Azerbaijan, fourteen civilians were killed and fifty-five injured. It was only after this attack that some leading international news agencies went to the region to see the devastation and tragedy that ensued have been conveyed to the world (Sarıkaya, 2021, pp. 12-13).

Between 27 September and 9 November 2020, which is forty-four days from the beginning of the conflict to the signing of the ceasefire, Azerbaijan liberated more than two hundred and ninety settlements from Armenian occupation. Azerbaijan put an end to the Armenian occupation of provinces such as Qubadli, Zangilan, Jabrayil, and Fuzuli and hundreds of villages connected to these regions. Azerbaijan also retook many villages and settlements connected to Lachin, Khojaly, Tartar, and Khojavand. The liberation of Shusha, which has a great moral value and symbolized the province of Azerbaijan, on November 8, 2020, caused Armenia to accept its defeat. Along with the city of Shusha, some residential areas of the Nagorno-Karabakh region were under the control of Azerbaijan and were cleared of Armenian armed elements (Mehdizade, 2021, p. 47).

Shusha is known as the cradle of Azerbaijani culture and is considered the capital of Azerbaijani civilization. This city is located in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Armenia occupied this historical city on 8-9 May 1992. Liberating Shusha had critical importance in the liberation of Karabakh from occupation. On October 29, Arayik Vladimiri Harutyunyan, the so-called administration of Nagorno-Karabakh, declared that the Azerbaijani army was 5 km from Shusha. On November 2, Artur Sargsyan, the deputy commander of the so-called government, was killed by the Azerbaijani forces. It was now known that the Azerbaijani army was in Shusha and Lachin. On November 7, for the first time, it was announced that the villages and heights from Khojavand and Khojaly were under Azerbaijani control. On November 8, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, in military uniform, gave the good news of Shusha's liberation from the occupation of Armenia. On November 9, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan released a video shot from this city to confirm Azerbaijan's full

control. On the same day, despite Nikol Pashinyan, the Armenian Prime Minister, the spokesman of the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh government, Vahram Poghosyan, admitted that they lost control of Shusha (Mehdizade, 2021, p. 47).

On November 9, Azerbaijan announced that seventy-one villages and eight strategic heights were liberated from occupation. The liberation of Shusha from the Armenian occupation was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Northern and Southern Azerbaijan. The streets of Baku were a scene of great enjoyment. There was also a festive mood among the Iranian Azerbaijanis. They made sacrifices and distributed sweets but, the Iranian regime prevented the street celebrations (Mehdizade, 2021, p. 48).

The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, pointed out that the agreement means the defeat of Armenia and stated that Pashinyan signed the agreement reluctantly but, thanks to the iron fist of Azerbaijan. Addressing the public after the agreement, Aliyev said that Pashinyan "run away like a rat" and that the Armenian armed forces were fired "like a dog". Aliyev warned Armenia by declaring that if Armenia does break the ceasefire, Azerbaijan will not stop and will continue. Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan shared on his Facebook account on November 10, 2020, "I signed an agreement with the presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan to end the Karabakh War". In a statement on the agreement, Pashinyan said it was not easy to make this decision and described the agreement as "painful" (BBC news, 2020).

The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan stated that 2783 Azerbaijani soldiers were martyred and 1245 soldiers were injured in the 44-Day War of Karabakh in 2020. During the war, the Azerbaijani army took back a significant part of its occupied territory in a controlled and superior manner without targeting any civilians.

CHAPTER IV

IRANIAN NATION-STATE AND NATIONALISM

Both during the Pahlavi rule and the Islamic Republic regime, the country has been multiethnic. In addition to people with different belief systems, mainly Shia and Sunni sects of Islam, Iran consists of Persians, Turkic people, Kurds, Arabs, Balochis, Lurs, and Gilaks, which is ruled by Shia Persian (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022). Both governments try to unite all these ethnicities under a flag by implementing almost the same policy. Although the turning point of Iranian more specifically Persian nationalism took place in the Pahlavi dynasty, the historical events throughout the Qajar dynasty constructed the basis of nationalism. For this part, I evaluate how Persian nationalism happened in the context of the Iranian nation-state.

Zia-Ebrahimi analyzes the historical objects of Persian nationalist ideology and calls it "Dislocative nationalism." This ideology is based on four core ideas. The first idea is that Iran is an ancient nation that has existed for 2500 years ago and sometimes this number reaches 5000 years or more. The second one refers to its glory which goes back to the pre-Islamic age. The third idea is to blame the Arabs for the underdevelopment who used the sword to impose Islam on the Iranians. The last one is about the Aryan race of Iranians which connects them to Europeans (2016, pp. 2-3). Zia-Ebrahimi called it dislocative nationalism because it is an ideology without any history or antecedent and it is imported from the Europe. This ideology emerged between the 1860s-1890s and later became official from 1925 until 1979, the Pahlavi era (2016, p. 3).

According to Zia-Ebrahimi, modernity is a Western event and all other non-European countries just observed or imitated Western modernity. For Iran, it is rather different. Iran experienced modernity through violence. During the Qajar dynasty (1796-1925), especially during the Russo-Persian wars in 1804-1813 and 1826-1828,

Iran encountered industrialized Europe which was traumatic for an underdeveloped country (2016, p. 17). Here, it reminds Gellner's argument that modernity is a mechanism that makes nationalism happen.

He argues that before the Qajar dynasty, Iran was in a kind of isolation, and was more concerned with its neighbors rather than distant Europe. The intercontinental expansion and transport of European empires made Iran have sudden contact with the nature of the European world. As I mentioned, the first contact is the 1804-1813 Russo-Iranian war in which Iran lost the Caucasus region by the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan to the Russian's superior warfare and technology. The second contact happened in 1826 and ended with another disastrous loss by the 1828 Treaty of Turkmenchay. The last contact that made Iran a buffer state between Russia and Britain, is Iran's attack on Herat in 1837. During those times, not only there were no decisive thoughts on colonizing Iran completely but also Qajar maintained its ostensible sovereignty through the interference of foreigners. All those interferences limited the government from exploiting the kingdom's resources. In addition, both the British and Russian governments were successfully straining Qajar to gain privileges for their subjects. The union of Shi'ite clergy and the Russians against the tobacco concession of 1891 was the first peaceful uprising which indicated both the extent of the resentment among the people and forced the Shah to repeal it. (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, pp. 17-21).

These historical confrontations, especially the Russo-Iranian wars both caused a kind of disbelief and perplexity among princes, provincial lords, clergymen, and intellectuals, and awaken Persian nationalism. One of the reasons is that traditionally in Islam, whatever belongs to Christianity were treated with disdain. This attitude continued to the early nineteenth century in Iran (Hariri, 1988, p.132-133, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p.21). The root of this belief goes back to the scientific advancement of Islamic empires while Europe was in "the Dark Ages" (Lewis, 1982, chap.2 and 3, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 22). The second reason is what Rudi Matthee analyzed about the Quranic notion of Ya'juj and Ma'juz bibulous and brutish people who live in the north and are separated from the civilized Muslims. This belief was eventually faded by Qajar times but, Russians were still inferior to Iranians (2012, p. 101, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 22). The third reason is the traditional feeling of Persian superiority, especially among the Qajar elite and upper class. Besides Sir

John Malcolm and the Comte Arthur de Gobineau, who called Iranians a self-contented nation and had the collective feeling of superiority, Herodotus stated that Persians assumed themselves as the most civilized nation on Earth (Malcolm, 1829, Comte de Gobineau, 1923, pp. 5-6, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 22).

According to Zia-Ebrahimi, both Gellner and Anderson argue that nation and nationalism are the fruits of the industrial age and the process of modernization initiated in Western societies including Latin America. Other results of this process are the overcoming of reason and the beginning of capitalism. However, he believes that in applying these scholars' models to a non-Western state, two issues emerge with the experience of nationalism.

The first issue is that such a reading condemns non-Western societies to imitate the European experience of nationalism or they will be left behind. In the case of comparing European nationalism and Iranian nationalism, some questions will be raised, like why the dislocative nationalism in Iran did not happen immediately after industrialization and print capitalism. How an industrialized nationalism could develop in an unindustrialized country? Zia-Ebrahimi argues that Western nationalism is not simply imitative. More specifically, the historical context of the society should be analyzed to identify the process of modernity. What he tries to explain is that nationalism is not a package that can be accepted or not. It is a shop that has possibilities of combination.

The second issue is that, in Gallner's work, there is a possibility of neglecting the individuals who had a significant role in shaping the content of nationalism (Chatterjee, 1993, pp. 40-41, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 42). For example, in the dislocative nationalism of Iran, two individuals had a crucial role in collecting ideas about Iran's historical national essence. One of them is Jalal Ed-Din Mirza, and the other one who added his radical thoughts is Mirza Fath'ali Akhundzadeh. According to Zia-Ebrahimi, his trans-regional and hybrid work wrongly evaluated both the idea that this nationalism is rooted in the Iranian national consciousness or is imported from European ideas. Akhunzadeh's follower, Mirza Aga Khan Kermani, is another individual whose radicalized and intensified racist perspective of the newly developed ideology penetrated the Pahlavi era and build the body of the state from 1925 onward.

During this period, several schools and authors were occupied to analyze and explain European modernity and Iranian deficiencies (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, pp. 42-43).

Zia-Ebrahimi states that the doctrines of dislocative Persian nationalism are formed of pre-Islam Archaism, Arab hatred, and a hybridized-authoritarian approach to Europeanization which have not changed in recent decades. For example, according to Hasan Tagizadeh, in the 1940s, the Iranian government refused to accept that Arabic loanwords are existing in Iran for a thousand years ago because the government consider the imported vocabulary as a calamity while, it stated that Iranian citizenship will be given to the foreigners who lived in Iran for a few years (1960, pp. 36-37, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 147). As Persian nationalists consider that they have an Aryan race, Mohammad Reza Shah once privately confided to the British ambassador, Sir Anthony Parsons that Aryans are members of the European family and they are accidentally residing in the Middle East (Katouzian, 2009, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 147). By creating an "other" (mostly Muslim Arabs) and connecting to the European race through Aryanism and its inglorious pre-Islamic history, the government of Iran was trying to bear all the blame for its regression. According to Zia-Ebrahimi, Akhundzadeh and Kermani paved the way for the admission of Aryanism and dislocative nationalism in Iran (2016, p. 148).

After the discovery of Nazi Germany's death camps, Aryan discourse faded except in some of the somehow racist neo-Nazi inclinations but, Iranians continue to refer to the Aryan race and their connection to Europeans, even in their academic production (Lincoln, Dumezil, 1998, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, p. 148). In Zia-Ebrahimi's book, the terms "Aryan" and "Indo-European" is used interchangeably but eventually "Aryan" became preferable because it is more appealing than the scientific "Indo-European". Historically, a French orientalist who lived in India from 1755 to 1761 and learned Sanskrit, Persian, and other Eastern languages came up with the term aryen for the first time in a speech in 1763. This word is derived from ancient Iranian term ariya (Histoire de l'Academie Royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1768, as cited in Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016, pp. 149-150). Then, Anqueti-Duperron found ariya in Avesta and Europeanized it. Herodotus also used the term arioi for Medes people who produced Avesta (2016, p. 149-150). According to Zia-Ebrahimi, semantically, the evolution happened in 1819 by Friedrich Schlegel when he translated "Aryan" as a modern racial

category. This translation became widespread in Europe (2016, p. 150). All in all, Persian nationalism which Zia-Ebrahimi called dislocative nationalism is founded by Akhundzadeh and Kermani and eventually became a part of domestic policies in the region of Reza Shah. Not only this nationalism failed to indicate the reality of Iran but also it is a kind of defense mechanism to deny its backwardness and create an 'other' to make it responsible for its failures. This ideology could not fill the gap between Western and Iranian nationalism in a way that meets all Iranians' aspirations (2016, pp. 215-216).

Zia-Ebrahimi argues that these failures have two reasons. First, it is excessively romantic which refers to its being instinctive and emotional impulses that prevent analyzing the real shortcomings. For example, instead of improving society and economy, in 1971, Mohammad Reza Shah had a costly birthday party for the "Persian Empire" with guests from around the world. Second, it has authoritarian tendencies. In dislocative nationalism all the differences with 'we' in the society are doomed to be eliminated such as language, religious beliefs, culture, and appearance because they are the sign of backwardness.

In other words, this approach eliminates the diversities by violating individuals' integrity. In the both reigns, Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah on other ethnic groups eventually alienated a large part of society. This alienation and resentment can somehow explain why the abdication of Reza Shah and the Islamic Revolution in 1979 was welcomed by the majority of people (although the 1979 revolution has other complex forces). After the Pahlavi dynasty, the Islamic Republic also continued the same path by implementing repressive policies against the differences somehow by converting Aryanism into Shi'ism and adopting some criteria of dislocative nationalism selectively (2016, pp.215-218).

As I stated in the first paragraph of this chapter, Iran is a multiethnic country in which both governments tried to unite all ethnicities under a singular ideology by neglecting the identity of individuals. One by going to 2500 years earlier and focusing on the Aryan race of Iranians and the other by going to 1400 years early and referring to the religion of Islam. According to Shaffer, states are based on the existence of a nation and national and ethnic identity are the characteristics of the stability of a nation (Shaffer, 2002, p. 11). By taking Shaffer's statement into account, I think both of these

dislocative nationalisms were successful in uniting Iranians and creating a state but, because of the internal resentment of minorities this state has been always like a glass that has been threatened to be dropped and shattered into nations. Therefore, nation and ethnic identity is important. As we can see in the 2022 protests in Iran, as this government accuse any ethnic activities being separatism, one of the strategies of the Islamic Republic to repress the protests is to propagate the danger of the dismembering of the state by separatists, that is the redline of pan-Iranians (ancient Iranian ideas). This strategy could somehow manipulate public opinion and be partly successful but it could not stabilize the situation at this moment in 2022. It is assumed that the Islamic Republic brought some intimacy into the diverse people of Iran, especially among those minorities who had a significant engagement in activities against the Pahlavi dynasty during 1925-1979; on the contrary, not only Islamization was not the opposition of Persianization but also the Persian centralization has continued under the clergypersons (Gerecht, 2021).

