



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT ETHNIC POLICIES
ON NATIONAL UNITY IN IRAN (1997-2005)***

MAJID KHORSHIDI

FEM 2013 5

**INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT ETHNIC POLICIES ON NATIONAL
UNITY IN IRAN (1997-2005)**

By

MAJID KHORSHIDI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

JANUARY 2013

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in the
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman: Lee Yok Fee, PhD

Faculty: Human Ecology

Iran is a multi-ethnic nation-state. All Iranian ethnic groups are indigenous and well integrated in general, but conflict and disagreement may occur when the issues of religion and language are being manipulated in politics. Therefore, preserving and promoting of national unity have been the most significant issue for all Iranian governments especially during the recent one hundred years. Khatami's administration (1997-2005) as a reformist government applied its own policies to cope with the diversity. Undoubtedly, the policies had their consequences, and influenced on national unity among ethnic groups. While the rivals of the administration argue the harmful effects of these policies on national unity through increasing ethnic demands, its advocates praise the applied policies due to their influences on promoting national unity.

Based on the above problem, the purpose of this study is to describe the political and cultural demands of ethnic groups in Iran during Khatami's administration, the administration's responses to the demands, and the influences of the administration's policies on level of national unity among the ethnic groups.

Based on the "systems theory" which indicates impacts of the demands and the systems responses to these demands, this research has explored the ethnic groups' demands and the administration's policies responding to these demands and finally, the influences of these policies on the national unity among ethnic groups.

The research followed qualitative approach and the primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The selection of respondents was based on purposive sampling method. The respondents were 23 persons from three categories of the informants: ethnic, administrative, and academic elites. Moreover, to enrich the data collected through the interviews, documentary data were used in some parts. For analysing of the data, the study applied qualitative content analysis.

The results indicate that Iranian ethnic groups due to their long co-existence and native nature have no secessionist demands but they have their own demands specially participation in power, reduction in discrimination, and cultural rights. The presidency election in 1997, which led to Khatami's winning, created a new atmosphere for the ethnic groups to express their demands. Khatami and his administration regarding his reformist ideas met the demands with positive attitudes, and chose a smart way to respond the ethnic groups' demands without provoking the concerns of the majority of the Iranian society. Most of the administrations' policies were run by the name of citizens' rights and empowering the civil society. Under this

approach, the administration responded many the ethnic demands. For the first time in the history of Iran, the administration executed the election of city councils, which played a remarkable rule in the ethnic groups' participation. In addition, some policies were followed in case of removal of discrimination and repression. The cultural demands were also responded.

The collected data shows, to some extent, it was a success in achieving the aims of the policies, however due to the duality of the political system in Iran and the competition between the reformists and conservatives, the policies met with some obstacles and limitations.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia adalah sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGARUH POLISI ETNIK KERAJAAN KE ATAS PERPADUAN
NEGARA DI IRAN (1997-2005)**

Oleh

MAJID KHORSHIDI

JANUARI 2013

Pengerusi: Lee Yok Fee, PhD

Fakulti: Ekologi Manusia

Iran adalah sebuah negara-bangsa yang berbilang kaum. Namun, pada hakikatnya, semua kumpulan etnik Iran adalah penduduk asal dan pada umumnya mereka hidup bersatu padu dalam masyarakat. Walau bagaimanapun, ketegangan antara kumpulan etnik tetap wujud bila timbulnya persaingan politik dan konflik dalam isu-isu agama dan bahasa. Oleh itu, semenjak seratus tahun yang lalu, usaha mengekalkan dan menggalakkan perpaduan negara telah menjadi satu isu yang paling penting bagi semua kerajaan Iran. Pentadbiran Khatami (1997-2005) sebagai sebuah kerajaan reformis telah mengaplikasikan dasar sendiri untuk menangani kepelbagaian dalam negaranya. Memang tidak dapat dinafikan, dasar-dasar yang dilaksanakan turut membawa kesan dan pengaruh ke atas perpaduan dalam kalangan kumpulan etnik.

Walaupun pesaing pentadbiran mendakwa bahawa dasar yang dilaksanakan telah membawa kesan buruk ke atas perpaduan nasional, namun pada masa yang sama, hujah mereka turut memuji dasar yang dilaksanakan telah menggalakkan perpaduan nasional secara berkesan.

Berdasarkan permasalahan di atas, kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti permintaan politik dan budaya dalam kalangan kumpulan etnik di Iran pada zaman pentadbiran Khatami. Selain itu, respons pentadbiran Khatami terhadap permintaan tersebut serta bagaimana polisi yang diamalkan telah membawa kesan kepada tahap perpaduan nasional di kalangan kumpulan etnik di Iran turut dikaji.

