



The Ratio of Social Convergence and Development: A Case Study of Hormozgan Province

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Abstract

Today, the issue of modernity and the weakening of the symbolic unity created by monarchies, religion, a sense of belonging to the country, and other factors have caused social integration to become a social and cultural issue at both the micro and macro levels, and ultimately a factor that drives and inhibits development. This article attempts to provide a general overview of this field by presenting quantitative evidence and integrating research findings. Accordingly, our most important goal in this article is to qualitatively examine the relationship between social cohesion and development in Hormozgan province.

In this article, using thematic analysis, we want to show how by reducing existing divergences and strengthening social cohesion, it will be possible to overcome the status quo and achieve development. Accordingly, our most important findings in two sections are the components and importance of social cohesion in development. Including 9 items: relying on common points and avoiding marginalization - recognizing all ethnicities and religions and fair distribution of services and facilities - forward-looking and the level of honesty and urban culture - the desire to maintain peace in individual and social life - solidarity and social capital - continuing respect for religions from ancient times - coexistence and convergence of ethnicities and religions - public trust - warm-hearted people of the province) And analysis of developmental factors and trust-building in social integration (including 10 cases of not being isolated from political and cultural relations - having ethnic groups share in government services - distributing facilities without considering tasteful behavior - distributing positions based on merit and competence - resolving the socio-economic gap between natives and non-natives - Development of infrastructure and livelihood facilities - attention to health justice - medical services in the region - balanced development based on collective interests - solving multilateral deprivations - creating trust between the people and the government and resolving pessimism) are presented.

Keywords: Development, Social Integration, Ethnic and Religious Divergence, Ethnic and Religious Convergence.

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Introduction and Problem Statement

One of the most important pillars of development in any country is social cohesion and solidarity, along with a strong sense of belonging and commitment to a society's values and cultural heritage. For this reason, all governments strive to familiarize their people with their history and culture in order to achieve national unity. National-level studies on ethnic groups indicate that some ethnicities feel stronger ethnic inequality than others, and this sentiment may lead to forms of aversion toward other ethnic groups. Ethnic identity is generally a social matter; both its overemphasis accompanied by a sense of superiority—which can negatively impact development, national cohesion, and ultimately foster tendencies toward autonomy, identity rigidity, and closed, change-resistant attitudes—and its underemphasis entail consequences. Ethnic, religious, and linguistic cleavages, due to their identity-based nature and because they give rise to demands that are very difficult, and in some cases impossible, to realize through dialogue, can lead to the politicization of violence and the instability of the political system. An examination of heterogeneous societies shows that ethnic, religious, and linguistic cleavages have been among the most significant sources of political conflict and strife. Only those societies that have successfully navigated nation-building have been able to mitigate these cleavages. In such societies, political violence gradually gives way to institutionalized, nonviolent forms of political participation and contestation. As social cleavages stabilize, their destructive activity gradually diminishes, and political participation takes on new forms.

Given that Hormozgan Province is home to diverse ethnic groups and various religious denominations, ethnic and religious issues are more pronounced. Some studies on ethnic groups show that certain ethnicities and denominations experience stronger feelings of inequality and ethnic dissatisfaction than others. Investigating the factors that influence social convergence is therefore of particular importance in Hormozgan, due to the province's existing opportunities and threats. The main research problem is to examine how ethnic and religious relations, framed as social convergence, affect regional development, with the aim of establishing sustainable security in the province.

Theoretical Framework

Among the approaches proposed and tested for achieving development, three foundational approaches relevant to our subject are discussed.

- **Social Development Approach:** This approach is concerned with improving living conditions and raising the welfare of society's members. Along this path, beyond the economic dimensions referenced above, it addresses the social dimensions of development, including the importance of social structure, social change, distributive justice (i.e., the equitable distribution of resources), human–environment interaction, social participation, and ultimately social empowerment. It also considers the cultural dimensions of development, such as emphasizing the importance of raising awareness, human values, and issues related to the spread of technology and media, among others.
- **Human Development Approach:** This is a human-centered approach focused on improving quality of life, individual development, and empowerment. It encompasses raising awareness and knowledge levels, enhancing education and skills, improving health and hygiene, and more. Ultimately, human development means increasing people's capabilities, skills, and knowledge. In the context of regional development, human development entails creating opportunities for education, vocational training, empowerment, and skill enhancement so that citizens can act independently and self-sufficiently, thereby moving society toward development. In general, empowering citizens requires attention to these components and creating opportunities and



conditions for the active participation and success of every social stratum, ethnicity, and denomination. This is vital and fundamental for elevating living standards and social welfare.

