

Analysis of Iran's International Borders from the Perspective of Stephen Jones

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Abstract

Borders which are specified by natural, man-made or contractual terrain specify the sovereignty limit of a state in a territory and with passing a line-like distance and the border line between two countries we will reach another state with a different political structure. The sensitivity of the border concept and the huge effects it has on national security and wars and conflicts and as well as on interactions between the countries has attracted a special attention toward it. Political geography as the main knowledge regarding the studies about the border possesses a more extensive background comparing to the other related sciences. Typology studies and classification of the borders with studying border from physical or cultural point of view and also classifying it based on border conflicts have allocated a special place to them. In line with this, Jones has provided his classification of borders according to their relationships with the type of border conflicts. Considering this approach, the international borders of Iran also, as the lines confining the territories of this country, have formed a significant part of the academic and management studies in Iran and a large part of these studies have been conducted by geographers, and especially political geographers. In this study, we intend to classify Iran's border in terms of Jones perspective with the use of analytical method and from political geography viewpoint.

Keywords: Political Geography, International borders, Perspective of Stephen Jones, Iran.

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Introduction

Border has a political meaning which has been expressed as a separation criterion of the state units and determination of the executive power territory of any type of state. These separating criteria can be natural or artificial, however; the mutual and contractual agreement is one of the main characteristics of any border. Political, economic, strategic and social interests and the intervention of the colonial countries have caused the creation of some conflicts in the borders between countries; which sometimes have extended to Strife, conflict and bloody wars. The limit of the land, air and sea territory of each country is called its border. A border is the most important recognition and separating factor of the land of one country from the neighboring country. Borderlines are contractual lines specified for limiting the boundaries of a country on earth and on the relevant documents of it. Political borders form the spatial manifestation of the power territory boundaries of the political system which belongs to it. Borders are more clear and tangible political geography phenomena and therefore, have a strong attraction for political geography studies. Such that in the past the geographers only have been pioneers in the academic studies regarding international borders, however; currently have as well a considerable share in managerial fields. During the last 100 years and especially after World War II, the number of the studies of the prominent geographers has been more than the other scholars. During the World War II and after that, there was a hot debate regarding the nature of the borders especially in terms of military and country. After that, the cold war guaranteed that the political map of the most of the world will remain without any change. Based on this, the political geographers reduced their studies on international borders and started to deal with more extensive issues regarding the Geopolitics of the Cold War. After the end of the cold war and entering the new era, some views were created regarding to a world without any border and in was increases. Although the concept of a world without any border cannot be considered as a lie, however; still the fact

exists that the borders will continue to exist in a variety of forms and with different intensities to limit our territories and the boundaries of our interactions and our affiliations. The study of borders has been a focal subject in political geography, not only because they specify our land territories but also because they specify the spatial boundaries of our countries. Among the studied which are full of typology and different classifications of border two classic works by geographers have been published in 1940s on international borders; Boggs and Stephan Jones which still consider to be of value. In addition, the use of Hartshorne of Geomorphology terms which goes back to 1930s, have remained strong in the minds of the students and scholars of political geography. In this study, we well to analyze the international borders of Iran through Stephan Jones perspective. His classification, contrary to other classifications instead of emphasizing on natural or cultural factors emphasizes on the type of conflicts resulting from the border between the agents at the two sides of the border. Therefore, the type of the basis conflicts has been considered as a factor for the classifications of Jones of borders. In this paper, we have tried to analyze the borders of Iran through the perspective of Jones.

Methodology

Methodology of this study is descriptive- analytical and required information has been collected through library research. The information gathered from sources such as books, magazines, online articles, etc.

Literature Review

Border

In the past, so many of the world's countries were being separated by zones instead of lines. Nowadays also in those countries which does not have lots of population or those which are undeveloped in terms of political aspect, the same applied. During the current time, issues such as increase of shortage of land and population increase have required more accurate lines

to be drawn at the borders (Boateng, 1980, 11). In this way, the border which is located between two countries or is a location which the authority of a country finishes there (Pourmehrani, 2009, 26) as the confining lines of the territories of a country, constitutes an important part of the political geography studies (Hartshorn, 1936, 121-147). This is because the political borders form the spatial manifest of the Limits of jurisdiction of the political system it belongs to. On the other hand, perhaps it is due to the fact that border are more clear and tangible political geography phenomena and therefore have a strong attraction for political geography studies (Minghi, 1963, 407). In general, among the studies related to international borders, geography have the longest background and prominence at least in the last 100 years so far. The initial discussions about the country borders by academic geographers goes back to the statements of Ratzel (1896) about the organic state and then it was followed by the imperialist statements of Lurd Croson (Boggs, 1940, 12) about the borders and the study of Holdich on political borders and creation of borders (Holdich, 1916, 421-39). After World War II, the number of the studies conducted by prominent geographers has been more than other scholars. During World War II and after that, there has been hot debates about the naturalness of borders especially thorough the point of view of military and the concept of country. For example, Thomas Holdich, initially considered borders as barriers and he reasons that the best borders are mountains, lakes and deserts. Also, regarding the territories under conflict, there are so many geographical studies and these have been influential on changing the borders. In fact, the terminology of border has become prominent by these very same case studies on border conflicts and marking processes (Jones, 1945, 33). Two classic works have been published by geographers in 1940s on international borders; Boggs and Stephan Jones, which are still considered to be of value (Blake, 2000, 55-62). After that, cold war guaranteed that the political map of so many regions of the world will remain unchanged. Based on this,

political geographers reduced their studies on international borders and dealt with broader questions regarding the geopolitics of cold war.

The inclination of the studies of the geographers toward limiting the sea borders started from 1970s, while before that and for the first time, Boggs in 1940s wrote about sea borders. In 1980s, geographers started to obtain more share in the studies of sea borders. In this regard, some geographers such as Prescott in Australia and Robert Smith in geographical association of the United States of America can be name. in this way, the geographers who in the past only were pioneers in academic studies regarding the international border, in late 20th century achieved a considerable share in managerial fields as well (Newman & Paasi, 1998, 186-207). In this way, in Westphalian period, the importance of the studies conducted on border was because land and border were considered as the source of the power of the government. Therefore, power increase became a reason for increasing the border claims in line with expanding the territory (Kristof, 1959, 269-82). With putting the cold war behind and entering the Globalization period, theories based on a world without border developed. In this regard, Hartshorne states that although the concept of a world without any border cannot be considered as a lie, still the fact exists that borders continue to exist in different shapes and with different intensities to confine our territories and the scope of our interactions and affiliates. The study of borders will remain as a focal topic in the political geography; not only because they define the territories of our land, but also because they define the spatial areas of our countries. Therefore; although in the pre-globalization period the Westphalia border have significant importance due to defining the boundaries of the authority of a country, however; due to the transportation of goods, people and thoughts at an international level, these borders have become more important and more prominent (Hartshorne, 1936, 121-147). Nevertheless, the need to define accurate separating lines between two countries and the contact points between them is the result of

the emergence of the nation-based government in the global economy of the 19th century. This new phenomenon, as defined by Peter Taylor and other is the inevitable achievement of the World- oriented imperialism development in the earlier period and the global economic system and the communicational system inherited in it (Mojtahedzadeh, 2006, 14). In a general view, the function of the border in the contemporary time can be divided into the following categories:

1) Creating distinction between two geographical spaces; 2) Lines separating the governments' territories; 3) Integrating the nation; 4) War and peace line between two countries; 5) Interaction and connection line between two nations; 6) Controlling line of the goods flows (Hafeznia, 2000: 19).

