Parviz Kazimi

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5577-4773
Associate Professor, Doctor of Philosophy, Baku State University, Azerbaijan, pkazimi@mail.ru

Ellada Balayeva

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8140-5290
Lecturer, Baku State University, Azerbaijan, elladabalayeva@bsu.edu.az

Ethnocultural Description of the Persians
(Socio-historical analysis)

Abstracts

Concepts such as the Persian nation, the Persian regime and the Persian ethnic group in the Islamic Republic of Iran appear in scientific and public literature. In the historical process, it is impossible to obtain reliable information that the Persians were the dominant people in Iranian geography. Research conducted in this direction shows that it is impossible to get an idea of the great unity of the Persian-speaking peoples, a single ethnic group and a single system of cultural values. At the same time, it is known that the Persian language is widely promoted, taught and celebrated as a poetic language in a wide area, especially in the Islamic cultural sphere. From this point of view, the role of the Persian language in this area, the process of formation of the Persian ethnic group and the study of aspects that hinder this process are topics that attract attention. The reasons for the absence or failure to form a major union of Persian-speaking peoples, as well as its failure to become the dominant nation in Iranian geography, express the picture that emerged from the study. Considering this issue in historical dynamics, one can identify an interesting ethnocultural picture. The concept of "Iranian", emerging as a result of the synthesis of language, religion and ethnicity, is presented as a modern Persian national identity. The article proposes an approach to the problem using the historical-comparative method.

Perslerin Etnokültürel Tanımı
(Sosyo-tarihsel analiz)

Öz

İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'nde Fars ulusu, Fars rejimi ve Fars etnik grubu gibi kavramlar bilimsel ve kamusal literatürde karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Tarihsel süreçte İran coğrafyasında Farsların hâkim halk olduğuna dair güvenilir bilgi elde etmek mümkün değildir. Bu doğrultuda yapılan araştırmalar, Farsça konuşan halkların büyük birliği, tek bir etnik grup ve tek bir kültürel değerler sistemi hakkında fikir edinmenin imkânsız olduğunu göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda, Farsçanın geniş bir alanda, özellikle de İslami kültür alanında şiirsel bir dil olarak yaygın bir şekilde tanıtıldığı, öğretildiği ve kutlandığı bilinmektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, Fars dilinin bu alandaki rolü, Fars etnik grubunun oluşum süreci ve bu süreci engelleyen yönlerin incelenmesi dikkat çeken konulardır. Farsça konuşan halkların büyük bir birlik oluşturmamasının ya da oluşturamamasının nedenleri ve İran coğrafyasında hâkim millet haline gelememesi, çalışmadan ortaya çıkan tabloyu ifade etmektedir. Bu konu tarihsel dinamikler içinde ele alındığında ilginç bir etnokültürel tablo ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dil, din ve etnisitenin sentezi sonucu ortaya çıkan "İranlı" kavramı, modern bir Fars ulusal kimliği olarak sunulmaktadır. Makale, tarihsel-karşılaştırmalı yöntemi kullanarak soruna bir yaklaşım önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fars halkı, Fars ulusu, Fars etnisitesi, Fars dili, Farsça konuşan halklar

Introduction

Who are the Persians and how well do we know them? Literary and historical works written in different periods under the names Fars, Persian, Pars, Iran, Persia do not allow us to reveal the national identity of this people and ethnic group (Kazimi, Oqlu & Qizi, 2022). The synonymization of the Persian ethnonym with Iran overshadows Persian-speaking cultures such as Tajik, Baluchi, Kurdish and Pashtun. Beginning in 1934, when the Pahlavis came to power in the territory of the Qajar Empire, a new policy of Iranianism began. The history of the ethnogenesis of the Persians and their transformation into the dominant nation in Iran is full of dark pages (Kazımi, 2017). Multi-volume history books written in different eras, especially the Pahlavi era, seem to serve to hide the truth behind confusing events rather than answer questions.

1.Description and Analysis of the Topic

Today, in the geography of Iran, it is very difficult to reveal the historical path, cultural evolution, heroes, culture, music, culinary culture and other forms of expression, especially linguistic features, of peoples who identify themselves as Persians. and the cultural heritage chain.

Therefore, it is more expedient to study history from its origins to the present day, and from our modern times to their origins.