4.1. Iranian Minority Policy

The Islamic Republic has a long history of suppressing all ethnic activities by imprisoning, assassinating, and executing political and cultural leaders and those who join these movements. The government denies the existence of non-Persians or persianize other ethnic groups. Its representatives and Persian intellectuals claim that all of the minorities who live in Iran are genetically Persian and the historical foreign invasions and current neighboring countries change and effect their languages.

The regime has several strategies for suppressing and assimilating the ethnic challenges which are generally based on neglecting identity by any means. For example, to boycott the Turkic people's ethnic activities, they repeatedly claim that Turkish people are forced to speak Turkish during the Ottoman and Mongolian invasions (while Mongolian and Turkish are two different languages). One of the officials who said such a statement is Ali Yunesi, the advisor of the former president, Hasan Rouhani (Daily Sabah, 2018, as cited in Gerecht, 2021). In facing of Sunni people's challenges, the government tries to call the activities, the perpetrators who are the members of terroristic groups, Islamic states, or other extremists like Al-Qaeda.

In other words, by calling the minorities insistently by referring to the language they speak like "Arabic speakers", "Turkish speakers", or "Kurdish speakers", the government tries to systematically somehow indirectly impose the idea that all of the Iranians are Persian. As a matter of fact, it is the same policy as the Pahlavi Dynasty.

The government also prohibits minorities from registering names for their newborn children in their languages. In 2022, VOA news published an article about 'Forbidden Names'. According to the article, official Iranian nationalists use their position and manipulate the decisions to maintain the domination of Persians. They even interfere in minority groups' selecting names for their children, a right that does not violate the law. By making the bureaucracy difficult for minorities, the Iranian authorities create a condition to tire the families and make them surrender and revise their decision. This article was published when an Iranian Azerbaijani lawyer, Sina Yousefi twitted about a child who could win the Turkish name for himself, Turkay in the court. On February 14, the Marand High Court in East Azerbaijan, one of the northwest provinces of Iran, ruled that the newborn child could not be named Turkay. His parents did not give up and decided to fight back. After two months, the Appellate Court announced that the name is not on the list of forbidden names and the family could use it. After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the government prepared a list of approved names including Persian and Shi'ite ones for children and forced families to pick up among them. Authorities argue that unapproved names could unveil the existence of multiple ethnicities and highlight their differences (Hussein et al, 2022). Despite the efforts of the Islamic government and the difficulties that they created, families are fighting back by taking their complaint to the court. However, the head of the Civil Registry in the province of East Azerbaijan stated that forty percent of names are Turkish (Azar Anjoman News, 2021, as cited in Gerecht, 2021, p. 19).

According to Article 19 of the Islamic Republic's Constitution, all rights of the people of Iran, from any ethnic group, with any color and language are reserved. However, Article 15 designates Persian as the state's official language, it also designates that the regional and ethnic languages can be freely used in the mass media, the press, and literature at schools. All these rights are legal but they are not protected. Article 16 refers to the right to study Arabic in grades of junior high school, while it is not allowed as a language of instruction in education. In reality, operating schools in

the languages of minorities are not allowed and the teachers who try to do so or have private lessons with students in their mother tongues would be prosecuted or imprisoned. Furthermore, government services including police integrations or court appearances are just offered in Persian and if the citizen under investigation is from another ethnic groups, he/she would not receive translations which could lead to wrong convictions (Gerecht, 2021, p. 20).

In 2019, the government passed a law on sufficiency in the Persian language. The Ministry of Education announced that five- and six-years old children would be required to take Persian proficiency tests before they begin their first grade of elementary school (Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA), 2019, as cited in Gerecht, 2021, p.20). The children who fail these tests would be placed in special education schools with disabled children as slow learners or hearing-impaired. Therefore, this policy forces ethnic minority families with different mother tongues to teach Persian at home. This policy would be also implemented in teaching applicants with thick accents. In this case, they would not be qualified to serve as teachers. As I mentioned formerly, language is one of the significant ethnic boundaries that define identity. Therefore, it is not surprising that the government allocates most part of the minority policies to suppressing ethnic languages however, it is not just limited to assimilating languages.

Although the Islamic Republic charges anyone who is against the regime's ideology, the execution rates are higher among ethnic minorities. Membership in an ethnic political organization is prohibited in Iran and in order to suppress ethnic activities, the regime charges the activists with the war against God, anti-Islamic propaganda, defamation of the state, or separatism, even if these groups assert rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution. Abbas Lisani is one of the most well-known Azerbaijani political prisoners whom the government sentenced to eight years for "making propaganda against the Islamic Republic" and "leading a group to disrupt the security of the country". He promoted his native language by writing poems and stories. The government has held him in an Ardabil prison since 2018. In his Appellate Court in 2019, his sentence was extended to fifteen years with two years in exile. During the anti-regime demonstrations in November 2017, and protests in November 2019, which is also called Bloody November, ethnic minorities were significantly

active. According to Javid Rehman, the United Nations Human Rights in Iran, hundreds of ethnic minorities' activists were arrested, including Kurds and Azerbaijani Turks. The regime treated Arabs even more harshly by massacring them in the province of Khuzestan (Situation of Human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2020, as cited in Gerecht, 2021).

Province Gerrymandering is another policy of the Islamic Republic which was also practiced during the Pahlavi Dynasty. First, in 1935, Reza Shah divided the Arab-dominated region, al-Ahwaz into several provinces. Then in 1937, he separated Zanjan and Qazvin from Azerbaijan State. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, in 1993, the government of Tehran divided the Province of East Azerbaijan into to two separate provinces; East Azerbaijan and Ardebil. By practicing such a policy, the government tries to prevent possible ethnic domination in the provinces.

Changing the names of the geographic areas from native language to Persian is another systematic policy of the regime. For example, the Arabic and historical name of the city of Khorramshahr is al-Mohammarah (Gerecht, 2021, pp. 22-23) Starting from the Pahlavi Period, some regions of Southern Azerbaijan were united with other regions under the name of administrative divisions. After the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, the policy of removing the name Azerbaijan from the administrative units continued. The Iranian state did not take into account the sensitivity and objections of the Azerbaijanis on this issue. Certain parts of the historical lands of Azerbaijan are divided between Gilan and Kurdistan provinces under the name of the administrative unit. In this process from the Pahlavi Period to the present day, it was contented with the erasure of the name of Azerbaijan from its historical lands, as well as regions, cities, villages, streams, rivers, nature, etc. Most of the native Turkish names were changed into Persian made-up names (Mehdizadeh, 2021, p. 56).

Here I reviewed a discussion about Azerbaijani identity awareness that is uploaded on BBC Persian YouTube channel on 2015 to bring overall reasons of Azerbaijani identity movements and Iran minority policies into notice. The guests are Simin Sabri who is psychiatrist and a feminist and ethnic activist, Kamran Salehi who is the founder of Aznews TV, and Farhang Jahanpour who is a Middle East history researcher. This discussion starts with some questions like; why are identification feelings are rising in

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Iran's Azerbaijan? What is the correct behavior in dealing with ethnic and identification movements? Because of the Iranian government's suppressing minority policies and its suffocating political atmosphere, identification movements have increased recently specially among the Turkic ethnicity in the Azerbaijan region. According to Sabri, the identification movements in Azerbaijan is not a new issue and there are several reasons that why it has been increased nowadays. One of them is the cybernetic revolution in Iran in the last two decades which helps Azerbaijanis and even other non-Persians to be aware of thoughts and actions around the world as fast as possible. This circulation of news plays a significant role in increasing identical awareness. As an example, the slogans that Azerbaijanis shout during the Tractor's matches in Persian Gulf Pro League is one of the stimuli. The other reason is the existence of a country, named the Republic of Azerbaijan that although it is not a democratic state, in which Azerbaijani Turkish people are studding their own language, literature and culture. It makes Iranian Azerbaijanis to think about their suppressed mother tongue and their assimilated culture.

Kamrani also adds another reason. He believes that the issue of the drying up of the Lake Urmia is intentional and it is a part of minority policies. This lake is one-fourth as salty as the Dead Sea and it is among the fifteen saltiest lakes in the world. He states that alongside the suppressed cultural aspect of Turkic identity, a droughty lake would annihilate the existence of Turkish people of the region by the tons of salt that will be left behind. While if Azerbaijan were an independent region, it would definitely prevent this catastrophe. He also explained that it is intentional because by destroying this ecosystem, a massive stream of Azerbaijanis would flow into the central Persian majority regions of Iran. Therefore, this reluctant immigration would eventually erase the name of Azerbaijan from the map. He adds that Aral Sea which is located in Kazakhstan disappeared during the government of Soviet Union because of the almost same policies. After Kazakhstan became independent, they have not allowed such calamitous events happen again.

I think that Jahanpour has inconsistent ideas, he states that statistically, Persians are the majority. On the other hand, he adds that the economic power is under the control of Turkish groups. However, Sabri disagrees and she states that there is several disinformation about Turkic ethnicities of Iran among both international and internal

arena. One of them is that according to some scholars and analyzers, market and trade of Iran is mostly under control of Turkish people so, it indicates that there are no suppression or discrimination. However, Sabri believes that first of all we should clarify the difference between the individual rights or collective rights of a nation. She states that according to the lack of economic opportunities in non-central cities of Iran, most of the people immigrate to Tehran. Therefore, an immigrated Turkish individual who is melted in the culture of capital city cannot benefit the collective rights of the ethnic group.

Moreover, Kamrani mentions that according to the article 44 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, almost seventy percent of the economy belongs to the government. Therefore, Jahanpour's claim has no validity. He states that both of the last governments accept the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination but, they neglect one of the articles which refers to self-identification. There is no static information about the ethnicities' members in Iran. He also refers to economic discrimination against non-Persians specially Azerbaijanis and their being majority by giving an example. Because of the unemployment and poverty, most of the Azerbaijanis moved to other cities like: Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and even Zahedan which is very hot and unbearable for Azerbaijanis as workers. This large-scale movement indicates the dense population of Azerbaijanis. In addition, Kamrani also refers to Ali Akbar Salehi, the former Foreign Minister's statement during an official visit to Türkiye in January 2012. Salehi pointed out that there are several commonalities between Iran and Türkiye, almost 40 percent of Iranians speak Turkish (HarayHarayMenTurkem, 2012).

Jahanpour states that discrimination exists everywhere. He believes all these discriminations can be solved by creating a democratic structure while Sabri disagrees with this statement by giving the example of the Sami people in democratic Norway that were living in shadow for decades. She argues that democracy cannot solve discrimination because the national-ethnic issue is a collective issue, not an individual one. She believes democracy would not work while it is top-down and a federative administration is a solution because it will establish democracy from the bottom up and decentralize the power. A decentralized power structure prevents political scandals and enables administrating. On the other hand, Kamrani has a completely different

idea about eliminating discrimination in Iran. He believes that the independence of South Azerbaijan is the only solution just like what happened in former Czechoslovakia with a peaceful referendum. According to Kamrani, establishing a federative administration in Iran is impossible because the Azerbaijani people have failed three times in trying this throughout history. The first failure is the Constitutional Revolution which happened in 1905 and lasted until 1911. The second failure is the movement of Shaikh Mohammad Khiabani in 1920, and the third one is the establishment of the Azerbaijan People's Government in 1945 by Sayyed Jafar Pishevari (BBC Persian, 2015).

4.2. Iranian Azerbaijanis

Geographically, the region of (South) Azerbaijan is located in the northwest of Iran, west of the Caspian Sea, and south of the Aras River. Internationally, it shares a border with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the north; with Türkiye and Iraq in the west, and through these common borders, Iran is connected to Europe, and Caucasia. According to legislation in 1906, Iran was divided into four states and twelve provinces. One of the states was Azerbaijan which included cities such as Ardabil, Urmia, Tabriz, Khoy, Salmas, Maku, Marand, Maraghe, Mahabad, Miandoab, Miyane, Ahar, Astara, Khalkhal, Sarab, Meshginshar, and Shahin Dezh while, Zanjan, another Turkic region was one of the twelve provinces (Mehdizade, 2021, p. 56). The current Iran is subdivided into thirty-one provinces. The northwest of Iran is mainly inhabited by Azerbaijanis which includes the provinces such as West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardebil, Zanjan, Qazvin, and Hamedan.

In the today's Islamic Republic of Iran, Turks are in second place according to some in terms of demographics and even in the first place according to others. The Turkish population in Iran is divided into three main groups. The largest number of this population are Azerbaijani Turks, the second group is Turkmens and Khorasan Turks living in the provinces bordering Turkmenistan, and the third group is Kashkay Turks, who predominantly live in the Fars province. According to Sarıkaya, as a matter of fact, there is no doubt that they are much more than twice the population of the independent Azerbaijan Republic (Sarıkaya, 2008). Since Iran's official state

institutions have not published any comprehensive official source on the population distribution of Turks in Iran, there is no exact number on this issue. Iran Statistical Center, which is responsible for creating statistical databases and census in Iran, keeps data on ethnic distribution closed to access, but according to the World Bank Country Profiles database, Turks constitute 42% of Iran's population (Ütük, 2002, p.10). According to the former Foreign Minister of Iran in 2014, 40 percent of Iranians speak Turkish which is the only available official statement. According to this ratio, stated by Salehi, if we consider the last census conducted in Iran in 2016, thirty-two million of Iran's population of 80 million is Turks. Turkish nationalists give a figure of thirty to forty million Turkish population living in and outside the territory of Southern Azerbaijan within the official borders of Iran. After the division of the Azerbaijan region into two after the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 and the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, although the will of the Iranian Azerbaijanis was ignored, the understanding of the Azerbaijanis from their homeland and their Turkishness became stronger by feeding on each other in north and south Azerbaijan over time (Mehdizadeh, 2021, p.58).

