Regional Garden Museum of Azerbaijan as Essential Need of Four Provinces for their Introduction and Recognition

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Abstract
Azerbaijan region in Iran includes West Azerbaijan Province, East Azerbaijan, Ardebil and Zanjan that each of them has different ethnic groups in its place. This land is particularly important in shaping of national identity, but art and architecture and dominant rich culture that are consistent with the other parts of Iran in over time. However the museums are historical and national identity, it seems Regional Garden Museum of Azerbaijan including the heritage of four provinces that with the pattern of Persian Garden plays a significant role in strengthen ethnic and culture and alliance of people in this region. The purpose of this study is to introduce and recognize the region of Azerbaijan to people. Thus, ethnic alliance refers to the preservation of ethnic, cultural and national identity. Research method of this study is qualitative with descriptive analysis method. In this study, after collecting information through library studies and referring to the documents, the theoretical framework was defined and then a model of recognition of regional identity in the architectural space was explained. Based on the presented criteria in this model, by using qualitative content analysis, the survey of region of Azerbaijan and Regional Garden Museum of Azerbaijan it was concluded that the mentioned four provinces have similar characteristics of regional identity in objective and subjective dimensions and finally, it was determined that Regional Museum of Azerbaijan with Persian Garden pattern can play an important role in strengthen ethnic, cultural and national identity as well as national alliance and recognizing it to the world.

Keywords: identity, regional identity, ethnic, cultural and national identity, Regional Museum of Azerbaijan, garden

Introduction
Azerbaijan region in Iran along with four provinces of West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardebil and Zanjan has valuable historical, cultural and architectural works. This region has particular importance in history and culture of Iran and also in the formation of national identity. But art and architecture, traditions and dominant rich culture of the region during time lead to the cultural invasion by alien cultures and that's why the source of people identity of this country appears less and even be converted into oblivion.

Therefore, in order to prevent and deal with this, it is essential to consider the historical, cultural and common characteristics of people. However, the museums have historical and national identity, it seems that Regional Garden Museum of Azerbaijan including the heritages of four provinces has a significant role in strengthening the ethnic and cultural and alliance of people in this region and recognition of them in the world. Regional Garden museum with Persian garden pattern that one of their objectives was to bring people and cultures of this region which is important in order to respond to this need and also strengthening unity and solidarity of the people of this region.

The purpose of this research is to introduce historical, cultural, architectural features and monuments of region of Azerbaijan and solidarity of groups to people and strengthening the ethnic
and cultural identity and preservation of national identity. After collecting information by library studies and referring to the documents and internet resources, first, the theoretical framework was defined and then a model of recognition of regional identity in the architectural space was explained and with respect to the presented criteria in this model and the survey of region of Azerbaijan was discussed by using qualitative content analysis. In this review, common points among the four provinces have been obtained and design of regional museum of Azerbaijan should be taken into account according to the points.

**Statement of Problem**

Azerbaijan region despite having numerous features and monuments does not have a common local region to display its works to use these resources and to help others in order to identify the region. Also, the customs and rich culture of the region have faced cultural invasion by alien cultures under the influence of different factors. Finally, it has made the experience of relatives who lived for many years in the land to be kept from the public eye and cause it represents the identity of the people of this region to be less effective.

Regional identity of Azerbaijan has faced with many challenges and in the current era of global and internal changes they will be accelerated and the officials and designers have a tendency to Western life and ideas. Thus, buildings’ design moves toward disregard of the values and history and is generally drawn to the anonymous direction.

Historical, cultural, economic, social factors have been very effective in architectural identity of Azerbaijan region, but contemporary architecture has been taken in the context of modern trends which constantly influenced by globalization and spread of new technologies and isolated from the past and its history and its identity and is less as a coherent region with the architecture. Hence, the following questions arise:

- How can we identify one region and its inhabitants and introduce to others?
- How can we preserve and strengthen ethnic, culture and national identity?

**Hypotheses**

In order to answer the above questions, the following hypotheses are made and assumed that:

- Designing regional Museum and holding ceremonies and local-regional festivals and also historical and archaeological exhibition can be effective in identifying and introducing one region to another.
- Designing regional Museum with focus on similar characteristics and common region between the provinces and using Persian garden pattern could have an important role in strengthening of ethnic and cultural identity and in reinforcement of national identity.

**Research Methodology**

The method in this article is based on documentation research and evidence-based review of related prominent investigation in the fields of identity, urban, provincial and outside-provincial or regional identity, ethnic, cultural and national identity, regional museum and garden. In this paper, the theory and related definitions of identity, urban identity, provincial and outside-provincial or regional identity and the basic factors and dimensions have been studied. In the second part, different dimensions of regional identity; objective dimensions including ethnic and cultural identity and national identity and so on have been explained. The third section presents pluralization and a model of recognition of regional identity in the architectural space that makes clear the link between the basic factors and dimensions of urban identity with regional identity and regional identity formation and by reasoning it became clear that family unity can be achieved as a result of interaction and can be maintain and strengthen in architectural space such as the regional museum.
In the fourth part, Azerbaijan region was studied based on the above model and by using qualitative content analysis. In this review, common points among the four provinces are obtained and these points can be the basis to design regional museum of Azerbaijan provided with Persian garden pattern.