Borders classification

The studies of borders are full of typology and different classifications of borders (Agnew, Mitchell, & Thuoal, 2003: 12). In this regard, the different types of borders are of interest. Based on the view of Dikshit, there are two important systems for classification of the international borders. The first one is functional classification which is also called the genetic classification. This classification is based on the relationship between the borders with the country's cultural prospective that border has define, limited and separated its authority. Second, there are those borders which can be classified based on the type of marking and their fixity on the ground. A border can be drawn along some of the physical characteristics. These are physiographic or physical borders (Dikshit, 2000, 74). Physical borders are the clearest ones. A physical border is in fact a natural barrier between two regions. Rivers, mountain ranges, oceans and deserts can be physical borders. In so many cases, the borders between countries or states are of physical type. For example, the border between France and Spain is consisted of the peaks of the Pyrenees Mountains. Gibraltar strait is the border between the south west of Europe and north east of Africa. This narrow waterway between the

Atlantic and the Mediterranean is an important political, economical and social border between the continents. Rivers are more normal borders between smaller nations, countries and political units such as provinces. Rio Grande forms a large part of the border between Mexico and the United States. Also, the borders can be drawn along a geometric line (geometric borders) or can be drawn for separation of the racial societies which in this case will be referred to racial borders or Anthropogenic. In the meantime, most of the borders can include more than a criterion of confining. Therefore, often the borders have a mixed nature. This classification is referred to as morphological classification (Dikshit, 2000, 74).

Borders' classification in Jones perspective

The differences of the borders can be divided into four types:

1. The differences resulting from the exact location of the border which can result from different or sometimes contradictory interpretations of the legal documents or the change of the location of the "natural border". The conflict between Iran and Iraq over the Arvand Rood border is an example of the first type and the conflict between Iran and Afghanistan over the Helmand River is an example of the 2nd type.
2. Conflict over territory which are popular to Territorial dispute. These disputes occur when two neighbouring countries claim authority over the same territory. Usually, the reasons behind these disputes are historical, geographical and national security reason. In Middle East, the conflict between Arabs and Israel over Jerusalem is one of the most prominent conflicts of this type. Usually, in territorial disputes the aim is to change the location of the border under dispute.
3. Conflicts resulting from the border performance. Border as a barrier against the movements of humans and goods transportation in addition to the problems it cause in using the resources and their management, sometimes creates conflicts between the two neighboring country. The conflicts may be regarding the formalities of legal passage or illegal

passages through the border or issues such as access to farms, water and pasturage. Some governments establish strict border crossings rules and regulations for the citizens of the other country for punishing the other government. Delaying the passenger more than necessary, tiring formalities, lengthy inspections or goods confiscations are among the problems are among the difficulties that that West Bank Arabs have to bear at the time of entering or exiting from Israel via the Jordan River bridge.

4. Border conflicts due to the common use of a economical resource: such as Excessive withdrawal of water, Exploitation of oil and gas of the share resources or using a pasture by one government at the expense of the other, among which the conflict between Turkey, Syria and Iraq over the division of Euphrates River and the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait over the oil field (Romileh Oilfield) at the both sides of the border can be named.

Findings

In this section of the present paper the borders of Iran at different parts of eastern, northern, western and southern have been divided in to 100 km distance and one map has been prepared for each 100 km. in line with this aim, based on the guide that exists in the beginning of the maps, the different types of borders have been defined according to the Jones theory and based on the type of disputes they have. Those borders which don't have any specific dispute have been specified with black solid line have been specified with the title of undisputed in the guideline of the border maps. Different types of disputes include "spot dispute", "territorial dispute", "functional dispute" and "dispute over the resources".

Study of the area

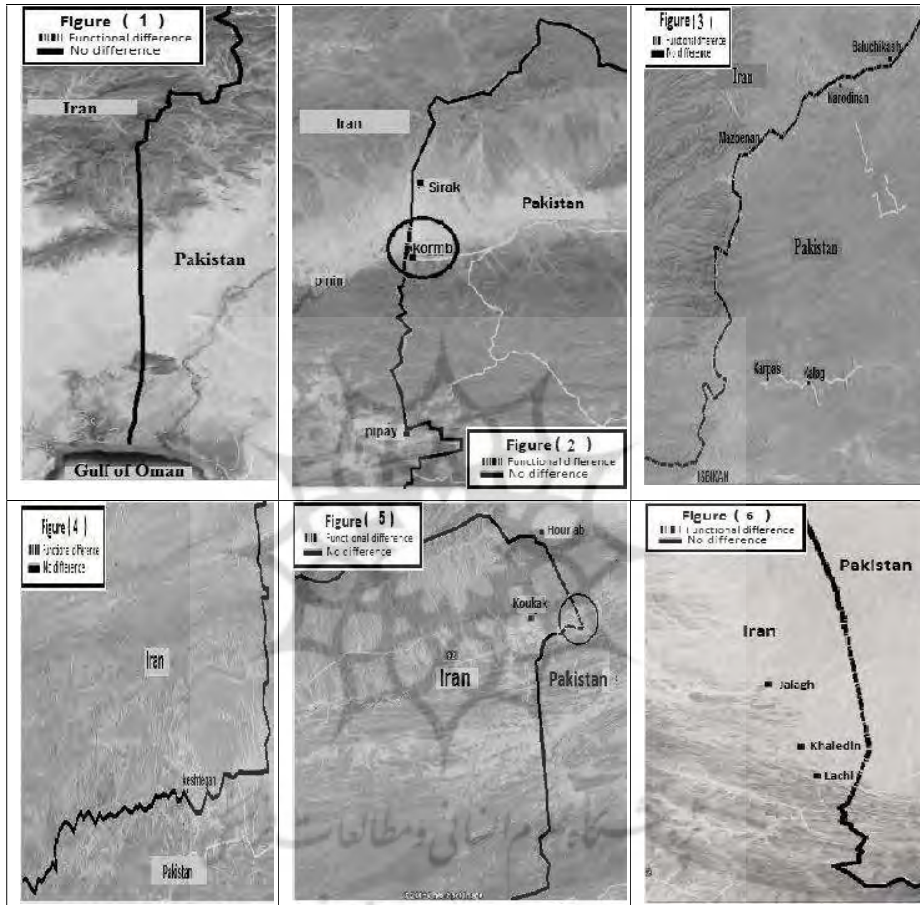
Iran state is a specific geographical unit of Asian continent that Iran is also located in it. The General and geographical position of the Iranian plateau which is located at the south west of Asia in the form of a bridge between three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, in a clear way have been

