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PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN AFGHANISTAN

Abstract

From a sociological point of view, national identity is defined as a kind of feeling and emotional belonging to a society that causes national unity and cohesion and has different material, cultural and psychological dimensions that cause societies to differ from each other. The phenomenon of Ethnicization and the formation of sub-national identities and subcultures have become doubly important in the contemporary period because factors such as territorial divisions based on national government, inequality, deprivation, ideology, and colonialism play an important role in ethnic nationalization in societies. The ethnicization of identity can be called a process in which the link between national values is weakened and the possibility of maintaining the convergence of a nation is endangered. What is true of national identity in Afghanistan is that no deep link has yet been established between nationalities and ethnicities with national territory, values, and culture.

The identity crisis in Afghanistan has been more focused on the social segregation of groups and has not yet reached the stage of disintegration. Lack of national identity has left negative consequences in the development of concepts such as national unity, national participation, and social justice and has prevented the formation of civic nationalism.

keywords: Afghanistan, Identity, National Identity, Politicization of Ethnicity.

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АУҒАНСТАНДАҒЫ ҰЛТТЫҚ БІРЕГЕЙЛІК МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ

Аңдатпа

Социологиялық тұрғыдан алғанда, ұлттық бірегейлік – бұл әртүрлі материалдық, мәдени және психологиялық аспектілері арқылы бір-бірінен ерекшелене отырып, ұлттық бірлік пен келісімді қалыптастыруға бағытталатын, қоғамға жататындығын эмоционалдық сезінудің бір түрі. Қазіргі кезеңде этникаландыру және субұлттық бірегейлік пен субмәдениеттің қалыптасу құбылысы аса маңызды болып отыр, және осыған орай ұлттық басқаруға негізделген аумақтық бөліну, теңсіздік, депривация, идеология және отаршылдық сияқты факторлар қоғамдағы этникалық ұлттандыруда маңызды рөл атқарады. Бірегейліктің этникалануын ұлттық құндылықтар арасындағы байланысты әлсірететін және ұлттардың жақындасуын сақтау мүмкіндігіне қауіп төндіретін процесс деп айтуға болады. Ауғанстандағы ұлттық бірегейлікке қатысты шындық – бұл, өз аумақтары, құндылықтары мен мәдениеті бар ұлттар мен этностар арасында әлі де терең байланыс орнамағандығы.

Ауғанстандағы бірегейлік дағдарысы топтардың әлеуметтік сегрегациясына бағытталған және әлі де толық ыдыраудың сатысына жеткен жоқ. Ұлттық бірегейліктің болмауы ұлттық бірлік, ұлттық қатысу және әлеуметтік әділеттілік сияқты ұғымдарды дамытуда жағымсыз салдарға алып келуде және азаматтық ұлтшылдықтың қалыптасуына кедергі болып отыр.

Түйінді сөздер: Ауғанстан, бірегейлік, ұлттық бірегейлік, этникалықтың саясаттандырылуы.

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ПРОБЛЕМЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ В АФГАНИСТАНЕ

Аннотация

С социологической точки зрения национальная идентичность определяется как разновидность чувства и эмоциональной принадлежности к обществу, которая вызывает национальное единство и сплоченность и имеет различные материальные, культурные и психологические аспекты, которые заставляют общества отличаться друг от друга. Феномен этнизации и формирования субнациональных идентичностей и субкультур стал важным в современный период, и поэтому такие факторы, как территориальное деление на основе национального правительства, неравенство, депривация, идеология и колониализм, играют важную роль в этнической национализации в обществах. Этнизацией идентичности можно назвать процесс, в котором связь между национальными ценностями ослабевает и возможность сохранения конвергенции нации оказывается под угрозой. Что верно в отношении национальной идентичности в Афганистане, так это то, что еще не установлена глубокая связь между национальностями и этносами с национальной территорией, ценностями и культурой.

Кризис идентичности в Афганистане был больше сосредоточен на социальной сегрегации групп и еще не достиг стадии дезинтеграции. Отсутствие национальной идентичности привело к негативным последствиям в развитии таких понятий, как национальное единство, национальное участие и социальная справедливость, и препятствовало формированию гражданского национализма.

Ключевые слова: Афганистан, идентичность, национальная идентичность, политизация этничности.