- **Participatory Development:** This refers to a process in which members of society—including all social strata, ethnicities, and denominations—take part in decisions and various community affairs related to development and play an active role in them. This requires creating opportunities and appropriate conditions for the active participation of all groups in decision-making processes and in carrying out different activities. From this perspective, participatory development lays the groundwork for human development and ultimately culminates in economic, social, and cultural development.

In this study, which seeks to empower and foster convergence among all social strata, ethnicities, and denominations in the region, we apply the components of social development, participatory development, and human development—each a development-oriented perspective—to identify the drivers of social convergence and ultimately derive a development model.

Methodology

After gathering information using library tools and conducting interviews with elites and subject-matter experts, we employ thematic analysis to code and construct themes from the most important concepts and common points cited by the majority of interviewees. Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data and is commonly used for corpora transcribed from interviews or focus group discussions.

Findings

In this section, we present qualitative findings focused on key themes at the intersection of social convergence and development in Hormozgan Province. These findings are derived from in-depth interviews with elders, social elites, and informed, influential individuals across various ethnicities and denominations in the region. Accordingly, the findings are presented in two parts: components and the importance of social convergence in development, and an analysis of developmental factors and trust-building in social convergence.

A. Components and Importance of Social Convergence in Development

1. Emphasizing commonalities and avoiding distractions and peripheral controversies
2. Recognizing all ethnicities and denominations, creating opportunities for participation, and ensuring equitable distribution of services and resources
3. Foresight, honesty, and urban civic culture
4. Inclination to preserve tranquility in individual and social life
5. Solidarity and social capital
6. Continuity of longstanding respect for denominations
7. Coexistence and convergence among ethnicities and denominations
8. Public trust
9. Warmth and hospitality of the province's people, and interethnic and interdenominational marriages

B. Analysis of Developmental Factors and Trust-Building in Social Convergence

1. Preventing isolation and abandonment from political and cultural relations
2. Ensuring ethnic representation in public services
3. Allocating resources without regard to denomination; avoiding discretionary, biased behavior in this regard
4. Assigning positions based on merit and competence within the province



5. Bridging socio-economic divides between locals and non-locals
6. Developing infrastructure and livelihood facilities across cities and villages equally and without discrimination
7. Ensuring justice in healthcare and medical services across the region
8. Establishing balanced development between central and peripheral cities in the province
9. Pursuing balanced development based on collective interests
10. Addressing multidimensional deprivation
11. Building trust between the people and the state and overcoming mutual suspicion

Conclusion

The nine items concerning the components and importance of social convergence span multiple dimensions—from the micro level (e.g., interpersonal interactions and tolerance) to the macro level (e.g., governmental policies and regional culture). Achieving lasting convergence in Bandar Abbas requires integrated and coordinated attention to all these factors. Focusing on common ground, guaranteeing social justice and equal opportunities, strengthening social capital through networks among trusted community figures, making optimal use of civil and religious institutions, adopting a forward-looking approach in planning, preserving social order and tolerance, and practicing responsible political behavior are all essential steps.

The state and structural factors likewise show that, beyond the role of culture and interpersonal relations, government performance and policy—particularly in establishing justice, equal opportunity, transparency, and meritocracy—play a vital role in the social convergence of ethnic groups in Bandar Abbas. Without adherence to these principles, even a warm culture and positive social interactions may not prevent deeper social rifts. Thus, good governance and observance of citizenship rights for all ethnicities and denominations are among the most fundamental pillars of convergence.

Taken together, these developmental and trust-building factors offer a roadmap for development-oriented and justice-centered governance. Emphasizing employment, citizenship rights, balanced infrastructure development, equity in health services, and—most importantly—trust-building between the state and the public demonstrates that social convergence in Bandar Abbas cannot be achieved solely by eliminating ethnic and denominational discrimination. It also requires a comprehensive developmental approach that puts justice at the forefront across economic, social, and spatial dimensions. These factors complement the earlier components and collectively present a complete picture of the determinants of social convergence in Bandar Abbas.

This list offers a multifaceted picture of the province's divisions, rooted both in deep-seated doctrinal and religious issues and in economic, social, political, and even bureaucratic matters (such as appointments). Reducing these rifts and achieving development require a comprehensive approach that addresses both belief-based issues and the rectification of economic and social injustices while avoiding divisive policies.