A search for people who say "I am Persian" in the cities of modern Iran does not yield any significant results. Especially in the city of Tehran, answers like "pedarbozorg men tork bude" (my grandfather was a Turk) require defining a search methodology. The population of Fars Ostan (province) also has a mixed ethnic composition. The "identifier" "I am an Iranian" is similar to the identifier "I am a Soviet citizen" during the years of the USSR (Soviet government) (Kazimi & Guliyeva, 2022). Within each Iranian, his Persian, Kurdish, Turkish, Lor, Baluchi identity is expressed.

Therefore, it is more correct to determine the genealogy of the peoples who express themselves as Persians and the ethnocultural picture that emerges from it. In this regard, the story of Shirin Ibadi, who was born in the city of Hamadan and received the Nobel Prize in 2003, attracts attention. She was born into the family of Muhammad Ali Ibadi, a professor of commercial law and chief notary of the city of Hamadan. Understanding his cultural identity, he says at the Nobel Prize ceremony: "I am Iranian." I am a descendant of Cyrus the Great. 2,500 years ago, at the height of his power, this emperor said: "...if the people did not want me, I would not rule." He promised not to force anyone to change religion or beliefs and guaranteed freedom for everyone. The Magna Carta of Curush is one of the most important documents to be studied in the history of human rights." (Speech at the Nobel Prize ceremony)

This speech is a historical speech and contains clues that will answer our questions. Shirin Ibadi goes further than Ferdosi in search of her ancestors. We know that Firdosi in his Shahnameh remembers and praises only the rulers of the Sasanian era. To quote the history books written on the orders of Reza Pahlavi, presenting Kourosh as the most "humanistic" person in the world and announcing this from one of the world's most prestigious platforms is perfect information engineering (Kazimi, 2011). The only thing that Firdosi and Shirin Ibadi have in common is that they are both far from Islam (Agamırzayev, 2022). It is impossible to prejudice Kurosh or the Sassanians with Islamic prejudices. Of course, in the Iranian province of Fars and in a number of areas south of Hamadan there are people who say that I am a descendant of Kurosh or a descendant of Dariush. However, this group of people are rather pacifists, they think about synthesizing the world with Islam and building a "moderate religious model" that claims that all religions are related. The establishment of Baha'ism in the mid-19th century also served this purpose. A similar approach is also characteristic of the Sasanian period. At that time, they were engaged in active

religious creativity in Iran. Early Christians, Mandaeans, Mithraans - many religions competed with each other in the southern provinces of Iran. However, such an approach could not be dominant in the country, and was not so. Firdosi's work was praised with the title "After 300 Years of Silence," (indicates that there were no fundamental works on the Persian language for 300 years after the introduction of Islam into the geography of Iran) and the absence of Islamic motifs in its plots surprised no one.

In the last millennium, major historical events related to the formation of the Persian ethnic group are "not foreseen" in the geography of Iran. Therefore, it is necessary to look for events "out of sight." For example, in the absence of a large Persian ethnic group, Persian was accepted for a time as a court language in the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal Empire, and also for a time during the Qajar dynasty. It is known that at that time the Persian language was not the language of the people, but only the court language, the language of official communication and the language of the gradually emerging aristocracy. As a result, Persian did not become the national language.

Those who claim that there are three stages in the development of the Persian language do not put forward any reasonable idea of the relationship between these stages. The existence of such a historical situation could not be substantiated even in history textbooks written on the orders of Reza Pahlavi. However, we know that during the period of Islamic culture, dervishes preached Persian protest literature over a large area, and the Persian language was taught in khans and dervish centers. Farsi was perceived as an alternative to the official Arab-Islamic aristocracy, as a tool aimed at a protest audience. Behind each dervish there was an Mobid (religious leader) in white robes.

A study of the Persian-speaking peoples living in modern Iran reveals an interesting picture. Currently, some researchers divide the Persian-speaking peoples into thirty-five groups, others into ten groups. However, in this grouping, language groups are combined with dialects, and the degree of relatedness of languages cannot be determined. Therefore, we consider it more correct to divide them mainly into three groups.

1. Mutually intelligible Persian-speaking peoples.
2. Farsi-speaking peoples who find it difficult to understand each other.
3. Farsi-speaking peoples who do not understand each other.

The first group, along with the Persian language, which is the official state language of Iran, includes Dari (Afghanistan) and Tajik (Tajikistan) languages. These peoples have so few linguistic differences that they easily understand each other, even though they live far from each other. The

second group includes Gilan, Mazandaran and Lors, whose language is difficult to understand. Despite being in the same cultural zone, no major process of integration occurred between these languages.