Introduction

National identity is the most universal level of identity in all social systems, of which the functional importance depends on the unity and cohesion that it creates in society. National identity is a two-dimensional concept that implies "similarity" and "distinction" at the same time national identity, on the one hand, includes the characteristics which a nation is identified, and on the other hand, refers to the characteristics based on which nationalities are separated from each other. Sociologists say that "the ideal model of national identity in any society is different from other societies and arises from the values and attitudes of that society" [1, p. 2]. In general, the concept of national identity, according to Eastern and Western philosophers, is related to modern literature that has emerged after the Renaissance. Some writers consider national identity to be a political phenomenon that first appeared in Europe and then spread to the political literature of other lands. Apart from the issue of identity typology, the discussion of national identity is usually considered in societies that consist of heterogeneous ethnic, religious groups, and social gaps. These social gaps in society have become active and influential gaps in ethnic-religious identities, as a result of which ethnic conflicts and national identity crises are becoming commonplace in a given society [2]. "If the concept of identity means the cognition that people have of themselves and distinguish themselves from others, national identity promotes this individual cognition to collective cognition and a sense of belonging to common cultural elements, national symbols and historical values" [3, p.10]. National identity is a sense of belonging to a particular nation. A nation that has symbols, traditions, holy places, customs, traditions, historical heroes, and special culture and land [4, p.81]. The main cause of identity crisis in countries with ethnic diversity is disagreement over the definition of their national symbols, which is examined under factors influencing the formation of identities.

Scientists give various characteristics of identity, enriching the understanding of such social phenomena.

1. Giddens examines the issue of identity under the conditions of modernity and globalization. He believes that globalization is simultaneously increasing the importance of regionalism, local nationalism, local ethnicity, and decentralization. "Ultimately, Giddens considers the main pattern of identity-building in today's societies to be non-specific, emphasizing that project-making identity is reflective and that individuals make choices about their identities; Because in general, globalization provides the opportunity to the continuous reconstruction of identity" [5, p.291].

2. Peter Berg besides emphasizing the theory of "identity control" explains how the meaning of identity can help predict one's future behavior. He believes that identity and behavior are linked through a common

semantic system, so if we can discover the meaning that identity has for the individual, we can predict the behavior of individuals and groups [6]. Identity is one of the most important and prominent issues in any society that has the greatest importance and necessity in terms of national unity and cohesion. Identity has different hierarchies, but at a glance, two types of identity can be distinguished:

Individual Identity is the characteristics that distinguish the "I" from others.

Collective Identity; It is a group of people in common affairs, which leads to social solidarity and the formation of a social unit called "us" and separate from other social units [2, p.74].

"Social identity" refers to how individuals and groups are distinguished. Social identity is determined by our understanding of "who we are and who others are" which is rooted in the process of socialization [7].

3. In the theory of "social comparison", Leon Festinger believes that social groups by comparing "their group" with "other groups" realize their abilities and possessions with others. In this case, a sense of discrimination and social and political conflict may develop between individuals and groups, which is shown in their behavior [8, p.74].

4. In the theory of "situational identity", Alexander shows how a person's relationship with the environment at a given time, can create a situational identity. Alexander's theory focuses on situational identity, not on a structured and relatively fixed identity [9, p.74].

Methods research

In the nineteenth century, Afghanistan experienced linguistic unity and the creation of a single ethnic identity through such components as language and common heritage. The main strategy in the nation-building projects of that time was the attraction and assimilation of all linguistic or ethnic groups into a single identity based on a common national language [10, p.43-45]. Identity and ethnicity are cultural phenomena, as Anthony Giddens says that, ethnic and diversity of identity can enrich societies; and that multi-ethnicity often transforms countries into vibrant and dynamic environments, but ethnic conflict, especially internal unrest, and external factors, has turned ethnic diversity in Afghanistan now into a most important challenge. The main challenge is to compete to the political power by relying on its undemocratic approach, which is seen as an obstacle to achieving a just political system. What must be denied in the struggle for democracy is ethnic nationalism and hegemony. Otherwise, the desire and need of society to acquire an ethnic identity, "identifying it" is considered the main factor of "separatist movements and ethnic decentralization" [11, p.203].