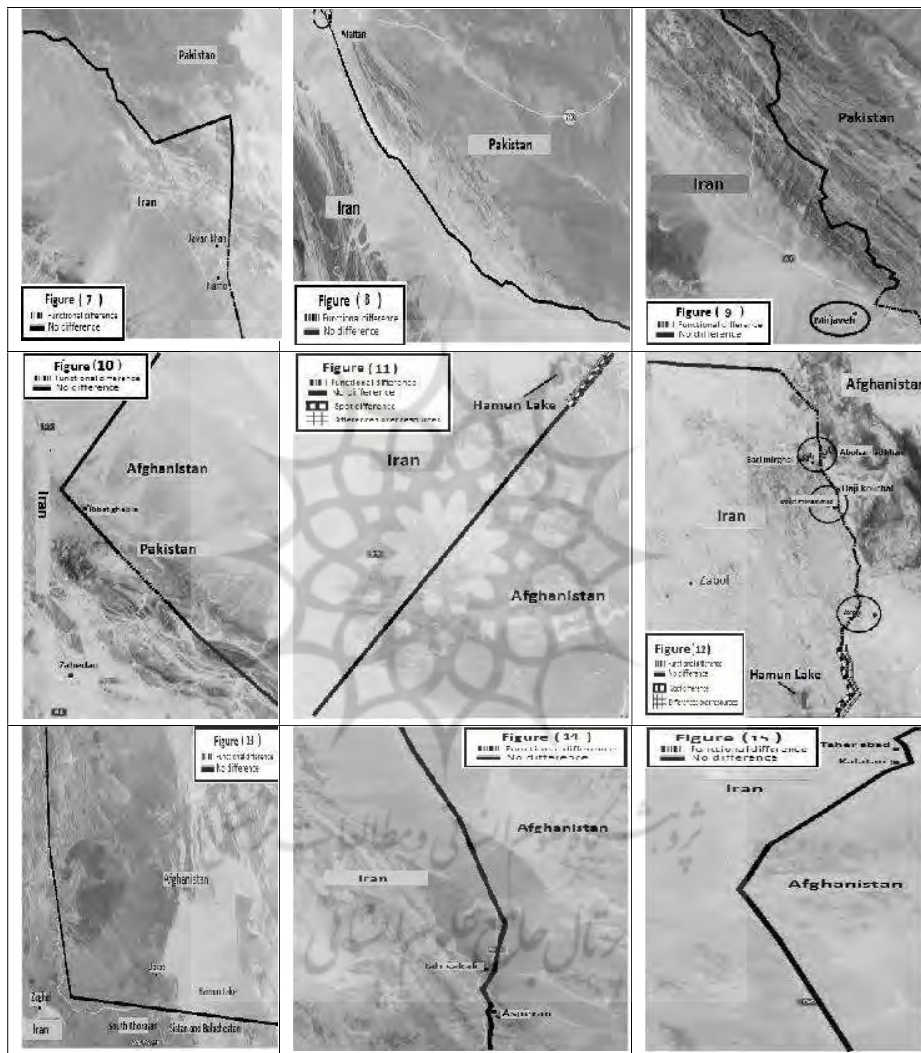
effective in the political situation and the fluctuations of its borders and often has been invaded to different nations and sometimes for a period of time strangers have gained control over it. The nature border of this plateau at the north part of the Cora plain, Mazandaran Sea and plains of Transoxiana, at the west of the plains of Mesopotamia at the south east and east of the Indus River and at the south of Persian Gulf and Oman sea and its islands. Around 90% of the soil of Iran has been located in the area of Iranian plateau.