The third group includes the Baluchis, Kurds and Pashtuns. Despite the fact that the languages of these peoples are in the same cultural space, they do not feel any closeness to the modern Iranian Persian language and are not mutually intelligible. The religious factor is mentioned here. Baluchis, Pashtuns and Kurds are Sunni, which has contributed to this problem. However, what is noteworthy is the fact that the proximity to languages outside Iran (Dari, Tajik) is felt more, although they are also Sunni.

Modern Persian, formed in the Tehran-Shiraz-Isfahan triangle, does not consider other Persian-speaking peoples to be its equals and in fact does not see itself as an interested party in mass assimilation. Despite the fact that Persian has been the only language of instruction in Iran for the last hundred years, these Persian-speaking peoples have not shown any serious integration trends. Of course, illiteracy, which still persists in the regions, also plays a role. Only after assimilating the "elite" of these nations are they used in government. This approach has both historical roots and comes from religious beliefs. Interesting generalizations were made in E. Blavatsky's research on the social structure of Persian ethnic groups.

According to E. Blavatsky, the social structure of the Parsis, belonging to the Indo-European language group, was socially divided into three layers - the first layer included religious leaders (mobids the second layer - soldiers and urban artisans, the third layer - peasants and servants. Between these layers there was a hierarchical subordination from bottom to top.

As for the heroes of the people, it is necessary to look at their mythology. Elements of "Armenian history" appear in Persian-Iranian mythology. The narratives of Mithraism and the Anaid Temple have survived to this day, changing their form. Persian mythology mainly consists of mythical heroes from the fire-worshipping period and stories similar to those in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. There are no narratives praising historical heroes, generals and rulers. Among the modern heroes created, if you look at the origins of Qasim Soleimani and Razi Mousavi, the first is from Lurestan, and the second is from the Zanjan Turks, although he lives in Semnan. Behind these "heroes" are the "bad guys".

Musical culture was formed under the influence of Sufi creativity. Although there are different local interpretations in Persian-speaking regions, Perso-Indian musical traditions retain elements of ancient and medieval Sufi dervish gatherings. Literature occupies a special place in

Iranian-Persian culture. In this direction, the peculiarities of the Persian language played a consolidating role, and a large number of non-Persian thinkers created unique examples of literature in this language. Although the Persian language is incapable of expressing precise and scientific ideas, literature, especially poetry, has excellent tools. Since the scientific language of the country is Arabic, Persian has developed as a poetic language and acquiring scientific knowledge in this language is problematic.

In Iran, on the one hand, the tendency to appropriate the Persian-language literature of non-Persian-speaking peoples, and on the other hand, to Iranianize the literary examples of various Persian-speaking peoples, creates an unhealthy environment. In the modern literary environment of the world, there is no need to prove that Rabindranath Tagore was an Indian, although he wrote in English. Unlike Iranian-Persian ideologues, the British do not consider all examples of English-language literature to be their literary heritage.

Noteworthy is the absence of national Persian alphabets. Pre-Islamic Persians used the Aramaic alphabet to record their fire-worshipping religious thoughts. The Mobids used the alphabet for cryptographic correspondence and were not interested in widely disseminating their written achievements. Arab travelers of the 7th century also mention in their works the presence of hidden signs in the writing of the Persian language. The Arabic alphabet, which began to spread widely along with Islamic culture, marked the beginning of a new era. The Persians formed their writing based on this alphabet and enthusiastically named it the Persian alphabet. With the help of this alphabet, the Kurds, Turks, Baluchis and other peoples who accepted Islam also began to write in their national language, but they did not call the alphabet the national alphabet.

Conclution

In the 30s of the 20th century, Reza Pahlavi included an Iranian toponym in a periodical instead of a Persian one, turning the two toponyms into synonyms. In rewritten history textbooks, the mythology of Persia was called ancient Iranian history. Because the Pahlavis did not trust traditional Islam, they made serious attempts to form a new religion. Baha'is were appointed to high positions in government structures and constituted the country's elite. The Islamic Republic of Iran also did not reconcile itself with traditional Islam and did not hesitate to incite Arab hostility in government policy. Under the name of Shiism, they put forward new hadiths, give a new interpretation of the verses of the Koran and try to form a new marginal religion (Bayramzadeh & Kazımı, 2020). Already in Iran, high-ranking religious figures can talk with prophets, imams and

various saints, correspond with them, and convey their reminders and advice to people. All this manifests itself as Iranian-Persian culture.

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