

Challenges of national identity in Iran

Abstract

The current variety of ethnic and cultural differences in Iran is the legacy of the ancient Iranian emperors. The relationship between ethnic identities and national identity may appear in three forms of contrast, simultaneous, and resonator. National identity in the frame-work of nation-state is a modern concept attempts to create national solidarity which may be in conflict with ethnic identity and solidarity. Ethnic and national identities also may coexist peacefully and create a dyadic identity for the people. And finally, ethnic identity may accelerate national solidarity by strengthening national identity. Obviously, all nation-states, by managing ethnic diversity, attempt to avoid tensions among ethnic identities and create parallel relationships or even strengthen relationships among them. This article seeks to explain the existing relationships among ethnic identities and national identity in Iran and the potential threats that may lead to contrast and conflict between ethnic identities and national identity. Accordingly, this article is to explain how it may be possible to develop an equitable strategy to avoid contrast between ethnic and national identities. The first part of the article summarizes concepts and theories that can explain the relationship between ethnic and national identities, while the second part of the article identifies the main threatening factors to positive–parallel or escalating - relationship of ethnic and national identities in Iran. The third part of the article describes the characteristics of an equitable strategy in Iran for managing ethnic diversity that leads to national solidarity.

Keyword: Iran; Ethnicity; National identity; Ethnic identity; Minority; Equitable strategy