The cultural modernization started with the Turkish Qajar dynasty in the 1850s, in which the Azerbaijanis had a significant role. However, as time passes, the modernization process changed in favor of Persians and against Azerbaijanis. According to Atabaki, there were three movements and revolutions in the twentieth century among Iranian Azerbaijanis. During the last days of the Qajar Dynasty, the privileges granted to foreigners by the state played a significant role in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911 as the first revolt that began by Khiabani. He was seeking radical reforms within the Iranian nation-state rather than the independent or autonomous Azerbaijan. He was influenced by European ideology in the eighteenth century. Khiabani opposed the centralized administration and he was looking for a fair distribution of powers throughout Iran. The main problem that he faced with is that he could not unite the division between himself and those who were against any movements that would directly or indirectly influence the power of Tehran and weaken the integrity of the country. While he was utterly against seeking support from foreign powers, his uncompromising attitude made the negotiation impossible with the central government and other contemporary reformists like Mirza Kuchak Khan in Gilan.

Finally, the government put an end to Khiyabani's movement in August 1920 by killing fifty Democrats including Khiyabani himself (Atabaki, 2005, pp. 33-35). All in all, according to Shaffer, Azerbaijanis felt that their position was weakened by the centralization of the system in Iran. Therefore, they objected to it (Mehdizade, 2021, p. 60).

Mehdizade argues that in the Constitutional Movement initiated against the monarchical system, Azerbaijan opposed the monopoly of Tehran with all power they had according to the conditions of the period. Over the past 100 years, the Constitutional Movement not only could clarify its red lines but also gradually became more determined. All in all, the Constitutional Revolution in the recent history of Southern Azerbaijan indicates the historical struggle, covering and aiming at many rights (from the right to education in the mother tongue to the right to independence) (Mehdizade, 2021, p. 59).

Iranian Azerbaijanis tried to build their identity not on religious grounds but, on language and other cultural characteristics. The common religion did not cause a convergence between the two nations (İpek, 2012, p.273). Being Azerbaijani was a privilege during the Constitutional Era. However, in the Pahlavi period, this affiliation was tried to be made inferior. In other words, the Pahlavi dynasty began to create a cultural-psychological environment to alienate Iranian Azerbaijanis from their national identity. By humiliating Turkishness, they emphasized that Azerbaijanis are not Turks.

The second movement in Azerbaijan was initiated in 1945-46 by Jafar Pishevari. On 2 September 1945, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party published a declaration with 12 articles in Tabriz. In this declaration, while maintaining the integrity and independence of Iran, the people of Azerbaijan demanded internal freedom, cultural autonomy, and the right to self-government. In the declaration, all social, economic, and political issues that the state and provincial councils wanted to be re-established were also mentioned (Keskin, 2018). In October 1945, the congress of the ADP approved the declaration published on September 2 and decided to establish national autonomy and make Turkish the official language. After the congress, the national assembly elections were held, and women voted for the first time in these elections. Jafar Pishevari was appointed by the Azerbaijan National Parliament to establish the national government. Then, On December 12, 1945, he could proclaim the National

Government of Azerbaijan. Pishevari is one of the distinguished and experienced intellectuals of the period and was imprisoned in Iran from 1930 to 1941 (Reza Pahlavi Period) due to his political activities. After the World War II, the Soviet army, withdrawing from the north of Iran, tied the north of the Aras River to itself but left Tabriz and its surroundings to Iran. Thus, the Tehran administration has tied Southern Azerbaijan back to itself (Shaffer, 2002). Some of the most important achievements of the Azerbaijan National Government in its short one-year life are as follows: Announcing Azerbaijani Turkish as the official language in the region of Azerbaijan, establishing the University of Tabriz, granting women the right to vote, and sharing lands among the villagers.

Pishevari was a Marxist-Leninist who considered Iranian Azerbaijanis a separate nation. The intervention of foreigners, especially Britain and the United States in Iran's internal affairs was mistrusted by Iranians. Therefore, Pishevari's tendency toward the Soviet Union and the existence of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan made other political activities reluctant to support Azerbaijani Democrats. Because they become suspicious that this is one of the Soviet Union's annexing policies or Pishevari's desire to secede from Iranian Azerbaijanis. Despite Pishevari's estimation, the Soviets negatively reacted and did not back the Azerbaijani Democrats. Although Pishevari reformed the electoral and educational system, the alienated Iranian Azerbaijanis from Pishevari's government, along with the negative response of the Soviets led the autonomous government to a gradual collapse. Pishevari had a threatening tone but he changed it and called all Iranians to support democracy in Iran. In December 1946, one year after the establishment of the autonomous government came to an end. The Iranian army assaulted Azerbaijan and faced resistance but defeated the Azerbaijani Democrats which resulted in high casualties and mass migration to Soviet Azerbaijan (Atabaki, 2005, pp. 36-37).

According to Shaffer, there were three main reasons behind the participation of the Turks of Azerbaijan in the revolutionary movements against the Shah: First, the Turks had dispersed to various regions within Iran for years, and some of them moved to Tehran and other distant cities during the Reza Shah Era because of the uneven economic developments. Therefore, this dispersion enables them to act whenever needed. Secondly, like other minorities in the country, most of the Turkic groups also

had complaints against the regime. Finally, many Turkish political and cultural leaders were killed by the central government in the events of 1920 and 1946, and some of them were exiled (Shaffer, 2002).

The third movement happened after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Two weeks after the establishment of the Islamic regime on 11 February, Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari set the Muslim People's Republican Party. Atabaki stated that one of the objectives of this party was that the Islamic regime should be a multi-party government. In addition, the MPRP argued that people should be given more choices than the Islamic Republic or monarchy in the plebiscite of April 1979 which was held to determine the political system of government. People voted for the Islamic Republic in the referendum of April. The MPRP also opposed the new Constitution because, despite the ruling clerics' promise of was constituent assembly with 500 members, it was the Assembly of Experts with 73 members that Ayatollah Khomeini opted for. Ayatollah Shariatmadari replaced the Assembly of Experts with the Constituent Assembly. The members of the Constituent Assembly were the MPRP and mostly Azerbaijani sympathizers. This group boycotted the constitutional referendum in December 1979 because they were against the extent of *Velayat-e Faqih'*s (the nature of the Islamic regime) authority. Therefore, once again the streets in Azerbaijan especially Tabriz turned into a bloody scene in which the supporters of Ayatollah Shariatmadari confronted the supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini. When this confrontation changed into a military intervention, Ayatollah Shariatmadari disassociated himself from the MPRP and put an end to the turmoil (Atabaki, 2005, pp. 39-40).

Except these three main movements in the history of Iranian Azerbaijan, there are no considerable activities than limited publication mainly among ex-Marxists and the foundation of Azerbaijan Society by Javad Heyat, Mohammad Ali Farzane, Hamid Notqi, Hossein Ali Katebi. After the 1980 Iran-Iraq war in which the Azerbaijanis were the forerunners and then during the President Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and President Khatami (1997-2005), the concept of ethnic identity and ethnic rights gradually faded and replaced with citizenship and individual rights (Atabaki, 2005, p. 40).

The collapse of the Soviet Union made Iran to face with a new issue which was the newly independent countries on the northern frontiers of Iran. Because Iran and some

of those republics are home of the same ethnic groups, once again the possibility of seceding Azerbaijan from Iran raised (Atabaki, 2005, p.40). By taking Atabaki's argument into account, I think because of three reasons, the ideology of seceding Iranian Azerbaijanis faded. The first one is the struggles that the Republic of Azerbaijan were dealing with under the opposing policy of the Soviet Union and internal conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh region. The second one is the short and unsuccessful governance of Abulfazl Elchibay who was elected in 1992 and were very passionate for Azerbaijani nation and had radical tendency toward uniting both Azerbaijan. The third one is the failure of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the first war of Nagorno-Karabakh. These reasons somehow isolated the Iranian Azerbaijani but, as I mentioned earlier and as Atabaki responded to the Newsweek magazine's interview in 1997, nothing is eternal because Iran is a multi-ethnic country with discriminative minority policy (Atabaki, 2005, pp. 43-44).

Mehmet Emin Resulzade, the founder of the Republic of Azerbaijan, writes about the situation of Turks in Iran during the Qajar's Period that the Turks in Iran were neither dominant as in Türkiye nor convicted as they were in Russia. The fact that Iranian rulers are Turkish does not confer any special privileges on the Turks, and it also underlines that it does not cause pressure on the Persian nation. But this situation has changed since the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty. Turkic groups constitute half of the population in Iran and the absolute majority in Southern Azerbaijan. From the 11th century until the emergence of the Pahlavi regime in 1925, the political power of Iran was generally Turkish. In addition, the ethnicity of the government and the cultural structure of the country was influenced by both Turkish and Persian cultural characteristics. During most of these periods, the capital of the various empires stood out in the Azerbaijan region. From the 11th century to 1920, Tabriz was the most important commercial center in today's Iran (Shaffer, 2002).

As I mentioned earlier, the Islamic government selectively chose the characteristics of Persian nationalism to oppress the non-Persian ethnic groups. According to Sarıkaya, in the modern period of Iran, tools such as jokes, idioms, films, and caricatures targeting the Turkish identity and figures are used to overpower the Persian identity. He also states that among Persians, there are stereotypes against various ethnic groups, especially those living in underdeveloped regions. Persians carry these

stereotypes everywhere regardless of where they live. Turkic groups tolerated this situation knowingly. However, it was the last straw when a state broadcaster gave place to words that amounted to insults by going beyond the border of politeness (Sarıkaya, 2008, p. 223).

Several actions have taken place against Turkic people until today, but two of them resulted in serious protests. The first one is the May uprisings in 2006. On May 12, 2006, the Turks were subjected to a great humiliation with a cartoon in the official newspaper of Iran. In the special supplement for children of the Iranian Friday magazine Iran-e-Jomee, an article has been published under the title of: "What should we do to prevent cockroaches from cockroaching us?" One of the cartoons in the article indicates a dialogue between a child who tries to speak in a cockroach language with a cockroach that uses the word "namana", which means "what" in Azerbaijani Turkish. In other words, the Turkish speech of the insect represents its Turkish identity and language which is not understandable for Persians. In addition, the article refers to the parasite-like life of cockroaches that do not understand other languages, and breed by feeding on excrement. In a week, Thousands of people joined the protests initiated by the students of the University of Urmia and then Tabriz University an hour later on May 20, 2006, and the protests that started from the universities spread to the streets of Southern Azerbaijan. The protests were not only limited to Southern Azerbaijan but also took place in many regions where Azerbaijanis live intensely, especially in Tehran. Gradually, thousands of people rioted in the streets in Tabriz, Urmia, Ardabil, Marand, Khoy, Naghade, and Meshkinshar chanting the slogans "Azerbaycan var olsun, istemeyen kör olsun" (Azerbaijan Long live, let them be blind who cannot see), "Haray haray men Turkem" (Hey hey, I am Turk) to target Persian chauvinism. The clashes lasted for hours and resulted in the state's intervention with weapons. More than fifty people were killed, hundreds were injured, and thousands were imprisoned (Gerecht, 2021, p. 28).

The second one is the November uprisings in 2015. "Fitile" was the children's program broadcast every Friday on Iran's official state television channel 2. On November 6, 2015, a scene broadcasted about a Turkish boy staying in the hotel for the first time, cleaning his teeth with a toilet brush because he had not seen a toothbrush before. Therefore, he was spreading a terrible smell. The program was not live and it

was about seven minutes. Hence, it indicated the systematic assimilation and humiliation of Turkic ethnicities in Iran for years. This program also resulted in a wide range of objections. As May 2006, the first protest was initiated by the students of Urmia University in November 2015. On November 9, 2015, in almost all cities of Azerbaijan, especially in Tabriz, Urmia, Zanjan, Maraghe, Marand, Naghade, and Ardabil, thousands of Turks went to the streets to declare their objection. Objections were not limited to a day or two. Thousands of Azerbaijani Turks marched on the streets in various parts of North West of Iran, accompanied by slogans. Iranian police used force against the civilized marches with batons and tear gas. They arrested dozens of Iranian Azerbaijani, but the people who went to the streets in a civilized manner to protest did not retreat. The protests continued despite all the pressure, and other Turkic groups living in Tehran also participated in the protest. Kashkay Turks collectively declared that they were with Azerbaijan and unfurled banners with the words "We are Turks and we are with Azerbaijan" in a match held in Shiraz. The Iranian Arabs also declared their support to the Turks. In addition, these protests were broadcast by many powerful news agencies around the world, such as al-Arabiya, BBC World, Washington Post, Associated Press, New York Times, Radio Liberty, al-Jazeera, especially in the news agencies and television channels of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Türkiye as the objections of South Azerbaijanis and Turks in Iran. (Mehdizade, 2021, pp. 75-76).

To evaluate the Iranian Azerbaijanis activities in the social media such as Twitter, in which individuals are sharing their personal analysis, I conducted an advanced research on hashtags of Iranian Azerbaijanis and other Turkic groups in Iran between 2010 and 2022. In the first five years of this category, there are very limited number of Iranian Azerbaijani accounts in the twitter who texted either in Azerbaijani Turkish (mostly with Arabic alphabets) or used hashtags such as (#Türkçe) (#تورکجه) (Turkish) which means Turkish. The content of these tweets is generally about daily routines texted in Azerbaijani Turkish. During the incident of "Fitile" in 2015 and during the Four-Days War of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2016, the number of accounts and Turkish texts considerably increased. The content of tweets was mostly about Azerbaijani mother tongue with hashtags like; (#Fitile), (#Türk) (Turkish) because of the racism in the children program of "Fitile". For Four Day War of Karabakh, accounts twitted

about the war with hashtags such as; (آناديليم#) (My mother tongue), (آذربايجان#) (Azerbaijan).