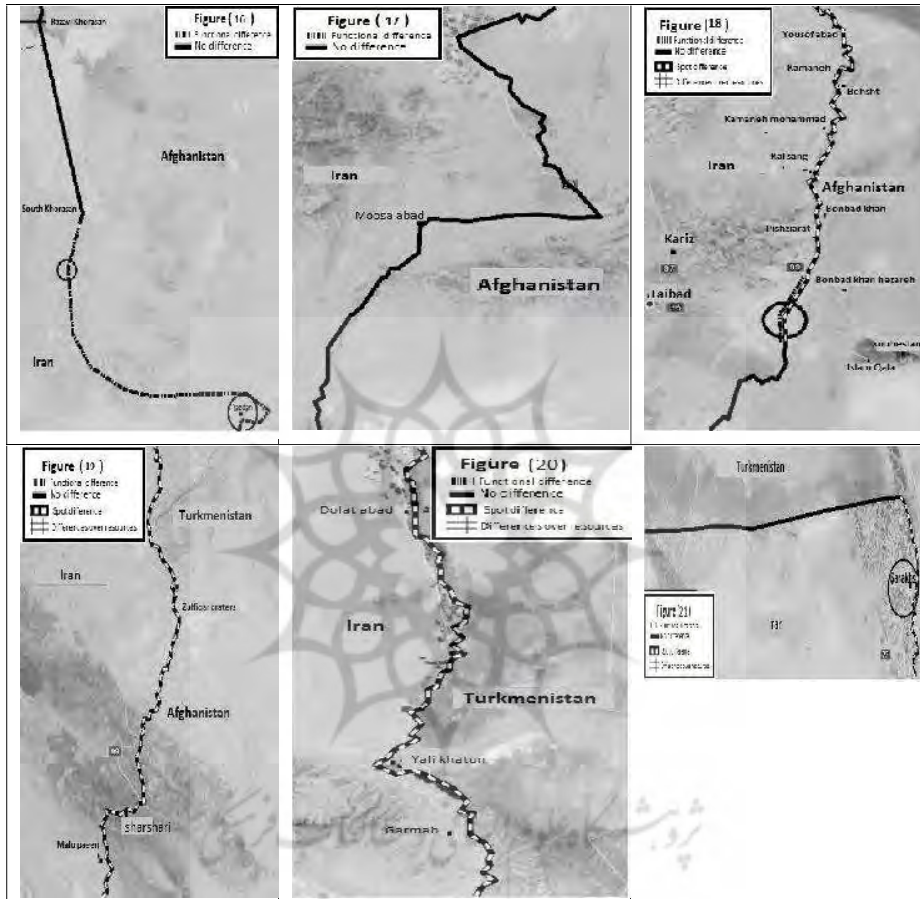
1. Eastern borders

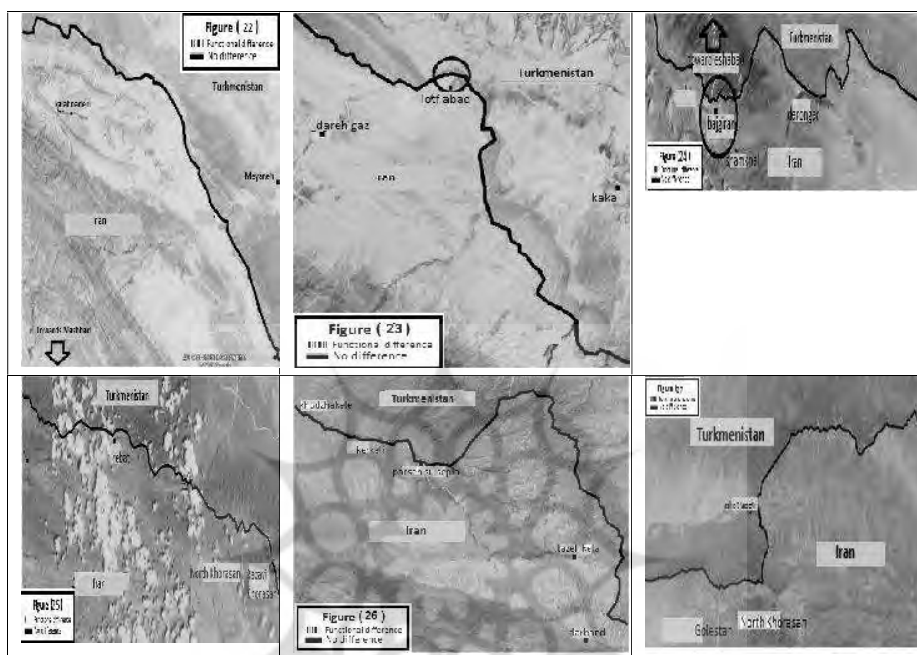
At eastern borders of the country as per the Jones' theory in maps 1 and 2 which are started from Oman Sea no border disputes are observed. Only in small locations which are the communication points due to the illegal crossing of human and good and fuel, some kind of functional disputes are observed. In map 3 due to the placement of population centers along the border and the cultural communications of the Baluch people at the both side of the border of Iran and Pakistan these borders have some functional disputes. Map 4 and 5 except in one small area in map 5 don't have any significant border dispute. Maps 6 and 7 also only have functional disputes in those regions with high human population along the border. In maps 8 and 9 also in the border markets such as Mirjaveh and its district due to the high flow of goods and also a kind of illegal crossing and transactions some kind of functional disputes are observed. Map 10 also doesn't have any border dispute except in a limited area which has functional disputes due to the same above mentioned reasons. Up to map 10, the maps belong to the border between Iran and Pakistan. Along the border of Iran and Pakistan due to the stability in Iran and relative stability in Pakistan and the strong control of these two countries on their borders normally in limited border points we observe functional disputes. However, in the border between Iran and Afghanistan more disputes are observed which are due to political reasons as well as lack of stability in Afghanistan. In map 11, most of the parts of

the border are without any dispute. However, with closing to the end of the map and the Hamoon lake and Helmand river different disputes are being observed in the border between these two countries. These disputes include functional disputes – due to illegal crossing of humans, smuggle of goods and drugs- spot disputes- due to lack of stability in the border which is in turn due to the variability in the bed of the Helmand river and Hamoon lakes- and the observed disputes over the resources are due to the conflict between Iran and Afghanistan over the share rate of each of the countries of the Helmand rivers. These triple disputes are also observed in the beginning of the borderline in the next map, i.e., map 13 and as we get away from the Hamoon lake the only dispute that remains is the functional dispute resulting from the smuggle of goods, drugs and illegal crossing of humans. When the borderline passes from the residential areas and enters the area with small population and impassability the border disputed almost reaches zero. Maps 13, 14 and 15 also due to the same reasons, having small population are free of border disputes. In map 16, a part of the border line due to the presence of population and proper roads and paths for border crossings and lack of stability in Afghanistan we observe some functional disputes and following that as we go far from this area no border disputes are observed. In map 17 no border disputes are present. In map 18, with the border entering the bed of the Hari Rood , the spot disputes between the two countries due to the lack of stability of the river bed starts. In a part of this map, in addition to spot dispute, some functional disputes are also observed. In maps 19 and 20 and the first section of map 21 due to the fact that the border and the Hari Rood river become one and due to the instability of the river bed and also due to the change in the route of the river over time, the border has spot dispute. In the second section of map 21 and maps 22, 23, 25, 24, 26 and 27 due to the separation of the border from Hari Rood river and also due to the stability of Turkmenistan on the other side of the border no dispute is observed.





