

## Narrative Analysis of the Elites' View of the Development of Baneh and Marivan Commercial-Industrial Free Zone

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### Extended Abstract

**Objective:** The development of commercial-industrial free zones on the border with the aim of creating bottom-up development and empowering border areas is on the agenda of governments; Therefore, by giving priority to this issue, the governments saw the development of the border areas in the promotion of cross-border trade from the path of the prosperity of commercial-industrial free zones. Kurdistan province has always experienced marginalization and underdevelopment in most of the development indicators during recent decades. This is despite the fact that due to its strategic location, Kurdistan has the appropriate capacity to invest in various commercial, commercial and industrial sectors, and correct and strategic management in this area could prevent problems and issues that affected by the current situation in the province and even in the west of the country. The unfavorable situation of economic development indicators in Kurdistan province, such as low economic welfare and per capita income, high unemployment rate, low employment in the industrial sector and the weakness of the industrial sector of the province have led to informal activities such as peddling and Kolberi in Kurdistan. Therefore, the development of cross-border trade through the realization of the commercial-industrial free zone can play an important role in solving the underdevelopment of Kurdistan. Therefore, emphasizing Harvey's theoretical concepts about trade and international trade and Weiner's analysis of the functions of the free trade zone, the purpose of this research is to analyze the narrative of the elites' view of the development of the free trade-industrial zone in border cities of Kurdistan province.

**Method:** In the current research, a qualitative approach has been adopted in order to deeply understand the topic. The method used in this approach is narrative analysis. Narrative analysis was chosen because the interviewees were mostly people who, despite having an academic background in related fields, were often residents of the target border cities or served as employees of government bodies in the mentioned cities. The technique of data collection is interviews with relevant experts as key informants (university professors and experts in the field of economics) in Kurdistan province until theoretical saturation is reached, which in the end is 12 people. Thematic narrative analysis method was used to analyze the interviews. In this method, based on the expertise of experts in the field of research, the necessary

interviews were conducted and the topics obtained were coded in three categories, open concepts, selective themes, and key themes, referring to the Strauss and Corbin analysis method.

**Results:** The findings indicate the following key themes: the development of business relations, the development of economic infrastructure and capital circulation under the theme of selective economic/commercial opportunities and the themes of increasing economic dependence, market monopoly and intensifying the bubble; financial under the theme of selective economic/commercial threats; the themes of strengthening cultural commonality, strengthening regional cohesion and strengthening regional tourism under the selective theme of social/cultural opportunities and finally, the themes of influencing lifestyle, changing ethnic-ethnic patterns and changing the population context of the regions under the selective theme of social/cultural threats.

**Conclusion:** The development of commercial-industrial free zones is in line with the decentralization of development and development from below, during which governments try to empower local areas (especially border and marginal areas) and by considering the ability Native capacities and capabilities have been developed productively so that they can help alleviate poverty in these target areas while meeting the needs of the first residents of these areas. Using border capacities in Kurdistan province is also in line with these assumed plans in order to create sustainable employment for border residents, prevent their tendency to smuggling and help economic, commercial and industrial growth and development in the border cities of the province. The results show that the realization of a commercial-industrial free zone in the cities of Baneh and Marivan requires, first of all, a serious modification of the related key infrastructures, proper supervision and the integration of the border dwellers. However, the realization of the activities of these areas is associated with opportunities and threats in various economic/commercial and social/cultural fields, which along with economic growth and development of employment and welfare in the border areas, as well as the development of cultural and social relations, it can be associated with potential threats such as integration into the global capitalist economy and lifestyle changes. But in general, it can be acknowledged that the operational realization of the free trade zone in Kurdistan province can be accompanied by a kind of rethinking in the social, cultural, economic and even political and security relations at the level of the province and even in the west and northwest of Iran. During it, the previous and traditional patterns and views of this region have been transformed and Kurdistan (especially the border cities), will enter a new phase of multiple relations and interactions.

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