The people of Afghanistan and its tribes have lived together peacefully in the past and had a strong social unity like religion, faith, national values, cultural customs, art, and a common language (Persian) and as well as the Persian language was the language of authorities were the connecting factors of the tribes. Like most countries that link ethnicity to immigration, ethnic nationalism in Afghanistan is strongly linked to politics and political power. The history of Afghan nationalism also dates back to the modern era (early 20th century), especially to nation-state-building and constitution-making, because the politics of ethnic identity has created a kind of extreme minority instead of citizenship rights, the most important consequence of which is ethnic conflict. If ethnic identity becomes an "extreme minority" and a sense of ethnic superiority it causes national conflict and prevents the ethnics from the social solidarity [6, p.69]. Some sociologists believe ethnic differences, and ethnic differences will gradually fade in the process of modernization. Although Afghanistan is still a traditional society, in traditional societies, identity is not considered a problem and there is no identity crisis in these societies because "the identity of individuals in traditional societies is easily determined and the history clarifies the existing identity of individuals", but in today's modern societies, contrary to fixed definitions of identity, different identities have exploded and clashed with each other under any circumstances as if I am a citizen of Afghanistan, my identity must be Afghan. "This is the anti-pluralist spirit that deprives individuals of the right to freedom of choice" [12].

To compare the past of Afghanistan and its present, to study the problem of ethnic identity and conflicts arising on this basis in modern conditions, the method of theoretical analysis, comparative historical analysis was used. Critical analysis of the consequences of the superiority of ethnic identity instead of the creation of civil relations helped the authors to make a predictive assessment of the situation in Afghanistan.

Results and discussions

The "identity crisis" and, more importantly, the "politicization of ethnicity" in Afghanistan have been the result of the wrong policies of Afghan rulers throughout history. According to Ahadi, only in the last two centuries, in the decade of democracy (1964-1973), there had been made serious efforts to establish a nation-

state system based on equality and social justice. The 1964 constitution, in addition to equal ethnic rights, also ended centuries of discrimination against Shiite Muslims (in Afghanistan) (1995). The crisis of identity and ethnicity in Afghanistan was so widespread that even these efforts could not bring about lasting change in the situation. In this regard, the ethnic structure of political power, ethnic elites, and competition for scarce resources are the main reasons that play a role in the politicization of ethnicity.

Most scholars of contemporary history have studied the relationship between ethnicity and tribe and political power mainly since the time of Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747). Some domestic scholars interpret ethnicity as the determinant of political behavior, Ethnic and ethnicity play a decisive role in the Afghan political system to elements such as language, religion, and ideology. Although specific statistics on the number of ethnic groups are not available, the constitution and national anthem of Afghanistan listed 14 ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Among the four ethnic groups (Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras & Uzbeks) are the most populous tribes and are the main players in political power.

After the transition period (The Bonn Agreement 13 December 2001) and the formation of the Senate and the approval of the constitution, the constitution declared the structure of the new democratic government of Afghanistan and "prohibited any political behavior based on ethnicity" [13, p. 64 – 66]. But the truth is that even in the "Bonn Agreement" the distribution of power in proportion to the (estimated) population among the tribes retained its importance and again the ethnic factor played a decisive role in government organizations and political parties. I have already mentioned that ethnic identity is a "cultural phenomenon" in itself. It is only by highlighting differences and politicizing ethnicity that a kind of hegemony is formed between ethnic groups. There are various theories regarding the politicization of ethnicity in the social sciences, the most important are mentioned below:

On the nature of the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic heterogeneity Glaser, Moynihan, and Susan Olzak say: "they have seen the competition for government resources and jobs as the impetus for ethnic conflict" [14]. But Anthony Smith and Paul Brass, see based on "elite competition theory" consider the role of elites important in the ethnic mobilization using cultural elements. Some see the role of the international system as an effective factor in ethnic conflicts. How are these three theories examined about the Afghan? In Afghanistan, it has been widely believed that tribes first became embroiled in ethnic strife over land, water, and pastures to the point that some writers on the wars of Amir Abdul Rahman and the theory of ethnic elimination and ethnic displacements in northern Afghanistan to get the land of the minorities. His successors have done the same according to the above-mentioned theory [14].

According to the deprivation theory, "the relative deprivation of minority groups causes ethnic conflicts between the minority and the majority" [15, p.30]. The long isolation of non-Pashtuns from the arena of political power motivated them to seek to end their "historical deprivation" Elite competition theory about Afghanistan's experience of ethnic conflict complements the theory of deprivation of sources of political power.

These two theories pay attention to the internal factors of the phenomenon of ethnicity, but the third theory considers external factors to be an effective factor in strengthen ethnicity. The beginnings of the international system's influence on ethnicity in Afghanistan date back to "the time of Russian-British rivalry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." Scholars such as Vartan Gregorian and Mohammad Siddiq Farhang believe that some of Afghanistan's political and cultural elites have been theoretically influenced by the Pan-Turkism of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and other nationalist views of the 1930s and have considered implementing their models. In this case, they especially mention several Pashtun elites such as (Mahmoud Tarzi) [16, p.264].