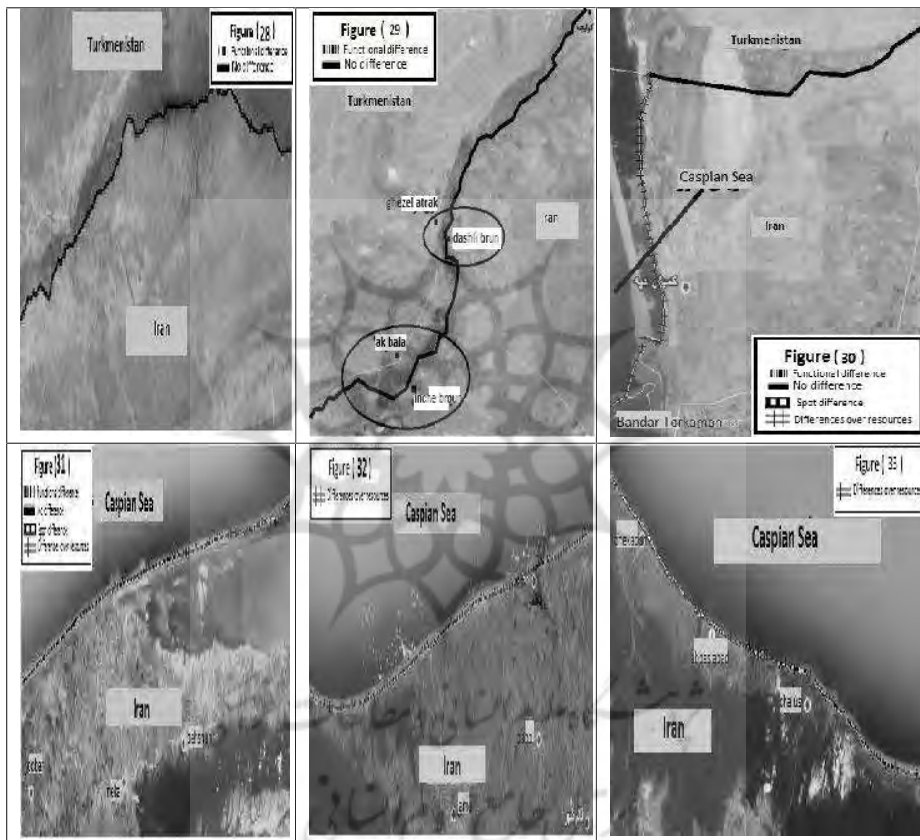


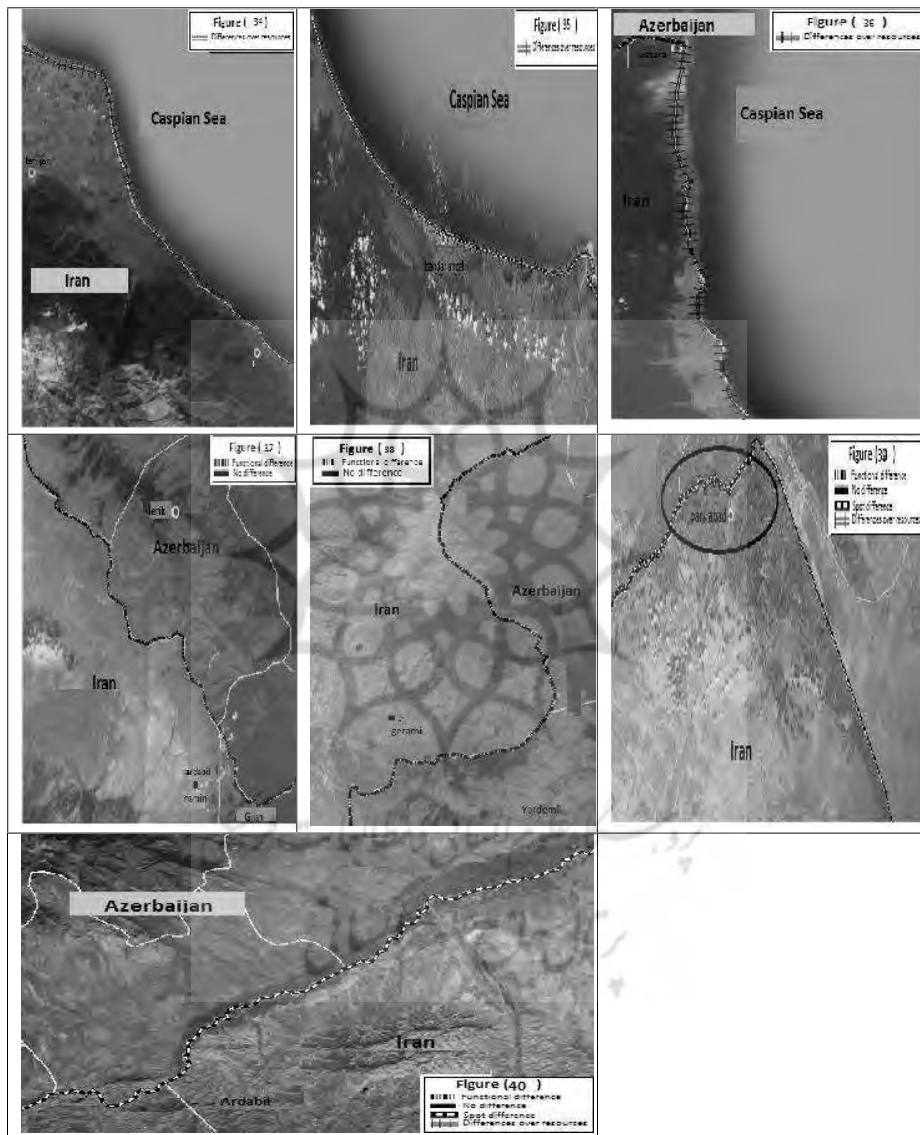


2. Northern borders

In maps 28 and 39 and the first section of map 30 we don't observed any border disputes. In map 30, second section and also maps 31 to 36 there are disputes over the resources due to the fact that the sea territory limits of the countries around Caspian sea is not clear which as lead to lack of clarity regarding the exploitation of the energy resources, aquatic and other available resources in water, bed and under the bed of the river. At the last section of map 36 due to the crossings between the Turks of the republic of Azerbaijan and Ardebil province which have racial and language dependencies and also due to the smuggling of good and etc. functional dispute is observed in the border. In maps 37, 38 and 39 also due to the very same reasons there is functional dispute in the border. In the second section of map 39 in addition to functional dispute, because the border has become

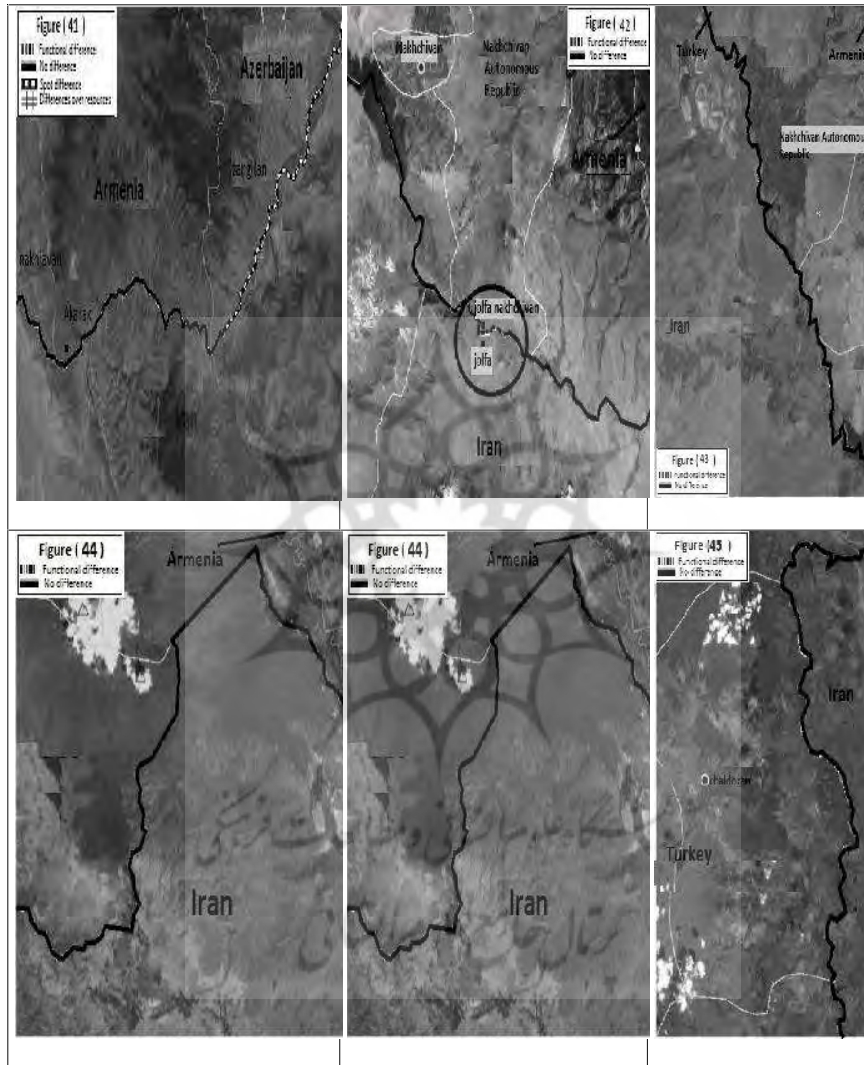
one with the bed of Aras River and the changes in the river route, we observe some spot disputes as well. In map 40 also there are spot disputes resulting from the conformity of the border with Aras River.