By the rising tensions about the crisis of Urmia Lake among Iranian Azerbaijanis, in 2017, 2018, and 2019, new hashtags were added by them in Twitter to help Iranian Turkic groups to write Turkish either with Arabic or Latin alphabet. For example, the hashtag of (توركجه_جومالار#) (Turkish Fridays) became trend to practice writing Turkish on Fridays. In addition, the hashtags of (منی_تاپ#) (Find me) were created for Iranian Turkic accounts to find each other on Twitter. Despite the tweets of ten years ago, in the last years of this time category, especially in the 2020 war of Nagorno-Karabakh and after that, the number of the Iranian Azerbaijani and other Turkic groups' accounts increased considerably because by the time one searches several accounts appear under frequent hashtags such as (آرازی_آييرديلار#) (They divided Aras River), and (من_خود_آذربايجانم#) (I am Azerbaijan).

CHAPTER V

MEDIA ANALYSIS OF IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN 2020 WAR

While the Islamic Republic claims its foreign policy is based on Islamic ideology, in the case of the conflict between Christian Armenia and Shiite Azerbaijan, this remained mostly at the discursive level and the government pursued policies not exactly parallel to the declared policy line. I contend that the Islamic regime hoped that the war would gradually erode the newly independent Azerbaijan and weaken the growing connection betweenAzerbaijan and its Azerbaijani minorities.

Shortly after the newly independent republics were born and USSR collapsed, Tehran Times published that the Islamic government is concerned about the political instability of the newly independent republics especially Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, because Iran shares over 2000 kilometers with these countries. Any unstable condition could insecure Iran, because there are foreign hands brewing discord among Iranian Azeris and Turkmen by creating ethnic and nationalistic sentiments (Tehran Times, 1991, p. 2, as cited in Gerecht, 2021, p. 37). Although Iran underestimated Iranian Azerbaijanis' opposition toward its foreign policy in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, alliance with Armenia became domestically costly (Shaffer, 2020, as cited in Gerecht, 2021, p. 38).

In the 2020 war, Baku's retaking control of its occupied regions bordering Iran caused great pleasure among Iranian Azerbaijanis. They were even gathered at the border to observe and support the soldiers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. To suppress this jubilance, the government arrested hundreds of protesters and activists (Gerecht, 2021, p. 38).

The Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy toward the second war of Nagorno-Karabakh is somehow controversial because the claims and statements of the authorities contradict with what they do. For example, despite transferring Russian

military equipment to Armenia and official meetings with Armenian authorities, they always claim their support of Azerbaijan and Islamic territories.

On November 4, 2020, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic regime, stated that Armenia should understand that the occupied regions undeniably belong to Azerbaijan. The sooner Armenia evacuate the occupied regions the better. Otherwise, it will pay the price. This conflict should be solved immediately to prevent the possible instabilities and the presence of terrorists in the Caucasia. In addition, he insisted on providing security for Armenian residents in the occupied regions (Irna, 2020). Radiofarda also published an article about the Islamic governement's support of Azerbaijan. Along with the Supreme Leader, Ali Rabei, the governement's spokesman, and Ali Akbar Velayati, Khamenei's international politics counseller, also stated that Armenia should evacuate the occupied regions of Karabakh (Radiofarda, 2020).

On November 18, 2021, the news website of the Constitutional Council of Iran also published a piece about the statements of Mohsen Pakaein, the former ambassador of Iran to Azerbaijan. Pakaein stated that the Supreme Leader believes in the fair peace. A peace in which the evacuation of occupied regions and the safety of the Armenian residents is provided. He also stated that this dispute began with the Armenian ambition and paved the way for the presence of foreigners such as the OSCE Minsk Group and Zionists. He argued that the Zionist regime and France sold dangerous weapons to Azerbaijan and exchanged information with Armenia. On the other hand, he also mentioned that the Supreme Leader disagrees with the border change and criticizes the presence of terrorists in the war, a claim which both Türkiye and Azerbaijan deny (Shora-GC, 2020).

On the other hand, there are some other developments which instigated resentment and anger among the Iranian Azerbaijanis. Even before the war of 2020, on February 28th 2019, the photo shared by the Tehran Armenian Caliphate on social media (Figure 1) in which, Pashinyan, the Prime Minster of Armenia took a selfie in the Ararat Club of Tehran with the background of a banner which "Karabakh is Armenia" is written. This photo resulted in the Iranian Azerbaijanis' reaction. On 29th of February, during the match between the two teams of Tractorsazi of Tabriz and Sepahan of Isfahan, which was held at the Yadegar Imam Stadium in Tabriz, the Tractorsazi's fans chanted

the slogan of "Qarabağ bizimdir, bizim qalacaq", (Karabakh is ours, and it will remain ours). They also set fire to the flag of Armenia. In addition, Hadi Bahadori, Urmia's representative in the parliament stated that the Minister of Foreign Affairs should be questioned regarding if and how such an incident happened inside the borders of Iran. The presence of Pashinyan in Tehran was a day after the anniversary of the Khojali massacre. This incident also ended in negative reactions of news agencies such as TRT and Anadolu Agency (AA) in Türkiye (Kayhan, 2019).

Figure 1: Pashinyan selfie in the Ararat Club in Tehran
Source: Kayhan

According to the Facebook Channel of Azturkxabarleri, Qomnews Twitter account which belongs to the clergies of Qom, twitted a text on September 27th 2020 in which they condemned the Republic of Azerbaijan's assault to Karabakh region and called it a cruel act. After facing the protests of Iranian Azerbaijanis, Qomnews deleted the tweet and claimed that it was an incorrect translation from foreign news agencies (Azturkxabarleri, 2020).

Figure 2: The screenshot of the deleted tweet of Qomnews about condemning Azerbaijan
Source: Azturkxabarleri

On 22 October 2020, IRANGLOBAL published an article about the historical reasons of Iran supporting Armenia. It was argued that the 2020 war of Karabakh is not just a territorial conflict but an issue of life or death for Azerbaijan and Armenia as well as a central issue concerning the power and interests of Iran, Türkiye, and Russia. In the article, it was argued that Iran's position in this conflict is against the Shiite Azerbaijan yet this was a complicated issue as the Iranian Azerbaijanis support Azerbaijan (IRANGLOBAL, 2020).

The news agency of GAMAC (Güney Azərbaycan Milli Azadlıq Cəbhəsi), reported that according to the Russian official news agencies, Iran's transfer of heavy military equipment to Armenia continued. According to the same news source, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan claimed that after the Armenian attacks to Tovuz in September, Iran transferred more than 400 tons of military equipment to Armenia through air. The equipment was transferred from Russia to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan,

Iran, and then to Armenia by an "AN-30" Russian airplane. President Aliyev claimed that it is not surprising that Iran is supporting Armenia by transferring Russian military equipment (GAMAC, 2020). According to GAMAC news agency, Iran was also transferring Russian weapons to Armenia through Nordooz, the East Azerbaijani province bordering Armenia. In the first days of the 2020 war, the Iranian authorities met with the Armenian authorities. Mojtaba Zolnuri, the chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Iranian Parliament met with Artashes Tumanyan, the Ambassador of Armenia to Iran. This means that on one hand Islamic regime of Iran calls itself the supporter of Muslims and Shiite in the world; while on the other it acted as one of the main allies of Armenia (GAMAC, 2020). According to Aznews, Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Iranian Foreign Minister Spokesman denied the transfer of the military equipment to Armenia and claimed that they would never let such things happen. On the other hand, Aliyar Rastgoo, Political and Security Deputy of the Governor of East Azerbaijani Province confirmed the passage of trailers but he claimed that they were not transferring military equipment (Aznews, 2020).

Figure 3: The military tracks transferring to Armenia
Source: BBC NEWS

On the first days of the Karabakh war, Iran placed its ground Forces in the northwestern border areas of the country. According to Tasnim news agency, the aim

of this maneuver is to emphasize its authority and general combat readiness (Tasnim, 2020). A year later, on September 27th 2021, Ilham Aliyev stated that it remained a puzzle why Iran did not maneuver in the border area earlier when Jabrail, Zangilan, and Fuzuli were under the control of Armenia? Why after thirty years when Azerbaijan could take back the occupied regions, Iran held a maneuver? Aliyev added that the government of Iran tried to deceive Azerbaijan by using Armenian number plates on their trailers following the Islamic government's transfer of military equipment to Armenia was shared in their own media (Anadolu Agency, 2021).

After the war, the President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev, visited the liberated territories including the Khudafarin Bridge of the Aras River on the border of Azerbaijan and Iran. During his visit, an Iranian sniper pointed a gun at President Aliyev and published photos from his gun's scope (CNNTurk, 2020).

Figure 4: Iranian sniper's scope pointed at President Aliyev
Source: Milliyet

Yazeco published an article on November 12th, 2022 about the tensions between the Islamic regime and Azerbaijan. Navid Mohammadi Nasab Abad who wrote the article, stated that during the 44 days of Karabakh war, the position of Iran was not

clear and transparent. While in the first days of the war, the Supreme Leader and Iranian authorities claimed that they supported Azerbaijan, they were transferring military equipment to Armenia at the same time. Later, Imams of Friday Prayer claimed their support of Azerbaijan in a statement to silence the protests of Iranian Azerbaijanis. As of 2022, the same source reported that it was now the time to create the Zangezor Corridor to connect Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan. Türkiye and Azerbaijan invited neighboring countries such as Iran, Russia, Georgia and Armenia to create an economic block in the region. Iran did neither reject nor accept the proposal (Yazeco, 2022).

Anadolu Agency published an article on 21 November 2022, which is about the increased awareness of Iranian Azerbaijanis during the 2020 war of N.Karabakh. According to Prof. Dr. Mehmet Akif Okur, the lecturer of the Department of Political Science and International Relations in Yıldlz Technical University, Tehran claims that it has shaped its Karabakh policy within the framework of neutrality and is equidistant from the parties but it would experience more and more difficulties while guarding Yerevan. Because the peace operation that carried out by Turkey and Azerbaijan not only would lead to a further rise in nationalist sentiments among Iranian Turks but also it would pressure Tehran to pursue realistic policies that take into account its demographics. In addition, Dr. Serhat Afacan, the lecturer of the Institute of Middle East and Islamic Countries Studies in Marmara University stated that because Turkey politically and culturally influences Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan poses a risk to Iran therefore the Islamic regime does not want to lose Armenia. Velayati also announced that Armenia should withdraw from a part of Nagorno-Karabakh. He did not specifically state that Armenia should withdraw completely from Karabakh. Iran certainly does not want this invasion to end in favor of Azerbaijan. Babak Shahed, Iran specialist in Tabriz Research Institute, stated that Iran preferred not to stand by the Republic of Azerbaijan with its silence by avoiding expressing a clear and definite opinion in terms of rhetoric. He added that the image of transferring military trucks to Armenia from the Nordooz, Iran-Armenia border gate, caused serious indignation among the Iranian Turks and resulted in protests on October 1 and 18. This led Tehran to take a step back, at least as a rhetoric. According to Shahed, with the end of the Armenian occupation, Iran's effectiveness in the Caucasus will be weakened and

Turkish-based nationalist feelings will be strengthened among Iranian Turks (Iranian Azerbaijanis). Therefore, Iran supports Armenia in line with its own definition of interests. However, continuing this support with diplomatic language and rhetoric will not only negatively affect Iran's image of international law, but will also open up discussion of the Iranian Turks' belonging to the state.

According to Arif Keskin, Middle East and Iran specialist, although Iran has defined Armenia as an invader since 1992, it has always supported this invader. Iran always wanted the Nagorno-Karabakh lands to remain in the hands of Armenia. However, it certainly does not want a hot conflict because the conflicts cause protests inside Iran. Keskin believes that a strong Azerbaijan means a strong Turkey in the Caucasus and Iran sees it as a threat to its security. The Islamic regime also prevents Azerbaijan from being a center of attraction for Turkic groups in the country. From the beginning, the Iranian Turks consider Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of their identity. The fact that the Tehran administration supports Armenia causes the Turkish identity of the Turks in Iran to come to the fore. If the conflicts continue, the demonstrations in Iran will continue to increase (Anadolu Agency, 2022).

By taking these media contents into account, the Islamic government's nature of foreign policy toward the second war of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 and the Republic of Azerbaijan is obscure and untruthful. Although the Iranian authorities claim their support and sympathy toward the Islamic soil of Karabakh, they initiate military maneuver in the northwest of Iran where share border with Azerbaijan exactly during and after Azerbaijan victory in the war, the Iranian sniper publish his scope's photos in which he targeted President Aliyev, or they arrest Iranian Azerbaijanis when they indicate their support in the streets. On the other hand, they send military equipment to Armenia and set official meetings with Armenian authorities.

Therefore, these contradictory behaviors indicate that the Iranian governement neither support Azerbaijan nor behave neutral between its two neighboring countries. In addition, because of this somehow threatening position of the government toward Azerbaijan made the Iranian Azerbaijanis upset and made them to indicate their supports in streets and social media. As I mentioned earlier that nationalism is a reaction of the suppressing policies, the actions of the Iranian government triggered

the identity consciousness of the Iranian Azerbaijanis and paved the way for more Azerbaijani nationalist activities.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Despite ethnic identity increasingly becoming an important topic in the field of International Relations mainly as a major root cause of contemporary conflicts, I argue that the Iranian Azerbaijani ethnic identity awareness and Iranian minorities policy did not receive the attention it deserved in the international arena. By analyzing the Iranian government's minority policies within the framework of the nation-state, ethnic identity, and ethnic conflict, I argue that despite policies against the elimination or suppression of their ethnic identity, Iranian Azerbaijanis maintained their ethnic awareness and explored and mobilized against their oppression. The second war of Nagorno-Karabakh and the victory of Azerbaijan had created conducive conditions for Iranian Azerbaijanis' sense of pride in their identity. Their increasing resentment against the repressive policies grew in parallel with national identity awareness.