Berdasarkan Teori Sistem yang digunakan untuk melihat kesan dan maklum balas terhadap permintaan, kajian ini ingin memahami permintaan-permintaan daripada kumpulan-kumpulan etnik yang pelbagai di Iran, polisi-polisi pentadbiran yang diimplementasikan untuk memenuhi permintaan tersebut, dan kesan polisi ke atas perpaduan nasional dalam kumpulan etnik.

Kajian ini ialah satu kajian bersifat kualitatif dan data primer dikumpul melalui kaedah temu bual separa berstruktur. Seramai 23 orang responden telah dipilih dengan menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan dan mereka berasal daripada tiga kategori utama, iaitu golongan pemimpin etnik, ketua pentadbiran dan elit dalam akademik. Selain itu, kajian ini juga menggunakan data sekunder seperti data dokumentari. Data dianalisa dengan menggunakan kaedah analisis kandungan.

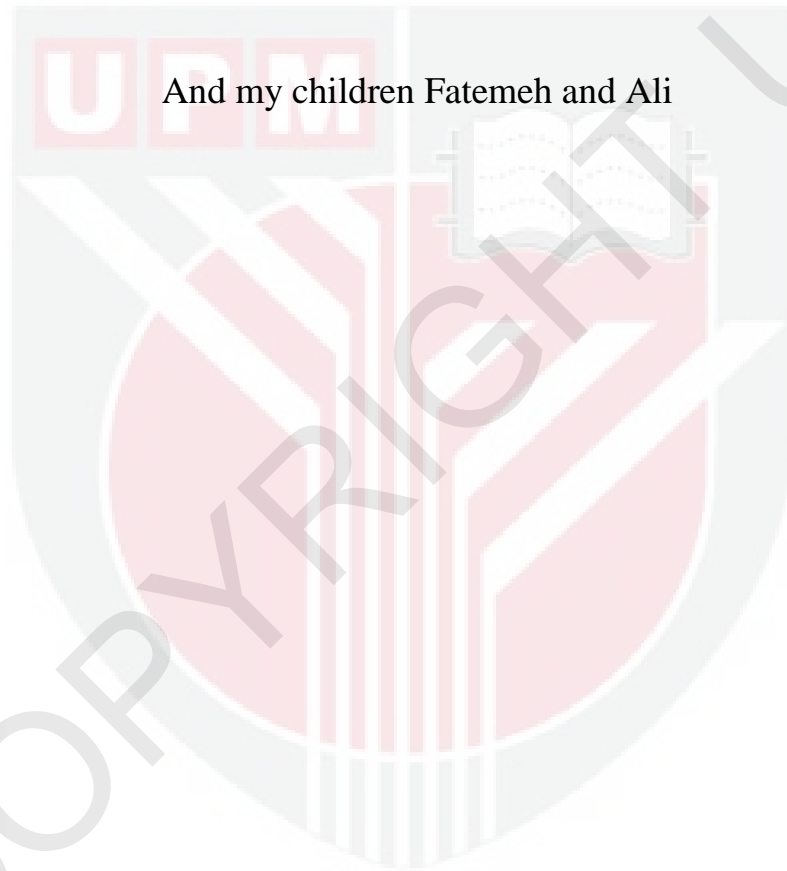
Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa oleh sebab sifat semula jadi kumpulan etnik dan juga kewujudan mereka yang sudah lama di Iran, mereka tidak meminta berpisah daripada Iran. Namun, mereka tetap mempunyai permintaan seperti penglibatan dalam kuasa politik, mengurangkan diskriminasi dan memiliki hak-hak kebudayaan. Pilihan raya presiden pada tahun 1997 yang membawa kemenangan kepada Khatami telah mencipta satu ruang baru untuk kumpulan-kumpulan etnik tersebut mengutarakan permintaan mereka. Khatami dan pentadbirannya yang mendukung

idea reformasi dengan sikap positif, telah memilih cara yang bijaksana untuk menangani permintaan kumpulan etnik tanpa mencetuskan ketegangan dalam kalangan majoriti di Iran. Kebanyakan dasar pentadbiran yang dijalankan adalah bersifat mengutamakan hak rakyat dan bertujuan memperkasakan perkembangan masyarakat madani. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan tersebut, pentadbiran Khatami membalas banyak permintaan etnik. Buat pertama kali dalam sejarah Iran, pentadbiran telah menjalankan pilihan raya di peringkat majlis perbandaran yang memainkan peranan penting untuk penglibatan kumpulan etnik. Selain itu, terdapat juga polisi yang bertujuan untuk mengurangkan diskriminasi dan penindasan. Pelbagai permintaan kebudayaan turut dipenuhi.

Data yang diperoleh menunjukkan bahawa terdapat kejayaan yang relatif dalam pelaksanaan dasar-dasar pentadbiran. Namun, kewujudan sistem politik bersifat dualiti di Iran dan persaingan antara pihak reformis dan konservatif telah menyebabkan wujudnya beberapa halangan dan batasan terhadap polisi tersebut.