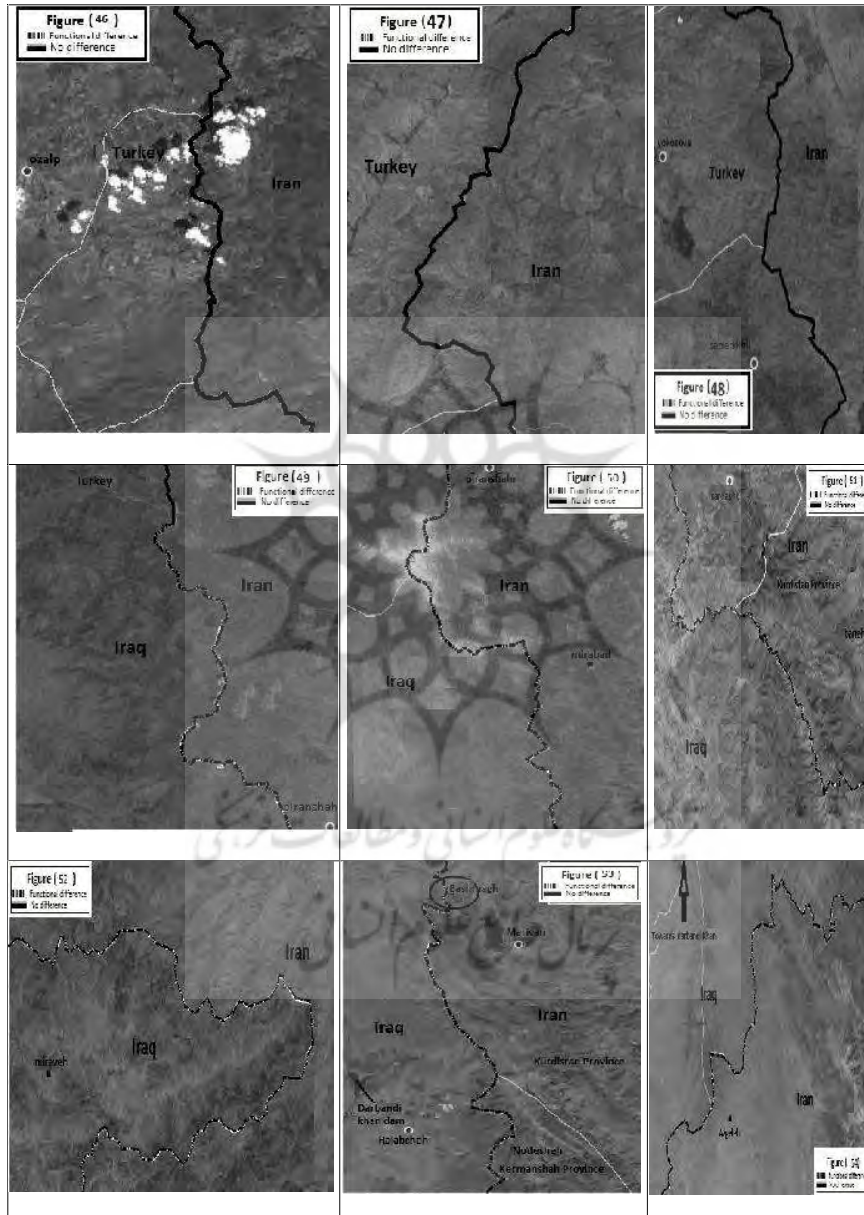


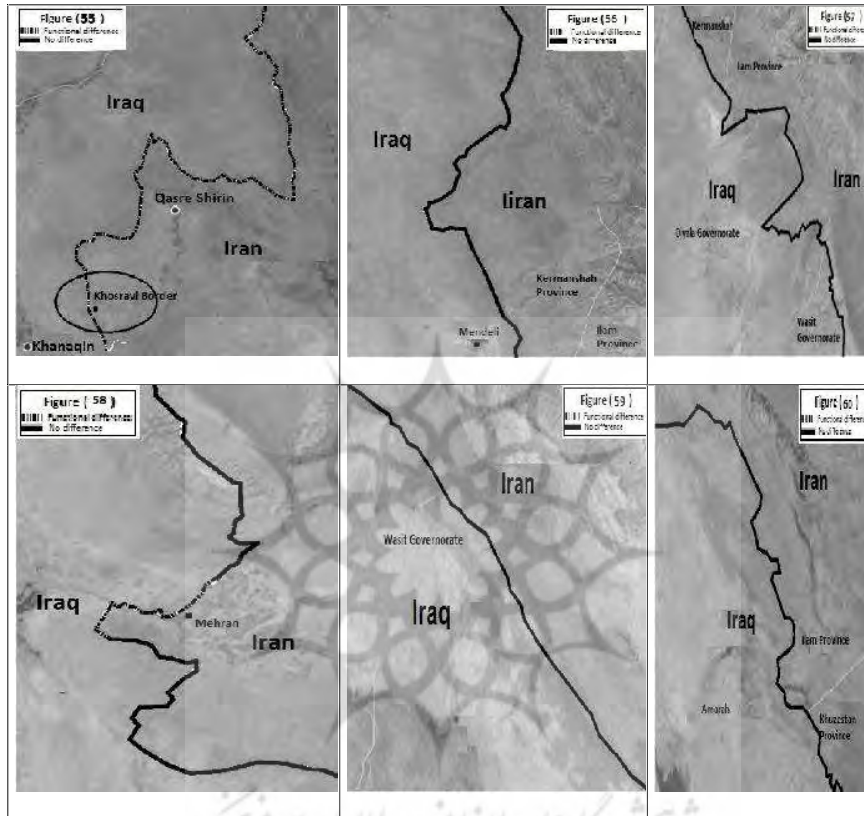


3. Western borders

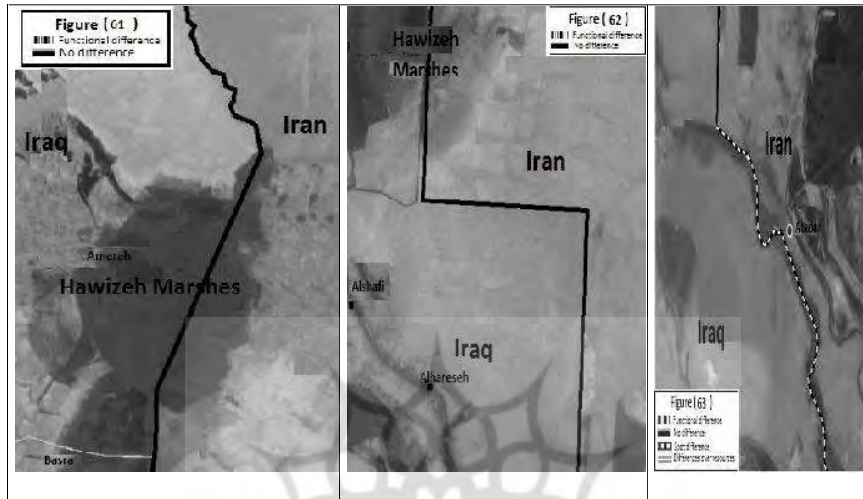
In map 41 up to the part that the Aras river route goes through plateau and the river bed goes through changes, we observe spot disputes. However, when the river enters a mountainous area and therefore does not have any change in its bed the borders do not have any spot disputes any more. Map 42 is generally free from any disputes, except for in some small portions such as border area of Jolfa which has functional disputes due to illegal crossings and sometimes smuggling of goods and fuel. No border disputes are observed in map 43 to 48. In map 49 to 55 which is located in the border area common between Iran (Kurdistan) and Iraq, the border has functional disputes which are due to the deep cultural and ethnical roots, high cultural, commercial-economic and political interactions and border markets, extensive illegal crossings, smuggling of goods, drugs and alcoholic beverages. In maps 56 and 57 due to the entrance of the border to a region with Shia Kurds on one side and Lurs people inside Iran and on the other hand with the Shia Lurs, Kurds and Arabs in Iraq the rate of illegal crossings and smuggling is so much limited and therefore the border doesn't have a functional dispute. In map 58 also most of the border area is free of any functional disputes. However; in the area of the Mehran city due to illegal crossings, especially after the downfall of the Baathist regime and the opening of the ways and the possibility of pilgrimage to Holy Shrines, the border has functional disputes. From map 59 to 62 no border disputes exist. In map 63 and the first section of map 64 due to the border conformity with Arvand Rud and the disputes between Iran and Iraq over the division of this river a kind of spot dispute has arisen in this part of the border of Iran.