The Azerbaijanis on the two sides of the Aras River share common history, language, myths, and belief systems even though being under the control of two different states. According to Nagel, ethnic identities can be politically constructed by acknowledging or recognizing an ethnic group and its ability to access political advantages. External factors can also influence and define the character of ethnic identity as well. All in all, ethnic boundaries can be constructed or reshaped as a result of certain processes and external factors. The ethnic boundaries of Iranian Azerbaijanis were reshaped during the Pahlavi Dynasty and the Islamic regime according to these regimes' political interests. As a result, today many Iranian Azerbaijanis are defining themselves or defined by others as 'Azeri', 'Iranian', or 'Turkish speakers. These definitions prevent and restrict Iranian Azerbaijanis from self-identification.

According to the scholars such as Gellner, Kumar, and Zia-Ebrahimi, uneven modernization in a state can raise nationalism. The economic and political minority

policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its suppressing nature, made the Iranian Azerbaijanis aware and passionate about their identity. Thus, in a way created the opposite impact than the ultimate goal of transforming their identity. As a matter of fact, the politically constructed Azeri concept, calling Iranian Azerbaijanis Turkish speakers, preventing them from self-identification, and separating them from other Turkic groups paved the way for the emergence of nationalism. How could we define Azerbaijani nationalism if they are just an ethnic group while according to Kumar, we know that there are nations behind nationalism? Iranian Azerbaijani nationalism with the N. Karabakh victory of Azerbaijan had increased and some of them felt even closer.

Both the Pahlavi Dynasty which was built on pan-Persian ideology and the Islamic Republic which was built on pan-Iranian ideology with Islamic characteristics tried to persianize the non-Persian ethnicities. As Azerbaijanis of Iran living in the northwest of the country, sharing borders with two Turkic countries, they gradually aimed to prevent the emergence of the probability of pan-Turkic governance. According to Shaffer, Azerbaijani national movements in Northern Azerbaijan mostly began in the late 1880s because of the Nagorno-Karabakh incidents and Russian imposing policies. The ethnic identity awareness of the Iranian Azerbaijanis was also built in a similar context in Iran. In addition, the independence of northern Azerbaijan and its cultural centers and national TV channels unconsciously influenced Azerbaijani nationalism among Iranian Azerbaijanis suffering assimilatory policies.

Although the first war of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1992 was catastrophic and somehow isolated Azerbaijanis on both sides of the Aras River, the victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the second war of 2020 was a turning point in terms of affecting the identity consciousness of Iranian Azerbaijanis. The 44 days of the 2020 war and the strength of the Azerbaijani Army encouraged Turkic groups in Iran to come to the streets and support their kins solemnly.

The triumph of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the second war of Karabakh made Iranian Azerbaijanis proud of their identity. Therefore, this victory is the turning point in the identity awareness of Iranian Azerbaijanis. Additionally, the perception of Türkiye's powerful position and influence in the region, as the most important ally of the Republic of Azerbaijan, paved the way for Turkic groups' identity to be highlighted. At the same time, the identity issue of the Iranian Azerbaijanis

transformed from being a domestic issue and internationalize after these processes. During the November 2022 summit of Organization of Turkic States in Tashkent, Aliyev's address to Iranian Azerbaijanis that there are other Azerbaijanis outside Azerbaijan that are deprived from education in their mother tongue, too is an indicator of this (Anadolu Agency, "Around 40M Azerbaijanis living outside country denied access to education in native language", 2022). Furthermore, according to advanced research on Twitter, after Azerbaijan's triumph in 2020, not only did the number of Iranian Azerbaijani accounts increased but also most of the former accounts began to write in Azerbaijani Turkish texts either in Arabic or Latin scripts.

These actions indicate the importance of ethnic identity and its political role in a state. The case of Iran with a heterogeneous ethnic structure has been concerned about its domestic stability and security due to the presence of non-Persian ethnic identities. However, as I argued earlier, nationalisms can emerge as a reaction to suppressive minority policies. In the absence of these distinctive policies, nationalism could be controlled and the danger of separatism which Iran has always been afraid of could be contained.

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APPENDICES

C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Etnik kimlik ve etnik çatışma kavramları ve uluslararası arenadaki önemi, beşerî bilimlerde son zamanlarda araştırmacıların dikkatine gelen konulardan biridir. II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra, Avrupa devletlerine göç akımı, milliyet ve etnik kimlik bilincini artırdı. İşçi sınıfının gerilemesiyle birlikte bu farkındalık, bir tür ırksal yorumu dayattı ve insanları ırksal bir gruba üyelik temelinde kategorize etti. Bu kategorizasyon, Avrupa toplumlarında siyasi hareketlere yol açtı ve ırkçılığa alan açtı. Robert Miles'a göre, 'ırk' diğer ırksallaştırılmış hayali toplulukların ötesinde olan sınırlı bir topluluğu ifade eder. Bu nedenle, 'Öteki' her zaman doğal olarak oluşturulmuş nüfus 'Biz' tarafından tanımlanan aşağı bir gruptur. 'Öteki'ye karşı siyasi hareketler ve özellikle Soğuk Savaş sonrasında etnik kimlik bilincinin artması hem etnik çatışmaların hem de yeni ulus devletlerin ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Bir etnik köken ulusal ve etnik statüsünü gerçekleştirebilir ve ancak kimliğinin farkındalığını kazanarak nasıl ilerleyeceğini öğrenebilir. 'Öteki' ile rekabet etmek, etnik gruplar arasında sürtüşmeye neden olan ve bazen şiddete yol açan güç kazanmanın gerekliliklerinden biridir.

Fenton'un değerlendirmesine göre, etnisiteler üzerine yapılan çalışmaların son on yılında, "ulus", "ulusal" ve "milliyetçilik" in anlamı, daha önce ele alınan milliyetçilikle ilgili değildir. Benzer bir etnik ve ırksal çalışma modeli de vardır. İşte bu tezde hem ulusun hem de etnisitenin aynı kavrama atıfta bulunduğunu düşünüyorum, çünkü sadece birbirlerine dokunmakla kalmıyorlar, aynı zamanda birbirlerini de tanımlıyorlar. Bu düşünceyi dikkate alarak, İran gibi çok kültürlü ve çok uluslu bir ülkenin ulus-devlet yapısının, Dağlık Karabağ çatışmasından, özellikle de 2020'deki ikinci savaştan nasıl etkilenebileceğini analiz ettim. Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin Türk nüfusunun İran Azerilerine yakınlığı, çatışmaların nasıl uluslararasılaştırılabileceğini değerlendirmeyi mümkün kılmıştır. 'Etnik Kimlik',

'Ulus-Devlet' ve 'Etnik Çatışma', Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'ndeki Dağlık Karabağ çatışmasının ve karmaşık bir yapıya sahip İran bağlamında İran Azerileri üzerindeki etkilerinin daha iyi algılanabilmesi için bu çalışmanın üç temel kavramıdır. Bu tezin kaygısı ve vaka çalışması, 2020 yılında Dağlık Karabağ'ın ikinci savaşı ve İran Azerilerinin kimlik bilincini nasıl yükselttiğidir, bu nedenle üç farklı konuyu analiz etmek esastır. Birincisi, İran'ın siyasi bağlamında ulus-devlet kavramıdır. İkincisi, bu devletin 1979 İslam Devrimi'nden önce ve sonra, Fars dışı etnik kökenlerin, özellikle de Azerilerin Fars milliyetçiliği tarafından nasıl bastırıldığını ve Farslaştırıldığını değerlendirmek için uyguladığı azınlık politikasıdır. Sonuncusu, İran Azerilerinin kimliği ve Azerbaycan'daki Türk halkıyla olan ilişkisidir. Özetlemek gerekirse, eylemlerin tepkileri olduğu gerçeğine göre, İran hükümetlerinin bastırılmasını ve asimilasyonunu bir eylem olarak, Dağlık Karabağ çatışmasını ise İran Azerbaycanlılarının kimlik bilincinin hızını hızlandıran tetikleyici olarak gördüm. Burada farkındalık ve Türk milliyetçiliği tepkilerdir.

Bu tezde, etnisite ve etnik kimlik kavramları, tarih boyunca birçok bilim adamı tarafından farklı ideolojiler üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Örneğin, belirli bir ideolojiye odaklanmadan, Li Xi Yuan şöyle diyor: paylaşılan tarih, semboller ve ideoloji de dahil olmak üzere etnisitenin içeriğini ve anlamını sağlayan kültürdür. Diğer yandan, Joane Nagel, etnisitenin anlamını konstrüktivizm merceklerinden açıkça analiz eder. O etnik kökenin istikrarlı bir miras olmadığına, ancak tarih boyunca sürekli olarak yaratıldığına ve yeniden yaratıldığına inanır. Bu nedenle, kimlik, kültür, dil, din ve soy etnik kökenin yapı taşlarıdır, etnik sınırların ve yerin anlamı her zaman hem etnik üyeler hem de üye olmayanlar tarafından müzakere edilir ve revize edilir. Başka bir deyişle, etnik inşadaki ana mekanizmalar, etnik sınırların yerleştirilmesi ve etnik kökenlerin sosyal değeri konusundaki tartışmalardır. Etnik sınırları müzakere ederken Barth, etnik köken kavramını değişken bir kavram olarak tanımladı, çünkü etnik kimlik hem etnik üyeler hem de üye olmayanlar tarafından tutulan görüşlerden oluşuyordu. Bu nedenle etnisite, karşılaşılan koşullar ve diğer gruplar açısından tarih boyunca değiştirilebilir ve inşa edilebilir.

Nagel hem gayri resmi etnik anlamların hem de resmi etnik anlamların etnik grupları şekillendirebileceğini ve etnik ilişkileri etkileyebileceğini savunuyor. Resmi ve gayri resmi etnik kategorilerin ve anlamların çoğunlukla politik olduğunu ve

politikaların egemenlikten geldiği için daha güçlü olduklarını ekliyor. Bu nedenle, bu politik politikalar etnik kimliği önemli ölçüde etkileyebilir. Siyasi politikalar etnik kimlikler, kültürler ve sınırlar üretebilir ve tanımlayabilir. Nagel, etnisitenin "politik olarak inşa edildiği" üç yol sunar. Birincisi göç politikaları, ikincisi etnik olarak bağlantılı kaynak politikaları ve sonuncusu etnik çizgiler boyunca tanımlanan siyasi erişimdir.

Nagel bize etnisitenin nasıl inşa edildiğine ve hangi faktörlerin onu etkileyebileceğine dair örtük bir açıklama sunar. Etnik kimlik, etnik sınırlar, gayri resmi yazıtlar ve hükümet politikaları yoluyla yaratılır, tanımlanır ve atılır. Başka bir deyişle, etnik sınırlar etnik kimlik adı verilen bir yapının bileşenleri gibidir. Bu bileşenlerin dokusu, etnik üyeler tarafından ekonomik ve politik çıkarlarına göre içeride veya hükümetler tarafından etnik politikaları aracılığıyla dışarıdan şekillendirilebilir ve yeniden şekillendirilebilir.

Ulus-devlet, ulusların nasıl şekillendiğini ve siyasi olayların bir ulusu yükselmeye ve bağımsız olmaya ne ölçüde teşvik edebileceğini değerlendirmek için bu tezde analiz etmeye çalıştığım bir diğer önemli kavramdır. Son iki İran hükümetinin azınlık politikalarını analiz etmek için ulus-devlet kavramını incelemeyi gerekli buldum. Kasıtlı olarak bu hükümetlere odaklanıyorum çünkü pan-İran ve asimile edici Fars olmayan etnik kökenlerin ideolojisi Pehlevi hanedanlığından kaynaklanıyordu. Ulus-devlet ve Pers milliyetçiliğini analiz ederek, dışsal bir tetikleyicinin yanı sıra azınlık politikalarının İran Azerilerinin kimlik bilincini nasıl etkileyebileceğinin özünü ele almak istiyorum.

Gellner'e göre, feodalizme ve yükümlülüklerin dağıtıldığı kabile politikalarına rağmen, modern toplumlarda iktidar ve siyaset merkezileşmiştir. Farsça merkezileşmenin dezavantajlarını belirtmek için bu ifadeden kasten bahsettim. Ulusu ve milliyetçiliği tanımlama biçimi, önceki diğer tanımlara meydan okudu. Milliyetçiliği hem olumlu hem de olumsuz toplumsal temeller açısından analiz etti ama burada Pers milliyetçiliğini dayatmayı daha iyi değerlendirmek için sadece olumsuz toplumsal temellere odaklanıyorum. Gellner, modernleşme sürecinin bir devlette eşitsiz olduğunda, yoksun grupların milliyetçi hareketlerine yol açtığını savunuyor. Bu durumda, ezilen gruplar ayırt edici kimliklerini eşitsiz politikalara tepki

olarak kullanırlar. Milliyetçiliğin kimlik bilinciyle ilgili olmadığına inanıyor, çünkü milliyetçilikten önce bazı ayırt edici kriterler dışında bir ulus yoktu.

Kumar'ın Gellner'in bakış açısını eleştirmek için dört nedeni vardır. İlk olarak, Gellner'in milliyetçilik teorisinin sorunlu olduğunu, çünkü sadece araç salcı ve işlevseli olduğunu belirtir. Her ne kadar milliyetçilikten önce, ortak bir yüksek kültür olmadan (grup üyeleri arasında) hiçbir ulus olmadığını düşünse de ne milliyetçilik ne de modernleşme olacaktır. İkincisi, Kumar'a göre Gellner, milliyetçiliğin ortaya çıkışında rol oynayanların enerjisini, zamanını ve tutkusunu tamamen görmezden geliyor. Üçüncüsü, Gallner'in daha önce bahsettiğim argümanına rağmen, milliyetçilik sanayileşmemiş toplumlarda ve aykırı olarak ortaya çıkabilir. Örneğin, Batı Avrupa'da sanayileşme süreci milliyetçilikten yoksun, diğer yandan 19. yüzyılda Balkanlar ve Latin Amerika'daki milliyetçi hareketler sanayileşme olmadan gerçekleşmiştir. Dördüncüsü ve sonuncusu, Gellner'in milliyetçi analizi yeterince politik değildir. Hangi etnik kimliğin ulus olabileceğini seçmede siyasetin nasıl belirleyici bir faktör olabileceğini değerlendirmek yerine.

