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Relations between Iran and the Eurasian Union from the Perspective of Critical Geopolitical Theory

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Abstract

This article examines the relations between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) from the perspective of critical geopolitical theory and attempts to explain the role of "connection" as a tool for advancing Iran's economic and geopolitical goals in the Eurasian region. With the expansion of economic globalization, developing countries such as Iran have turned to regional cooperation to gain benefits and competitive advantage in the global market. In the meantime, the Eurasian Economic Union, as one of the important economic blocs in the former Soviet region, has provided a basis for preferential trade and economic convergence, which Iran also seeks to exploit.

*The Importance of Regionalism and Connection

In the globalization environment, regionalism is proposed as a gradual path to

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opening up national economies and integrating them into the global economy. Due to its unique geopolitical location, Iran is located on the north-south and east-west transit highways and can become a hub for the transit of goods in the region. This location enables Iran to strengthen its geopolitical role while developing economic relations. Citing the theories of Parag Khanna, the article emphasizes that in the modern era, power and territory are no longer defined solely on the basis of geography, but the degree of connection of countries to transportation, energy, communications and trade networks has become more important.

*Structure and advantages of the Eurasian Union

The Eurasian Economic Union was formed on the basis of freedom of capital, trade, services and movement of goods and has strong infrastructure, skilled manpower and a geostrategic position between the East and the West. Russia, as the driving force of the union, plays a key role in advancing its goals. Member countries have provided the basis for extensive cooperation by creating a common market, harmonized customs laws and industrial and agricultural infrastructure. This union can provide suitable opportunities for Iran's exports and import needs, while at the same time connecting Iran to regional and global markets

*Geopolitical developments and Iran's position

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia's change of approach from Westernization to Eurasianization, the groundwork was laid for the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union. As a regional power with huge oil, gas, and petrochemical resources and being located at the center of international transportation routes, Iran plays an important role in connecting East and Southeast Asia to Europe. This geopolitical position further strengthens the possibility of Iran becoming a transit and goods connection center and can lead to the promotion of Iran's regional and global trade.

*Critical Geopolitics Theory and Its Three Elements

Relying on the critical geopolitical theory, the article highlights the three main elements of power, space, and identity in the analysis of Iran-Eurasia relations:

*Power : In this theory, power is considered not only in the sense of hard power, but also as a multidimensional and complex phenomenon, influenced

by the discourses and mentality of politicians. Relations between states and regional actors can also be analyzed based on the interaction of active and reactive forces.

*Space : Space in critical geopolitics is not simply a physical reality, but is the result of social and discursive boundaries created by actors to maintain their cohesion and identity. The importance of space in this theory goes back to its connection with time, power, and ideology.

*Identity : Identity in this framework is an epistemological and social construct that is formed through the process of othering (us and them). Geopolitical discourses usually produce enemies and highlight differences to establish their identity.

Together, these elements allow for a deeper analysis of Iran's foreign policy and regional relations and show how discourses of power, space, and identity influence Iran's policies and orientations towards the Eurasian Union.

*Research Background and Related Theories

Parag Khanna emphasizes in her book "Linkage" that power in the present era is measured by the degree to which countries are connected to global networks, not simply by their geographical size. She believes that by accepting interdependence and cooperation, a brighter and more connected future can be built for the world. In his article "Critical Geopolitics," Ahmadipour also describes the evolution of the concept of geopolitics from a traditional approach to a critical and discursive approach, emphasizing the role of social, ideological, and identity factors in shaping foreign policy. Sadeghi et al., in their analysis of the approach, show how the elements of space, power, and identity play a role in regional policymaking and geopolitical competition.

*Challenges and Opportunities for Iran in Cooperation with the Eurasian Union

In addition to economic opportunities, Iran's cooperation with the Eurasian Union also brings challenges. On the one hand, Iran can use its geopolitical position to become a hub for connectivity and transit of goods in the region and benefit from the benefits of preferential trade and a common market. On the other hand, regional competition, international sanctions, and structural obstacles can challenge the convergence process. However, adopting a connectivity approach and utilizing geopolitical capacities can make Iran a key player in re-

gional and global networks

***Conclusion and Suggestions**

The article concludes that in the era of globalization and the formation of network civilization, the geopolitical power of countries depends more than ever on the extent of their connectivity to transportation, energy, and trade networks. Given its strategic location and location in international corridors, Iran can strengthen its position in the Eurasian region by adopting a connectivity approach and utilizing critical geopolitical theory. This requires smart policy-making, strengthening transit infrastructure, and active cooperation with Eurasian Union member states. Ultimately, harnessing the power of connectivity and embracing interdependence will be a key strategy for advancing national interests and enhancing Iran's geopolitical position in the 21st century.

Key words: Iran, Eurasia, critical geopolitics, connectivity.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research study.