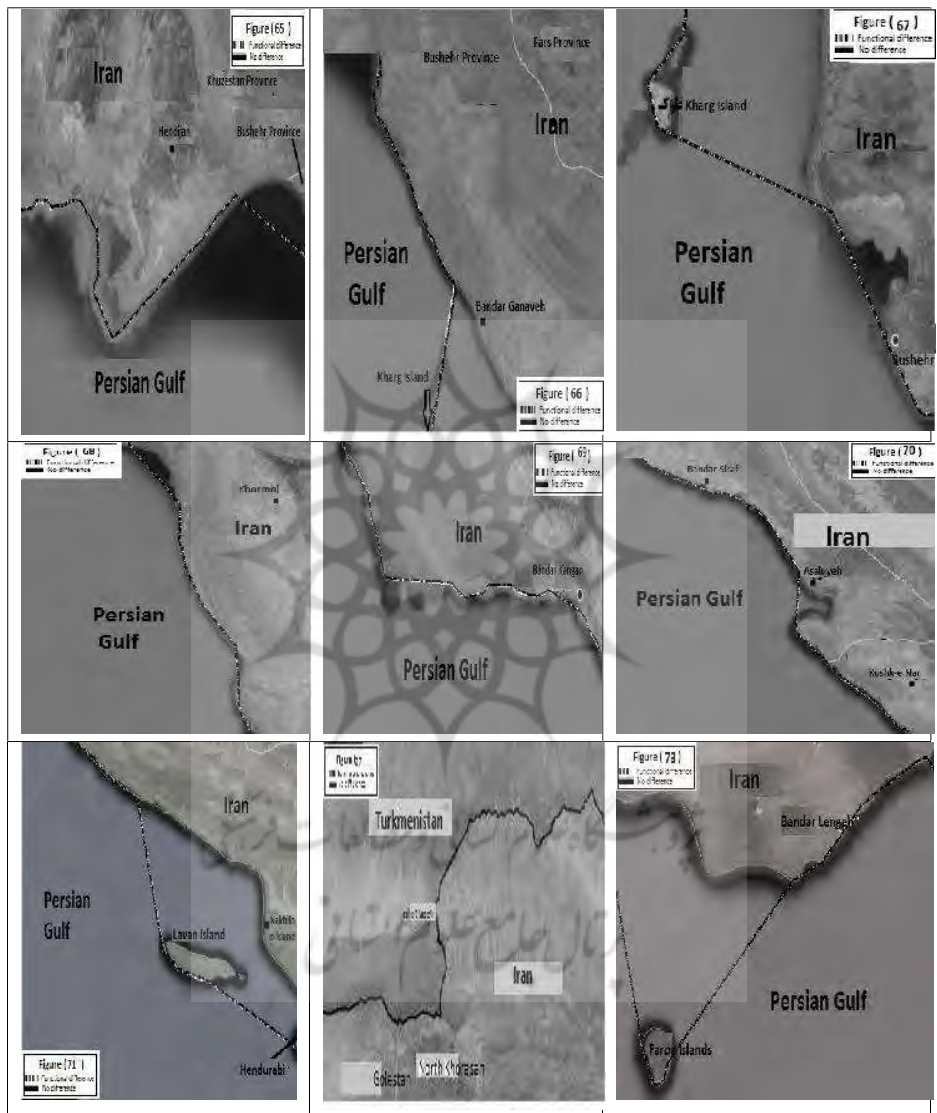


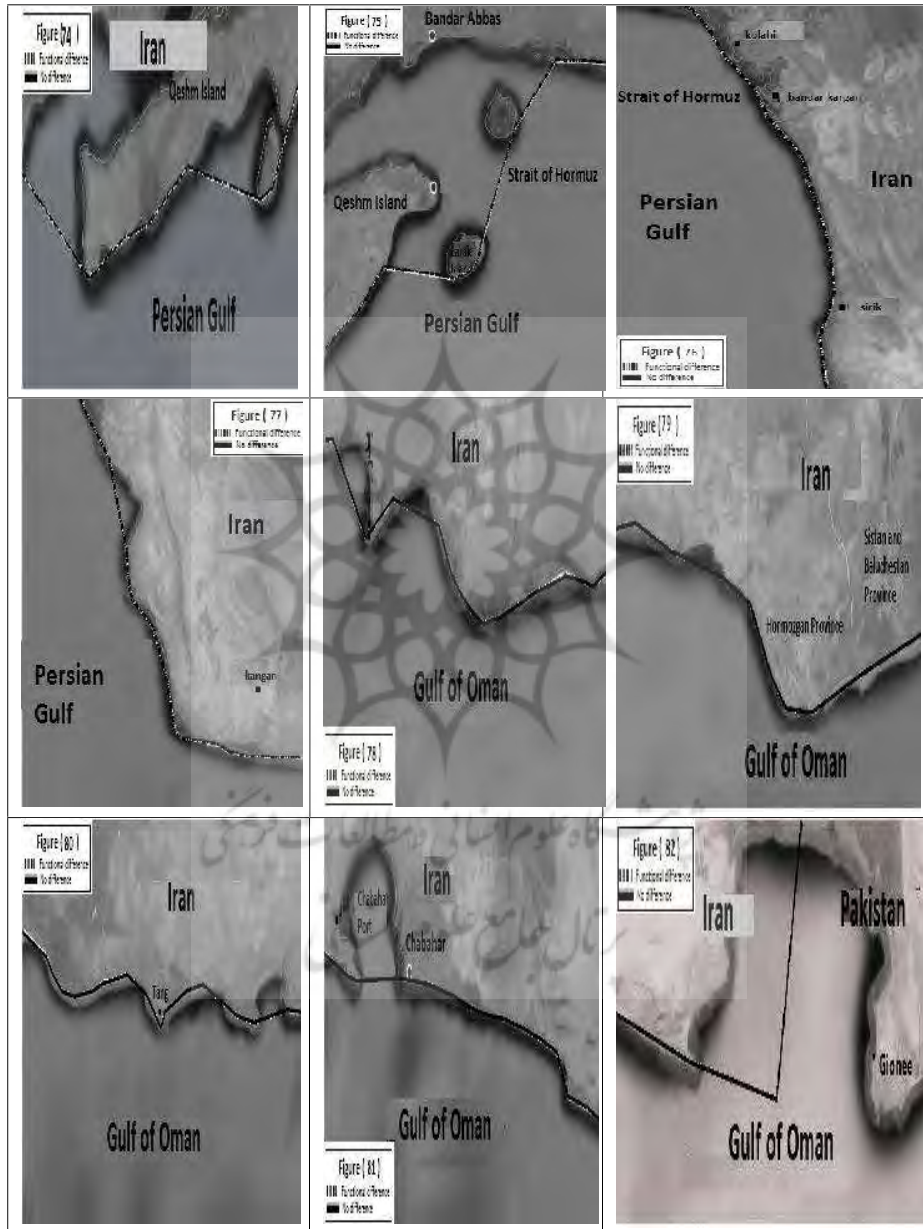
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4. Southern borders

From the second section of map 64 to map 77, due to crossings and smuggling of humans from Iran to Arab countries, fuel, goods, arms, drugs smugglings from Iran shores to Arab countries and vice versa, this region of the borders of Iran has so much of functional disputes, however; from map 78 to 82 no border disputes exist which is due to the existence of Oman sea which no neighboring country or attaching country is located at the other side of it, there is no advantage of smuggling and illegal crossings which is also due to the higher control of the state of Iran, Oman and Pakistan on the border.





Conclusion

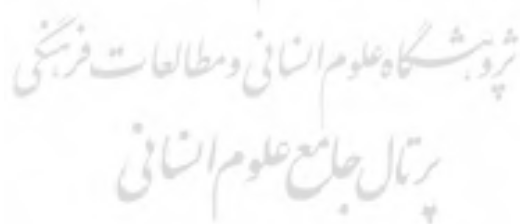
Based on the above mentioned and also considering the above maps and the following table (table 1), more than half of the borders of Iran (around 5370%) don't have any specific disputes. Around 32.47% of the borders of Iran have functional disputes which is more dominant, contrary to the common belief, are observed in the southern borders (75.67% of the whole southern borders) and then western borders (35.75% of all the western borders) and after that in northern borders (13.3% of all the northern borders) and eastern borders (15.47% of all the eastern borders) of the country. Spot disputes are observed more in those borders which have been defined based on the river bed. Easter borders due to the existence of Helmand and Hari Rood rivers with 12.45% (of all the eastern borders) have the highest spot disputes. After that, the northern borders due to the existence of Aras river with 9.77% (of all the northern borders) and the western borders due to the existence of Arvand Rud (Shatt al-Arab) with 0.6% (of all the western borders) are placed in the next ranks and the southern borders doesn't have any spot disputes. Disputes over resources also exist in northern borders (48.12% of all the northern borders) and eastern borders (4.90% of all the eastern borders) respectively and the other borders don't have any type of dispute.

Table (1): classification of the Iran's borders based on Stephan Jones theory

Borders	Total length in percentage	No dispute		Functional dispute		Spot dispute		Resource dispute	
		km	percent	km	percent	km	percent	km	Percent
Eastern borders	33.84	2040	76.98	410	15.47	330	12.45	130	4.90
Northern borders	16.98	250	18.70	310	23.3	130	9.77	640	48.12
Western borders	25.54	1465	73.25	715	35.75	120	0.6	0	0.0
Southern borders	23.36	450	24.32	1400	75.67	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	100	4205	53.70	2835	23.47	580	7.40	770	8.82