Bence Kumar, İngiliz sömürgeciliğine sahip bir Hintli akademisyen olarak, milliyetçiliği hem Azerbaycan hem de Fars milliyetçiliğini değerlendirmemde bana daha yararlı olacak şekilde analiz etti. Kumar, milliyetçiliğin diyalektik bir doğası olduğuna inanıyor. 'Biz' için hem kapsayıcı hem de yapıcı, 'Öteki' için dışlayıcı ve yıkıcıdır. Yapıcı bir şekilde, bastırılmış ve yoksun bırakılmış grupların kendi ekonomilerini ve refahlarını yeniden inşa etmek için milliyetçilik adı altında birleştirilebileceğini açıklarken, yıkıcı olarak, güçlü grupların milliyetçiliği daha zayıf etnik grupları marjinalleştirmek için kötüye kullandığını açıklar. Smith'e göre, bir ulus, üyelerin aynı kültürü, deneyimleri, çıkarları, sorumlulukları ve bölgeyi paylaştığı bir grubu ifade eder. Milliyetçiliği, bağımsız ve egemen olmaya çalışan potansiyel veya gerçek bir ulusa ait bir ideoloji olarak tanımlar. Modern bir ulusun etnik köklerini tanınması gerekli, çünkü kolektif ortaklıkları gösterdiğini ekliyor. Bu kolektif ortaklıklar, özellikle de kahramanca bir geçmiş, modern bir ulus için ilham verici olabilir ve onun için güvenli bir temel sağlayabilir.

Dağlık Karabağ meselesi, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti Türk halkı ile İran Azerbaycanlılar arasında bir bağın olduğu etnik bir çatışma olduğundan, etnik çatışmanın doğasına ve üçüncü bir ülkenin iç politikalarını nasıl etkileyebileceğine

kısa bir giriş yapmaya çalışıyorum. Etnik gruplar, hükümetin politika yapımında önemli bir rol oynayan hükümet dışı aktörlerdir. Her etnik grubun farklı çıkarları olduğundan, daha fazla siyasi güce sahip olmak ve politikaları etkilemek için, etnik üyeler diğerlerinden ziyade grup üyelerini tercih etme eğilimindedir. Bu nedenle, bu aktörler grup üyelerini desteklemeye ve siyasi arenada daha ekonomik ve politik çıkarlar için rekabet etmeye çalıştıklarında, çatışmalara yol açabilecek çatışmalar ve sürtüşmeler olacaktır.

Bir ülkede birden fazla etnik kökenin varlığı sorunlu olabilir. Farklı etnik partiler ve örgütler nedeniyle, hükümetlerdeki bazı etnik ayrımcılık ve eşitsizlikler kaçınılmazdır ve etnik çatışmaya neden olmaktadır. Vanhanen, bunları dikkate alarak kurumsal boyutu ölçmek için bazı kriterler sunmakta ve iç etnik çatışmadaki önemini nicel olarak değerlendirmektedir. Her ne kadar analizinin iç etnik çatışmaya dayandığını belirtse de çoğu zaman dış aktörlerin katılımı nedeniyle, iç ve devletlerarası etnik çatışmayı ayırmanın oldukça zor olduğuna inanıyor.

Gerginlik sırasında, üçüncü devletin yapısına ve dış çatışmaya yanıt olarak nasıl harekete geçileceğine dair özelliklerine bağlıdır. Siyasi ve ekonomik konuların ötesinde, üçüncü devletin (veya komşu ülkenin) güvenliği ve egemenliği konusundaki endişelerinin iki bakış açısıyla analiz edilebileceğini düşünüyorum. İlk endişe türü dış sınırlarla ilgilidir. Üçüncü ülke ile gergin ülke arasında hiç etnik bağlantı olmaması veya önemsiz bir etnik bağlantı olması durumunda, üçüncü ülke göçmen akışını kontrol etmek veya önlemek için sınırının güvenliği konusunda endişelenecektir. İkinci tür endişe, iç güvenlikle ilgilidir. Üçüncü ülke ile gergin ülke arasında güçlü bir etnik bağlantı olması durumunda, üçüncü ülke sınırları içinde benzer bir gerginlikten endişe duyacaktır. Özellikle de üçüncü ülkenin azınlık politikaları varsa ve azınlıklarını bastırıyorsa.

Rus İmparatorluğu'ndaki 1917 Ekim Devrimi'nden sonra, yeni doğmuş ancak resmi olmayan hükümet, Kafkasya'yı, özellikle de Azerbaycan'ı işgal etmeye çalıştı. Aynı zamanda, Karabağ'daki Ermeni çoğunluk Azerbaycan yönetimini kabul etmiş olmalarına rağmen, 1919'da çeşitli isyanlar başlattılar. Bu nedenle Kızıl Ordu bu şansı değerlendirdi ve 1920'de Azerbaycan'a saldırmaya başladı ve bu da büyük çapta ölüm kayıplarıyla sonuçlandı. Yavaş yavaş SSCB'nin iktidarı altında Karabağ 1923 yılında

Azerbaycan'ın özerk oblastı haline gelmiş ve 1937 yılında adı resmen Dağlık Karabağ olarak değiştirilmiştir.

SSCB'nin 1980'lerden sonra gücünü kaybetmeye başlamasıyla Ermenistan, demografik yapısının değişmesiyle daha önce Moskova'nın yarattığı toprak iddialarını ileri sürmeye başladı. Ermenistan yasal ve tarihsel olarak Azerbaycan topraklarını Moskova hükümetinden talep etmiştir. Mihail Gorbaçov'un 1985 yılında SSCB'de devlet başkanı olmasından sonra, Ermeni aydınları Gorbaçov ile ilişkilerini geliştirmeye başlamış ve Dağlık Karabağ bölgesinin tarihi bir Ermeni toprağı olduğunu iddia etmişlerdir. Dağlık Karabağ'daki Ermeniler, komünist Taşnaklar ve Ermenistan Komünist Partisi önderliğinde, Azerbaycan Türklerini bölgeden çıkarmak ve bölgeye ilhak etmek için Karabağ Komitesi'ni kurdular. SSCB, Ermenilerin taleplerini kabul etmedi. Kasım 1989'da SSCB Yüksek Sovyet'i Dağlık Karabağ Oblastı'nın özerkliğini kaldırmaya ve doğrudan Azerbaycan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'ne bağlamaya karar verdi. SSCB'nin resmi ilanına rağmen, Ermenistan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti ve Dağlık Karabağ'daki Ermeniler burayı ihmal ederek bölgede ayaklanmalar başlatmış ve Azeri sivilleri öldürmüşlerdir. Ermeniler ve Azeriler arasında çatışmalar şiddetlendikçe, SSCB ve Kızıl Ordusu Ocak 1990'da Azerbaycan'ı işgal etti ve daha sonra Kara Ocak olarak anılan Azeri sivilleri katletti.

Sovyet 20 Ocak 1990'da Bakü'yü işgal ederek sivilleri katletmesi Azerbaycan'ın SSCB'ye olan nefretini artırdı. Bu tarih Azerbaycan tarihinde Kara Ocak (Kara Yanvar) olarak bilinir. Ağustos 1990'da Ermenistan bağımsızlığını ilan etmiş ve Karabağ'ın Ermenistan'a ait olduğunu iddia etmiştir. 1991'de SSCB resmen çöktü ama yine de Ermeni askerleriyle Azerbaycan'ı işgal etmeye devam ettiler. En yıkıcı işgallerden biri 26 Şubat 1992'de Azerbaycan'ın Hocalı adlı köylerinden birinde gerçekleşti. Bu vahşi işgalde 613 sivil öldü, 1275 kişi yaralandı ve 150 kişi kayboldu. Bu felaketin ardından Azerbaycan'ın Eylül 1991'de bağımsızlığını kazanmasının ardından seçilen Azerbaycan'ın ilk cumhurbaşkanı Ayaz Muttalibov, Azerbaycan Halk Cephesi Partisi'nin baskısıyla Mart 1992'de istifasına imza attı. Ardından Mayıs ayında Moskova'ya kaçtı. Aynı yıl 17 Haziran'da Azerbaycanlılar tarafından Abulfez Elçibay seçildi.

İki ülke arasındaki çatışmalar Mart ayı boyunca devam etti. AGİT Dışişleri Bakanları Konseyi, Karabağ sorununun çözümünü gerçekleştirmek üzere 24 Mart

1992'de Helsinki'de toplandı. Ermeniler 8 Mayıs'ta önce Azerbaycan'ın en stratejik şehri olan Şuşa'yı, yaklaşık on gün sonra da Karabağ'ı Ermenistan'a bağlayan Laçın'ı işgal ettiler. Öte yandan, Azerbaycan karşı saldırıya geçti ve bazı yerleşim yerlerini Ermeni kuvvetlerinden geri almayı başardı. 27 Ağustos 1992 tarihinde Kazakistan'ın arabuluculuğunda her iki tarafın da imzasıyla ateşkes ilan edilmesine rağmen, kısa bir süre sonra Ermenistan tek taraflı olarak bildirgeyi tanımadığını açıklamıştır.

Eylül 2020'nin son günleri yeni bir savaş döneminin başlangıcına işaret ediyordu. Azerbaycan ordusu, ateşkesi defalarca ihlal eden Ermenistan ordusuna karşı işgal altındaki topraklarını kurtarmak için 27 Eylül 2020 sabahı bir karşı askeri operasyon başlattı. Bu savaş Azerbaycan için tarihi bir adım olmuştur. Ermenistan, savaşın başından itibaren cephede Azerbaycan'ın üstünlüğüne yenik düşerken, cephe hattından yüzlerce kilometre uzaktaki Azerbaycan'ın sivil yerleşim yerlerini bombaladı, küçük çocuklar da dahil olmak üzere silahsız sivilleri hedef aldı ve öldürdü.

Ermeni tarafının Gence'ye karşı ilk saldırısı 4 Ekim'de gerçekleşti. Bu saldırıda altmış kişi yaralandı ve öldürüldü. 8 Ekim'de Ermenistan sivil bir bölgeye tekrar saldırdı, ancak kayıpları olmadı. Gence 11 Ekim'de yeniden hedef alındığında, Moskova'daki ilk ateşkes anlaşmasının üzerinden sadece bir gün geçmişti. Bu saldırıda on sivil öldü ve düzinelerce sivil yaralandı. 11 Ekim saldırısının Azerbaycan'da ve dünyada büyük yankıları oldu, ancak uluslararası toplum önemli ve gerekli bir tepki göstermede zayıftı. Sivil hayatı umursamayan bu duygusuz tavrın Ermenistan'ın 17 Ekim'de gerçekleştirdiği saldırıdaki rolü göz ardı edilmemelidir çünkü Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'ne göre on dört sivil ölmüş, elli beş sivil yaralanmıştır. Ancak bu saldırıdan sonra, bazı önde gelen uluslararası haber ajansları, ortaya çıkan yıkım ve trajedinin dünyaya aktarıldığını görmek için bölgeye gitti.

Çatışmanın başlamasından ateşkesin imzalanmasına kadar kırk dört gün olan 27 Eylül ile 9 Kasım 2020 tarihleri arasında Azerbaycan, iki yüz doksandan fazla yerleşim yerini Ermeni işgalinden kurtardı. Azerbaycan, Kubâdlı, Zengilan, Cebrayil, Fuzuli gibi vilayetlerin ve bu bölgelere bağlı yüzlerce köyün Ermeni işgaline son vermiştir. Azerbaycan ayrıca Laçın, Hocalı, Tatar ve Hocavan'a bağlı birçok köy ve yerleşim yerini geri aldı. Büyük bir ahlaki değere sahip olan ve Azerbaycan vilayetini simgeleyen Şuşa'nın 8 Kasım 2020 tarihinde kurtarılması Ermenistan'ın yenilgisini kabul etmesine neden olmuştur. Şuşa şehri ile birlikte Dağlık Karabağ bölgesinin bazı

yerleşim bölgeleri Azerbaycan'ın kontrolü altına alınmış ve Ermeni silahlı unsurlarından temizlenmiştir.

9 Kasım'da Azerbaycan yetmiş bir köyün ve sekiz stratejik yüksekliğin işgalden kurtarıldığını açıkladı. Şuşa'nın Ermeni işgalinden kurtuluşu Kuzey ve Güney Azerbaycan'da büyük bir coşkuyla kutlandı. Bakü sokakları büyük bir keyif sahnesiydi. İran Azerileri arasında da şenlikli bir hava vardı. Fedakarlıklar yaptılar ve tatlılar dağıttılar ama İran rejimi sokak kutlamalarını engelledi. Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı İlham Aliyev, anlaşmanın Ermenistan'ın yenilgisi anlamına geldiğine işaret ederek, Paşinyan'ın anlaşmayı gönülsüzce ama Azerbaycan'ın demir yumruğu sayesinde imzaladığını belirtti. Anlaşmadan sonra halka seslenen Aliyev, Paşinyan'ın "sıçan gibi kaçtığını" ve Ermeni silahlı kuvvetlerinin "köpek gibi" ateş edildiğini söyledi. Aliyev, Ermenistan'ın ateşkesi bozması halinde Azerbaycan'ın durmayacağını ve devam edeceğini söyleyerek Ermenistan'ı uyardı.

Hem İran Pehlevi Hükümeti'nin hem de İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'nin İslami hükümetinin, 1648'deki Vestfalya Barış Antlaşması'ndan önceki Avrupa'ya benzediğini varsaymayı tercih ediyorum. Başta Şii ve Sünni Müslümanlar olmak üzere farklı dinlerin yanı sıra İran, Şii Farsça tarafından yönetilen Farslar, Türkler, Kürtler, Araplar, Beluciler, Lurs ve Gilaklar vb. gibi çok etnikli bir. Her iki hükümet de hemen hemen aynı politikayı uygulayarak tüm bu etnik kökenleri bir bayrak altında birleştirmeye çalışıyor. Fars milliyetçiliğinin dönüm noktası Pehlevi hanedanlığında gerçekleşmiş olsa da, Kaçar hanedanlığı boyunca yaşanan tarihi olaylar milliyetçiliğin temelini oluşturdu.