To: Afsaneh

And my children Fatemeh and Ali



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great pleasure that I express my appreciation to the various people who provided me with their full assistance and support in completing this thesis.

Most sincere thanks are expressed to Dr. Lee Yok Fee the chair of my committee, for all of his support and guidance throughout this process. It is because of his willingness to share in his interests and gentle encouragement. This thesis would not have been possible unless his supports. For that, I am forever grateful.

I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Jayum A. Jawan for being a part of my committee and for all of the time he put into this effort and for his supports. From him, I learned so much.

Gratitude is extended to Dr. Sarjit Singh A/L Darshan Singh a committee member for taking on this commitment and for always being there throughout the process. His kindness and gentle will be in my mind forever.

I also would like to thank those who have enabled me to start and complete this study with their help, support, and encouragement personally:

- I especially owe my deepest gratitude to my wife, Afsaneh Asad Famian Azar and my children, Fatemeh and Ali who by their love and encourages and bearing the difficulties, I could continue my education.
- The soul of my father Abbas who believed in me and always encouraged me to continue education and wished to see my success but he never had the chance!
- My mother Zahra who believes in me and always prays and encourages me to continue education and wishes to see my success.

- The informants, who gave a lot of their time to share their valued experiences with me
- And my family members and friends, who encouraged and supported me in difficulties. I would also like to thank my colleagues and friends in the Faculty of Human Ecology and in the Department of Government and Civilisation Studies who contributed to the richness of my academic journey.



I certify that a thesis examination committee has met on 02.01.2013 to conduct the final examination of Majid Khorshidi on his doctor of philosophy thesis entitled “Influence Of Government Ethnic Policies On National Unity In Iran (1997-2005)” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (higher degree) act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (higher degree) regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the doctor of philosophy.

Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

Zaid b Ahmad, PhD

Prof. Madya
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Ahmad Tarmizi bin Talib, PhD

Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Asnarulkhadi b Abu Samah, PhD

Prof. Madya
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Thock Ker Pong, PhD

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Universiti Malaya
Malaysia
(External Examiner)

SEOW HENG FONG, PhD

Professor and Deputy Dean
School Of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 11.04.2013

This thesis is submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Lee Yok Fee, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Jayum A. Jawan, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Sarjit Singh A/L Darshan Singh, PhD

Associated Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

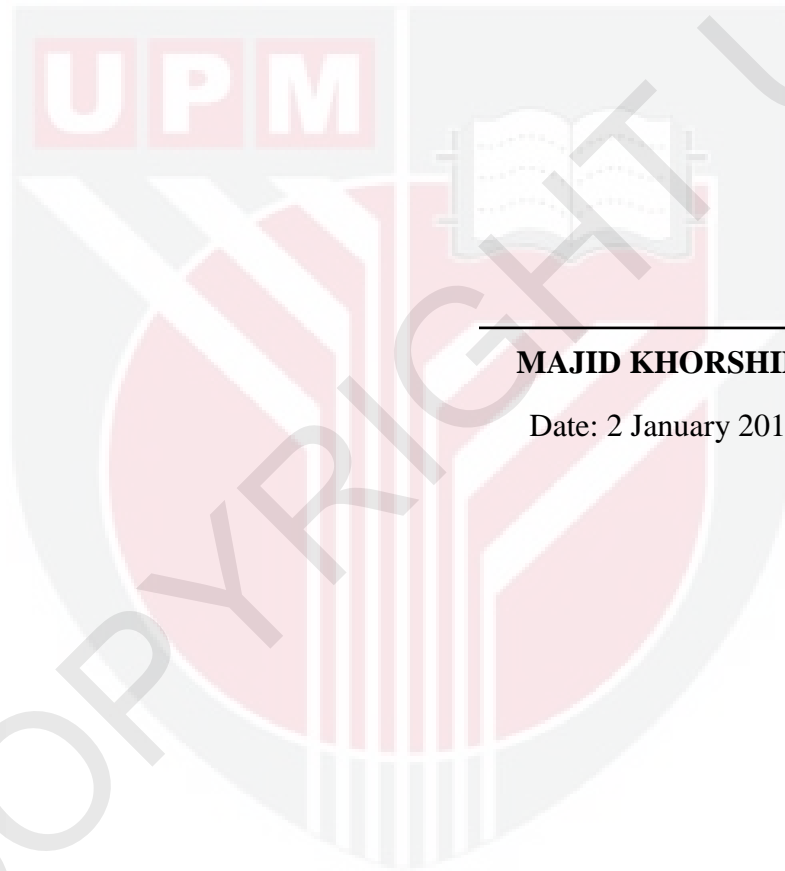
BUJANG Bin KIM HUAT, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institutions.



MAJID KHORSHIDI

Date: 2 January 2013

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