With a look at the existing maps in the present research, it is seen the borders which don't have any conflicts are those in which there are no natural and human conditions for creating dispute. For example, in Oman sea due to the great spread of water, the distance between the ownership areas such as exclusive economical zones of Iran, Oman and Pakistan and the attachment of this sea to the open waters and lack of any disputed energy resources and sea resources and the difficulty illegal crossings and smuggling have caused this sea to be free of any dispute. In regions such a south part of the Ilam province and Khuzestan province also due to the security reasons at both sides of the border and the high controlling power of the two governments (especially Iran), no border dispute is seen in this border which is due to the fact that this region is impassable and also due to the difficulty of illegal crossings and smuggling. Usually, in some regions such as desert, high mountains and empty of residents the conditions for the cause of disputes are not provided. Based on what was said above, the international borders of Iran have special characteristics in Jones viewpoint. One of the most prominent characteristics of Iran's borders are high functional disputes in them. This type of dispute is usually seen in eastern, western and southern borders of Iran. There is different reason for this type of border dispute. Usually, functional depute in Iran's borders are caused by one or a combination of factors such as: population placement in the margin of the border, the connecting paths between the borders, border markets and free zones, lack of stability in the neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, ethnical and cultural connections and the resulting economical connections between the two sides of the border such as Sistan and Baluchistan and Kurdistan and Azerbaijan regions, pilgrimage and illegal crossings for this reason, the largeness of the water and the difficulty of control over it, lack of cooperation of the neighboring countries for controlling the borders such as Afghanistan and sometimes some Arab countries and so on. Regarding to the spot disputes one of the factors is the conformity of the border with rivers which hare having instable and variable beds. Hari Rood and Aras rivers are

among prominent instances of this thing. Hamoon Lake also has the same characteristic. Regarding the Arvand Rud also it should be said that the disputes between Iran and Iraq over the exploitation way of the surface of this river for transportation has caused spot disputes in this region. Dispute over the resources also is placed in the 2nd rank in the border disputes in Iran's border. This type of dispute is mostly seen in northern borders and due to the fact the ownership borders are not well defined between the five countries located at the bank of Caspian sea which has cause ambiguity in exploitation of the resources of this large lake (surface, below and bed resources) and have eventually caused border disputes over these resources. In the east part of the country also there are disputes between Iran and Afghanistan over the exploitation way from Helmand river and border lakes of Hamoon and have caused disputes over the resources.



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