Fars milliyetçi ideolojisinin tarihsel nesnelerini analiz ediyor ve buna "Yer değiştirici milliyetçilik" diyor. Bu ideoloji dört temel fikre dayanmaktadır. İlk fikir, İran'ın 2500 yıl önce var olan eski bir ulus olduğu ve bazen bu sayının 5000 yıl veya daha fazlasına ulaştığıdır. İkincisi, İslam öncesi çağa kadar uzanan ihtişamını ifade eder. Üçüncü fikir, İranlılara İslam'ı empoze etmek için kılıcı kullanan azgelişmişlik için Arapları suçlamaktır. Sonuncusu, onları Avrupalılara bağlayan İranlıların Aryan ırkı hakkındadır. Ziya-İbrahimi buna yerinden edilmiş milliyetçilik adını verdi çünkü herhangi bir tarihi veya öncülü olmayan bir ideolojidir ve Avrupa'dan ithal edilmiştir. Bu ideoloji 1860-1890'lar arasında ortaya çıkmış ve daha sonra 1925'ten 1979'a, Pehlevi dönemine kadar resmiyet kazanmıştır.

Kaçar hanedanlığından önce İran'ın bir tür tecrit altında olduğunu ve uzak Avrupa'dan ziyade komşularıyla daha fazla ilgilendiğini savunuyor. Avrupa imparatorluklarının kıtalararası genişlemesi ve taşınması, İran'ın Avrupa dünyasının doğasıyla ani bir temas kurmasına neden oldu. Daha önce de belirttiğim gibi, ilk temas, İran'ın 1813 Gülistan Antlaşması ile Kafkasya bölgesini Rusların üstün savaşı ve teknolojisi karşısında kaybettiği 1804-1813 Rus-İran savaşıdır. İkinci temas 1826'da gerçekleşti ve 1828 Türkmençay Antlaşması'nda bir başka feci kayıpla sona erdi. İran'ı Rusya ve İngiltere arasında tampon devlet yapan son temas, İran'ın 1837'de Herat'a saldırmasıdır. O dönemde, sadece İran'ı tamamen sömürgeleştirme konusunda belirleyici bir düşünce yoktu, aynı zamanda Kaçar yabancıların müdahalesiyle görünüşteki egemenliğini sürdürdü. Tüm bu müdahaleler hükümetin krallığın kaynaklarını sömürmesini sınırladı. Buna ek olarak hem İngiliz hem de Rus hükümetleri, tebaaları için ayrıcalıklar elde etmek için Kaçar'ı başarılı bir şekilde zorluyordu. 1891'deki tütün imtiyazına karşı Şii din adamlarının ve Rusların birleşmesi, hem halk arasındaki kızgınlığın boyutunu gösteren hem de Şah'ı bunu yürürlükten kaldırmaya zorlayan ilk barışçıl ayaklanmaydı.

Yerinden edilmiş milliyetçilik olarak adlandırdığı Fars milliyetçiliği, Ahundzade ve Kermani tarafından kuruldu ve sonunda Rıza Şah bölgesindeki iç politikaların bir parçası haline geldi. Bu milliyetçilik sadece İran'ın gerçekliğini göstermekte başarısız olmakla kalmıyor, aynı zamanda geri kalmışlığını inkâr etmek ve başarısızlıklarından sorumlu tutmak için bir "öteki" yaratmak için bir tür savunma mekanizmasıdır. Bu ideoloji, Batı ve İran milliyetçiliği arasındaki boşluğu, tüm İranlıların özlemlerini karşılayacak şekilde dolduramadı.

Ziya-İbrahimi, bu başarısızlıkların iki nedeni olduğunu savunuyor. Birincisi, gerçek eksiklikleri analiz etmeyi engelleyen içgüdüsel ve duygusal dürtüler olduğunu ifade eden aşırı romantiktir. Örneğin, toplumu ve ekonomiyi iyileştirmek yerine, 1971'de Muhammed Rıza Şah, dünyanın dört bir yanından gelen konuklarla "Pers İmparatorluğu" için pahalı bir doğum günü partisi düzenledi. İkincisi, otoriter eğilimlere sahiptir. Yer değiştirici milliyetçilikte toplumda "biz" ile olan tüm farklılıklar dil, dini inançlar, kültür ve görünüş gibi ortadan kaldırılmaya mahkumdur, çünkü bunlar geri kalmışlığın işaretidir.

Rejimin, genellikle kimliği herhangi bir şekilde ihmal etmeye dayanan etnik zorlukları bastırmak ve asimile etmek için çeşitli stratejileri vardır. Örneğin, Türk halkının etnik faaliyetlerini boykot etmek için, Osmanlı ve Moğol istilaları sırasında Türk halkının Türkçe konuşmaya zorlandığını defalarca iddia ediyorlar (Moğolca ve Türkçe iki farklı dildir). Sünni halkın meydan okumaları karşısında hükümet, faaliyetleri, terörist grupların, İslam devletlerinin veya El Kaide gibi diğer aşırılıkçıların üyesi olan failleri çağırmaya çalışıyor. Hükümet ayrıca azınlıkların yeni doğan çocukları için kendi dillerinde isim yazmalarını da yasaklıyor. 2022'de VOA News, 'Yasak İsimler' hakkında bir makale yayınladı. Makaleye göre, resmi İran milliyetçileri konumlarını kullanıyor ve Perslerin egemenliğini sürdürmek için kararları manipüle ediyorlar. Azınlık gruplarının çocukları için isim seçmelerine bile müdahale ediyorlar, bu da yasaları ihlal etmeyen bir hak. İranlı yetkililer, bürokrasiyi azınlıklar için zorlaştırarak, aileleri yormak ve teslim olmalarını ve kararlarını gözden geçirmelerini sağlamak için bir koşul yaratıyorlar. 2019 yılında hükümet, Farsça dilinde yeterlilikle ilgili bir yasa çıkardı. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, beş ve altı yaşındaki çocukların ilkokul birinci sınıfa başlamadan önce Farsça yeterlilik sınavlarına girmeleri gerektiğini açıkladı. Bu testlerde başarısız olan çocuklar, engelli çocukların yavaş öğrendiği veya işitme engelli olduğu özel eğitim okullarına yerleştirilecektir. Bu nedenle, bu politika farklı ana dilleri olan etnik azınlık ailelerini evde Farsça öğretmeye zorlamaktadır. Bu politika, başvuru sahiplerine kalın aksanlarla öğretimde de uygulanacaktır.

Kültürel modernleşme, 1850'lerde Azerbaycanlıların önemli rol oynadığı Türk Kaçar hanedanı ile başladı. Ancak zaman geçtikçe modernleşme süreci İranlılar lehine ve Azeriler aleyhine değişti. Atabaki'ye göre yirminci yüzyılda İran Azerbaycanlıları arasında üç hareket ve devrim yaşandı. Kaçar Hanedanlığının son günlerinde Hiabani'nin başlattığı ilk isyan olan 1906-1911 Meşrutiyet Devrimi'nde devletin yabancılara tanıdığı ayrıcalıklar önemli rol oynamıştır. Bağımsız veya özerk Azerbaycan'dan ziyade İran ulus-devletinde radikal reformlar peşindeydi. On sekizinci yüzyılda Avrupa ideolojisinden etkilendi. Hiabani, merkezi yönetime karşıydı ve İran genelinde adil bir güç dağılımı arıyordu. Karşı karşıya olduğu temel sorun, Tahran'ın gücünü doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak etkileyecek ve ülke bütünlüğünü zayıflatacak her türlü hareketin karşısında olanlarla kendi arasındaki bölünmüşlüğü

birleştirememesidir. Dış güçlerden destek alınmasına tamamen karşı çıkarken, tavizsiz tavrı, merkezi hükümet ve Gilan'daki Mirza Küçük Han gibi diğer çağdaş reformcularla müzakereyi imkânsız hale getirdi. Nihayet hükümet, Ağustos 1920'de Hiyabani'nin kendisi de dahil olmak üzere elli Demokrat'ı öldürerek Hiyabani hareketine son verdi. Sonuç olarak, Shaffer'a göre Azerbaycanlılar, sistemin İran'da merkezileşmesiyle konumlarının zayıfladığını hissettiler. Bu nedenle itiraz ettiler.

Mehdizade, monarşik sisteme karşı başlattığı Meşrutiyet Hareketi'nde Azerbaycan'ın dönemin şartlarına göre sahip olduğu tüm güçle Tahran tekeline karşı çıktığını ileri sürmektedir. Son 100 yılda Anayasal Hareket kırmızı çizgilerini netleştirmekle kalmadı, aynı zamanda giderek daha kararlı hale geldi. Sonuç olarak, Güney Azerbaycan'ın yakın tarihindeki Meşrutiyet Devrimi, (anadilde eğitim hakkından bağımsızlık hakkına kadar) birçok hakkı kapsayan ve hedefleyen tarihi mücadeleyi göstermektedir.

İranlı Azeriler, kimliklerini dini temellere göre değil, dil ve diğer kültürel özelliklere göre oluşturmaya çalıştılar. Ortak din, iki millet arasında yakınlaşmaya neden olmamıştır. Azerbaycanlı olmak Meşrutiyet döneminde bir ayrıcalıktı. Ancak Pehlevi döneminde bu aidiyet aşağılaştırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Yani Pehlevi hanedanı, İran Azerbaycanlılarını ulusal kimliklerinden uzaklaştırmak için kültürel-psikolojik bir ortam yaratmaya başladı. Türklüğü küçük düşürerek Azerilerin Türk olmadığını vurguladılar.

Kaçar Hanedanlığının son günlerinde Hiabani'nin başlattığı ilk isyan olan 1906-1911 Meşrutiyet Devrimi'nde devletin yabancılara tanıdığı ayrıcalıklar önemli rol oynamıştır. Bağımsız veya özerk Azerbaycan'dan ziyade İran ulus-devletinde radikal reformlar peşindeydi. On sekizinci yüzyılda Avrupa ideolojisinden etkilendi. Hiabani, merkezi yönetime karşıydı ve İran genelinde adil bir güç dağılımı arıyordu. Karşı karşıya olduğu temel sorun, Tahran'ın gücünü doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak etkileyecek ve ülke bütünlüğünü zayıflatacak her türlü hareketin karşısında olanlarla kendi arasındaki bölünmüşlüğü birleştirememesidir. Dış güçlerden destek alınmasına tamamen karşı çıkarken, tavizsiz tavrı, merkezi hükümet ve Gilan'daki Mirza Küçük Han gibi diğer çağdaş reformcularla müzakereyi imkansız hale getirdi. Nihayet hükümet, Ağustos 1920'de Hiyabani'nin kendisi de dahil olmak üzere elli Demokrat'ı öldürerek Hiyabani hareketine son verdi.

Azerbaycan'da ikinci hareket 1945-46'da Cafer Pişevari tarafından başlatıldı. 2 Eylül 1945'te Azerbaycan Demokrat Partisi Tebriz'de 12 maddelik bir bildiri yayınladı. Bu deklarasyonda Azerbaycan halkı İran'ın bütünlüğünü ve bağımsızlığını korurken iç özgürlük, kültürel özerklik ve kendi kendini yönetme hakkını talep etmiştir. Beyannamede, devlet ve taşra meclislerinin yeniden kurulmasını istediği tüm sosyal, ekonomik ve siyasi konulara da değinildi. Ekim 1945'te ADP kongresi, 2 Eylül'de yayınlanan bildiriyi onaylayarak ulusal özerkliğin kurulmasına ve Türkçenin resmi dil olmasına karar verdi. Kongrenin ardından milletvekilliği seçimleri yapıldı ve bu seçimlerde kadınlar ilk kez oy kullandı. Cafer Pişevari, Azerbaycan Ulusal Parlamentosu tarafından ulusal hükümeti kurmakla görevlendirildi. Ardından 12 Aralık 1945'te Azerbaycan Milli Hükümeti'ni ilan edebildi. Dönemin seçkin ve deneyimli aydınlarından biri olan Pişevi, siyasi faaliyetleri nedeniyle 1930'dan 1941'e kadar (Rıza Pehlevi Dönemi) İran'da hapsedildi. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra İran'ın kuzeyinden çekilen Sovyet ordusu, Aras Nehri'nin kuzeyini kendine bağlamış, ancak Tebriz ve çevresini İran'a bırakmıştır. Böylece Tahran yönetimi Güney Azerbaycan'ı tekrar kendisine bağlamıştır. Azerbaycan Milli Hükümeti'nin bir yıllık kısa ömründe en önemli başarılarından bazıları şunlardır: Azerbaycan Türkçesinin Azerbaycan bölgesinde resmi dil olarak ilan edilmesi, Tebriz Üniversitesi'nin kurulması, kadınlara seçme ve seçilme hakkının verilmesi, paylaşımların paylaşılması, köylüler arasında topraklar.