The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union (1979), the independence of Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan due to cultural commonalities in southern and northern Afghanistan are considered external factors which have been influencing nationalism and ethnic identity in Afghanistan. One example of a factor in Afghanistan's domestic politics and its impact on the ethnicity approach is that "for the first time in the literature Afghan media, the term 'nationalities' was promoted by the Russians" [17, p.60]. This was the issue for the Central Asian countries which the Russians wanted to implement in Afghanistan as well. On the eve of communistic government, the official language of the government in addition to Pashto and Persian also recognized the language of a minority like Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluchi, and Nuristani as the official languages of the country [18, p.7-9]. During the rule of the People's Party government, recognition of minority languages Ethnic groups was initially formed to weaken the position of the Persian language and strengthen the Pashto language as a national language, which for the first time diverted cultural nationalism from its main course and served the government's policy. There is no doubt that ethnicity and the national identity

crisis in Afghanistan have not become a social phenomenon, but the identity crisis is formed when the identity has become political. The issue of identities in Afghanistan has reached this stage, there is no other way out of it than the government obeys cultural-ethnic pluralism.

Conclusion

Sociologists mention three models for solving the problems of sub-identities, ethnicities, and achieving national identity in countries: "assimilation", "smelting furnace" and "pluralism". These models are based on the sociological analysis of immigrant countries. Although Afghan society is not made up of immigrant ethnic groups, this does not mean that the challenge of national identity in Afghanistan cannot be examined in terms of these approaches.

Anthony Giddens explains that the first model does not accept the cultural differences of immigrants and emphasizes that they are similar to the dominant culture. The smelting model accepts ethnic diversity but emphasizes the cultural mixing of immigrants with the original culture. Pluralism recognizes the approach of subcultures with equal validity and importance. What was decided at the Bonn Summit (5 December 2001) about ethnicity and the structure of political power in Afghanistan was somewhat in line with the third approach, the pluralism approach.

In the approach of totalitarianism and sectarianism, the emphasis is on the inclusion of ethnic groups in political power based on agreement. In the new political system, the values of human rights, citizenship rights, equality, and social justice could not transform the existing vacuum (civil nationalism) in political and social structures. Thus, the attempt to integrate minorities into the political structure was interpreted by critics of the system as "de-ethnicization." The holistic trend emphasizes national identity, national unity, and the condemnation of ethnicity as a platform for nationalization, which is pursued primarily through the enactment of laws, instructions, and executive orders, and emphasizes the cultural interaction of ethnic groups. The diversity of the composition of government employees, the broadcast of mixed Persian and Pashto programs from the media, are signs of efforts to implement this model. In such cases, this approach is considered close to the "melting furnace" approach [14]. On the other hand, the generalization of "Afghan" identity (the name of the Pashtun people to other ethnic groups) in national identities and the emphasis on the word "Afghan" as a national identity is similar to the "assimilation" model. Critics say the attempt to remove ethnic identities runs counter to constitutional principles and successful mechanisms implemented in multi-ethnic countries. They emphasize that in Afghanistan, too, pluralism and ethnic tolerance can be a solution to ethnic conflict and political crisis, rather than enacting extra-legal regulations to eliminate ethnic identities. Patterns of national identity in Afghanistan discuss the existing social contexts and backgrounds for achieving national identity. These patterns will help us to elucidate the relationship between the geographical location of ethnic groups, wartime migrations, second-generation immigrants, and the ethnic structure of political power in Afghanistan with how national identity is defined.

1. The model of pluralism: The model of pluralism in Afghanistan can be examined in terms of culture, ethnicity, and religion. Cultural pluralism means accepting cultural plurality and diversity within the framework of national values [14]. Cultural pluralism creates a kind of integration in the field of culture, which is the opposite of cultural elimination and imposition and brings Afghan society closer to the national identity. However, in the multicultural conceptual course, "the idea of an egalitarian multicultural society has never been fully realized empirically" [19].

2. Transition to Democracy: In post-conflict countries with ethnic minority structures "majority democracy" leads to the permanent victory of one social group and the permanent defeat of another, resulting in ethnic violence and identity-seeking. "The reality is that in countries like Afghanistan, where on the one hand the people choose with ethnic presuppositions and on the other hand the political decision-makers act according to tribal criteria, there is no other way but to moderate the kind of democracy that governs power relations in the country [20]. The establishment of consensual or democracy and the division of the quota of executive power is the only possible way to gather different social groups at the center of the political system.

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