Pishevari, İranlı Azerileri ayrı bir ulus olarak gören bir Marksist-Leninistti. Yabancıların, özellikle İngiltere ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin İran'ın iç işlerine müdahalesi İranlılar tarafından güvensiz karşılandı. Bu nedenle, Pishevari'nin Sovyetler Birliği'ne olan eğilimi ve Azerbaycan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'nin varlığı, diğer siyasi faaliyetleri Azerbaycan Demokratlarını desteklemek konusunda isteksiz hale getirdi. Çünkü bunun Sovyetler Birliği'nin ilhak politikalarından biri olduğundan veya Pişevari'nin İran Azerbaycanlılarından ayrılma arzusundan şüpheleniyorlar. Pishevari'nin tahminine rağmen Sovyetler olumsuz tepki gösterdi ve Azerbaycan Demokratlarını desteklemedi. Pişevari seçim ve eğitim sisteminde reform yapmasına rağmen, Sovyetlerin olumsuz tepkisiyle birlikte Pişevari hükümetinden yabancılaşan İranlı Azeriler, özerk hükümeti kademeli olarak çöküşe götürdü. Pişevi'nin tehditkâr bir tonu vardı ama bunu değiştirdi ve tüm İranlıları İran'da

demokrasiyi desteklemeye çağırdı. Aralık 1946'da özerk hükümetin kuruluşundan bir yıl sonra sona erdi. İran ordusu Azerbaycan'a saldırdı ve direnişle karşılaştı ancak Azerbaycan Demokratlarını yendi, bu da yüksek kayıplara ve Sovyet Azerbaycan'a kitlesel göçe neden oldu.

MÜçüncü hareket 1979 İslam Devrimi'nden sonra oldu. 11 Şubat'ta İslami rejimin kurulmasından iki hafta sonra Ayetullah Kazım Şeriatmadari Müslüman Halkın Cumhuriyet Fırkasını kurdu. Atabaki, bu partinin amaçlarından birinin İslami rejimin çok partili bir hükümet olması gerektiğini belirtti. Ayrıca MPRP, hükümetin siyasi sistemini belirlemek için Nisan 1979'da yapılan halk oylamasında insanlara İslam Cumhuriyeti veya monarşiden daha fazla seçenek sunulması gerektiğini savundu. Nisan ayındaki referandumda halk İslam Cumhuriyeti'ne oy verdi. MHRP yeni Anayasa'ya da karşı çıktı çünkü iktidardaki din adamlarının 500 üyeli Kurucu Meclis vaadine rağmen Ayetullah Humeyni 73 üyeli Uzmanlar Meclisi'ni tercih etti. Ayetullah Şeriatmadari, Uzmanlar Meclisi'ni Kurucu Meclis'le değiştirdi. Kurucu Meclis üyeleri MPRP ve çoğunlukla Azerbaycan sempatizanlarıydı. Bu grup, Velayet-i Fakih'in (İslami rejimin doğası) otoritesinin kapsamına karşı oldukları için Aralık 1979'daki anayasal referandumu boykot ettiler. Bu nedenle Azerbaycan'da özellikle Tebriz'de sokaklar bir kez daha Ayetullah Şeriatmadari yanlılarının Ayetullah Humeyni yanlılarıyla karşı karşıya geldiği kanlı bir sahneye dönüştü. Bu çatışma askeri bir müdahaleye dönüştüğünde Ayetullah Şeriatmedari, MPRP'den koptu ve kargaşaya son verdi.

İran Azerbaycan tarihinde bu üç ana akım dışında, ağırlıklı olarak eski Marksistler arasında sınırlı yayın ve Javad Heyat, Mohammad Ali Farzane, Hamid Notqi, Hossein Ali Katebi tarafından Azerbaycan Cemiyeti'nin kurulması dışında kayda değer bir faaliyet yoktur. Azerbaycanlıların öncü olduğu 1980 İran-Irak savaşından sonra ve ardından Cumhurbaşkanı Rafsancani (1989-1997) ve Cumhurbaşkanı Hatemi (1997-2005) dönemlerinde etnik kimlik ve etnik haklar kavramı yavaş yavaş soldu ve yerini vatandaşlık ve bireysellik kavramı aldı hakları.

Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması, İran'ı yeni bir sorunla, İran'ın kuzey sınırlarında bağımsızlığını yeni kazanmış ülkelerle karşı karşıya getirdi. İran ve bu cumhuriyetlerden bazılarının aynı etnik gruplara ev sahipliği yapması, Azerbaycan'ın İran'dan ayrılma olasılığını bir kez daha gündeme getirdi. Atabaki'nin argümanı

dikkate alındığında, bence üç nedenden dolayı İran Azerbaycanlılarını ayırma ideolojisi soldu. Birincisi, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin 80'li yıllarda Sovyetler Birliği'nin karşıt politikası altında yürüttüğü mücadeleler ve Dağlık Karabağ bölgesindeki iç çatışmalardır. İkincisi, 1992'de seçilen, Azerbaycan milletini çok seven ve her iki Azerbaycan'ı birleştirme yönünde radikal eğilimler sergileyen Ebülfezl Elçibay'ın kısa ve başarısız yönetimidir. Üçüncüsü, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin Birinci Dağlık Karabağ savaşındaki başarısızlığıdır. Bu nedenler bir şekilde İranlı Azerbaycanlıyı izole etti, ancak daha önce de belirttiğim ve Atabaki'nin 1997'de Newsweek dergisinin röportajına yanıt verdiği gibi, hiçbir şey ebedi değildir çünkü İran ayrımcı azınlık politikasına sahip çok etnikli bir ülkedir.

İslam Cumhuriyeti, dış politikasının İslami ideolojiye dayandığını iddia ederken, Hristiyan Ermenistan ile Şii Azerbaycan arasındaki çatışma durumunda bu daha çok söylemsel düzeyde kalmış ve hükümet beyan edilen politika çizgisine tam olarak paralel olmayan politikalar izlemiştir. İslami rejimin, savaşın yeni bağımsızlığını kazanmış Azerbaycan'ı yavaş yavaş aşındıracağını ve Azerbaycan ile Azerbaycanlı azınlıkları arasında büyüyen bağı zayıflatacağını umduğunu iddia ediyorum.

Yeni bağımsız cumhuriyetlerin doğup SSCB'nin dağılmasından kısa bir süre sonra Tehran Times, İran'ın bu ülkelerle 2000 kilometreden fazla bir alanı paylaştığı için, İslam hükümetinin yeni bağımsız cumhuriyetlerin, özellikle Azerbaycan ve Türkmenistan'ın siyasi istikrarsızlığından endişe duyduğunu yayınladı. Herhangi bir istikrarsız durum İran'ı güvensiz hale getirebilir çünkü İranlı Azeriler ve Türkmenler arasında etnik ve milliyetçi duygular yaratarak nifak yaratan yabancı eller var. İran, Ermenistan-Azerbaycan ihtilafında İran Azerbaycanlılarının dış politikasına yönelik muhalefetini hafife alsa da, Ermenistan ile ittifakı ülke içinde maliyetli hale geldi.

2020 savaşında Bakü'nün İran sınırındaki işgal ettiği bölgeleri yeniden ele geçirmesi İranlı Azeriler arasında büyük memnuniyet yarattı. Hatta Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti askerlerini gözlemlemek ve desteklemek için sınırda toplandılar. Hükümet bu sevinci bastırmak için yüzlerce protestocu ve aktivisti tutukladı.

Etnik kimliğin, uluslararası ilişkiler alanında giderek daha önemli bir konu haline gelmesine ve temel olarak çağdaş çatışmaların temel nedeni olmasına rağmen, İran'ın Azeri etnik kimliği bilincinin ve İran azınlıklar politikasının uluslararası arenada hak

ettiği ilgiyi görmediğini savunuyorum. İran hükümetinin azınlık politikalarını ulus-devlet, etnik kimlik ve etnik çatışma çerçevesinde analiz ederek, etnik kimliklerinin ortadan kaldırılmasına veya bastırılmasına yönelik politikalara rağmen İranlı Azerbaycanlıların etnik farkındalıklarını sürdürdüklerini ve kendi etnik kimliklerine karşı araştırdıklarını ve seferber olduklarını savunuyorum. Baskı. İkinci Dağlık Karabağ savaşı ve Azerbaycan'ın zaferi, İran Azerbaycanlılarının kimlikleriyle gurur duymalarına elverişli koşullar yaratmıştı. Baskıcı politikalara karşı artan kırgınlıkları, ulusal kimlik bilincine paralel olarak büyüdü.

Aras Nehri'nin iki yakasındaki Azerbaycanlılar, iki farklı devletin kontrolünde olmalarına rağmen ortak tarih, dil, mitler ve inanç sistemlerini paylaşıyorlar. Nagel'e göre etnik kimlikler, bir etnik grubu ve onun siyasi avantajlara erişme yeteneğini kabul ederek veya tanıyarak siyasi olarak inşa edilebilir. Dış faktörler de etnik kimliğin karakterini etkileyebilir ve tanımlayabilir. Sonuç olarak, etnik sınırlar belirli süreçlerin ve dış faktörlerin bir sonucu olarak inşa edilebilir veya yeniden şekillendirilebilir. İran Azerbaycanlılarının etnik sınırları, Pehlevi Hanedanlığı ve İslami rejim döneminde bu rejimlerin siyasi çıkarlarına göre yeniden şekillendirildi. Sonuç olarak, bugün birçok İranlı Azerbaycanlı kendilerini veya başkaları tarafından "Azeri", "İranlı" veya "Türkçe konuşanlar" olarak tanımlıyor. Bu tanımlar, İranlı Azerilerin kendilerini tanımlamasını engellemekte ve kısıtlamaktadır.

Gellner, Kumar ve Zia-Ebrahimi gibi bilim adamlarına göre, bir devletteki eşit olmayan modernleşme milliyetçiliği yükseltebilir. İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'nin baskıcı doğasıyla ekonomik ve siyasi azınlık politikası, İranlı Azerileri kimlikleri konusunda bilinçlendirmiş ve tutkulu hale getirmiştir. Böylece bir bakıma nihai amaç olan kimliklerini dönüştürmekten daha zıt bir etki yaratmış oldular. Nitekim siyasi olarak inşa edilen Azeri kavramı, İranlı Azerileri Türkçe konuşanlar olarak adlandırmak, onların kendilerini tanımlamalarını engellemek ve diğer Türki gruplardan ayırmak milliyetçiliğin ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Kumar'a göre milliyetçiliğin arkasında milletler olduğunu biliyorken, onlar sadece bir etnik grupsa Azerbaycan milliyetçiliğini nasıl tanımlayabiliriz? Azerbaycan'ın K. Karabağ zaferi ile İran Azerbaycan milliyetçiliği artmış ve bazıları kendilerini daha da yakın hissetmiştir.

Hem pan-Pers ideolojisi üzerine inşa edilen Pehlevi Hanedanı hem de pan-İran ideolojisi üzerine inşa edilmiş İslamî özelliklere sahip İslam Cumhuriyeti, Fars

olmayan etnik grupları farslaştırmaya çalıştı. Ülkenin kuzeybatısında yaşayan ve iki Türk ülkesiyle sınır paylaşan İran Azerileri olarak, yavaş yavaş pan-Türk yönetim olasılığının ortaya çıkmasını engellemeyi amaçladılar. Shaffer'a göre Kuzey Azerbaycan'daki Azerbaycan ulusal hareketleri çoğunlukla 1880'lerin sonunda Dağlık Karabağ olayları ve Rusya'nın dayatma politikaları nedeniyle başlamıştır. İran Azerbaycanlılarının etnik kimlik bilinci İran'da da benzer bir bağlamda inşa edildi. Ayrıca Kuzey Azerbaycan'ın ve onun kültür merkezlerinin bağımsızlığı ve ulusal TV kanalları, asimilasyon politikalarına maruz kalan İran Azerbaycanlıları arasında bilinçsizce Azerbaycan milliyetçiliğini etkiledi.

1992'de Dağlık Karabağ'ın birinci savaşı felaket olmasına ve Azerileri Aras Nehri'nin her iki yakasında bir şekilde izole etmesine rağmen, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin 2020'deki ikinci savaşındaki zaferi İranlıların kimlik bilincini etkilemesi açısından bir dönüm noktası oldu. Azeriler. 2020 savaşının 44 günü ve Azerbaycan Ordusunun gücü, İran'daki Türk gruplarını sokaklara çıkıp soydaşlarını ciddiyetle desteklemeye teşvik etti.

Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin ikinci Karabağ savaşında kazandığı zafer, İran Azerbaycanlılarını kimlikleriyle gururlandırdı. Dolayısıyla bu zafer, İran Azerbaycanlılarının kimlik bilincinde bir dönüm noktasıdır. Ayrıca, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin en önemli müttefiki olan Türkiye'nin bölgedeki güçlü konumu ve nüfuzunun algılanması, Türki grupların kimliğinin öne çıkarılmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Aynı zamanda İran Azerbaycanlılarının kimlik meselesi de bu süreçlerden sonra bir iç mesele olmaktan çıkmış ve uluslararası bir mesele haline gelmiştir. Kasım 2022'de Taşkent'te düzenlenen Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı zirvesinde Aliyev'in İranlı Azerbaycanlılara Azerbaycan dışında anadillerinde eğitimden mahrum kalan başka Azerilerin de olduğunu söylemesi bunun bir göstergesidir (Anadolu Ajansı, "Yaşayan yaklaşık 40 milyon Azeri yabancı ülke anadilinde eğitime erişimi engelledi", 2022). Ayrıca, Twitter'daki gelişmiş araştırmalara göre, Azerbaycan'ın 2020'deki zaferinden sonra, İran Azerbaycan hesaplarının sayısı artmakla kalmadı, aynı zamanda eski hesapların çoğu Azerbaycan Türkçesi metinlerle Arapça veya Latin harfleriyle yazmaya başladı.

Bu eylemler, etnik kimliğin önemini ve bir devletteki siyasi rolünü göstermektedir. Heterojen bir etnik yapıya sahip İran örneği, Fars olmayan etnik kimliklerin

varlığından dolayı iç istikrarı ve güvenliği konusunda endişe yaratmıştır. Ancak daha önce de savunduğum gibi, milliyetçilikler baskıcı azınlık politikalarına bir tepki olarak ortaya çıkabilir. Bu özgün politikaların yokluğunda milliyetçilik kontrol altına alınabilir ve İran'ın her zaman korktuğu ayrılıkçılık tehlikesi kontrol altına alınabilir.

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YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Farrokhpour
Adı / Name : Aida
Bölümü / Department : Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations

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