**Theoretical framework**

To identify a region, it is necessary to define "identity" and "regional identity".

**Identity**

The word is Arabic infinitive of how and in response to the question "What is it", so can be translated as "what" (Noghrekar, 2008: 54). Stuart Hall defines identity as a growing process of what is a known factor or a cause of knowing (Gotbi, 2008: 81).

Identity reflects the attributes of any person or phenomenon (Bemanian et al., 2010: 40) and it is a result of every day subjective and social communication that needs a place to shape (Pourjafar and others, 2011: 12). This creates a similarity in a person, people or nation and makes a distinction between individuals and groups (Akbari, 2008: 220). Charles Jencks believes that "identity is a category of objects and people and connects with something or someone else" (Tajik, 2005: 2-11). Catherine Woodward says: "identity is assessed through the similarity, resemblance to people like us and differences with those who are not like us" (Myrmqtdaye, 2004: 32). Identity highlights the fact that every phenomenon reflects identity through objective and subjective traits which demonstrate their similarity with a group of objects and their difference from others. The identity is the factor of identification of a phenomenon also explains the differences and similarities of the two concepts (Mahdavinejad & others, 2010: 115). But other definitions of identity belong to a set of material and spiritual that its elements have already been formed and has a time dimension because social life of human is rooted in history (Nawfal, 2009: 85).

**Urban, provincial and regional identity (outside-provincial)**

There are different definitions of urban identity that we will discuss some of them. Urban identity is the history and culture of a city and a society governing the city that some knew it as diversity and multi-ethnic and multicultural result of the city. Gender, culture and history as urban identity builder are general (Gharab, 2011: 46). Urban identity is collective in which the memories and collective conscience are formed (ibid: 50).

Urban identity is a concept that has two important elements, one is subjective and human and the other is objective and places. This makes distinguish between the two terms of "urban identity" and "identity of the city". When we pay attention to the term, it is better to use "urban identity". In this sense, the attention of the speaker of the term urban identity is the identity of the place, while most urban identity implies individual or collective mind that refers to other historical issues of place and space and finally, the perception is created in human mind (ibid: 48-47).

Urban identity is a phenomenon with at least two main dimensions: the first dimension is the fact that is invisible and is as a result of social interactions and civil life in the city and the second, is the outside and body which is in front of eyes. Defining the identity of a city without the two main aspects would be inaccurate and incomplete and should be considered that the issue of identity in the city makes a sense with experience of life and human interaction with the city (Negarestan and others, 2010: 63-67).

Basic elements of urban identity: Basic factors of urban identity are natural, artificial and human that artificial and natural factors, the objective dimensions (physical) and human factors, and subjective dimension (mental) constitute urban identity.

These dimensions have the variables and identifying elements that are separated from each other in terms of dependent on these dimensions and a special characteristics between each of these.
dimensions and a prominent role of identity index (Table 1) (Khodaei and Porkheiri, 2010: 203-204).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Basic factors and dimensions of urban identity, elements and variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>basic factors and dimensions of urban identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objective dimensions (physical)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>subjective dimension (mental)</td>
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</table>

(Source: authors)

As basic factors and dimensions of the identity of a city (here by city means the provincial capital) are along with the basic factors and identity dimensions of other cities in a province, the identity of these cities are combined with each other and has influence on each other so that, in a larger environment such as a province, basic factors and dimensions of provincial identity are achieved. In other words, these basic factors and urban identity dimensions can be generalizable to provincial identity.

On the other hand, the neighboring provinces form a region (outside-provincial) have lots in common in terms of culture, ethnic, art and architecture and have similarities with each other. The provincial identities influence each other in this region which is a wide region of the province and appears as a new identity like regional identity. Therefore, to identify a region it is necessary to analyze and know basic factors and dimensions of urban identity in all cities of a province and the provinces that make a region:

At first, factors and the objective dimensions of regional identity are checked. Natural factors identified in nature (innate identity) and artificial factors can show the architectural identity of region. But human factors, the subjective dimension of regional identity is very important because man in a region (outside-province) has a social identity in addition to individual identity (innate identity) that this identity covers the identity of the private sphere (family members and the issue of privacy), local and outside-local identity, membership in public institutions, ethnic and cultural identity, urban, provincial and outside-provincial (regional) identity. In the larger level, social identity includes national and universal identity. All these identities include macro-level means the structure of society at any given time and place and historical element which is individual and collective (Khodaei and Porkheiri, 2010: 203).

What is important here is that the selection of identities that explains identity content of a regional better and brings us to research goals. Thus, explaining some type of social identity is enough, but as the purpose of this research is to maintain and strengthen national identity, its explanation will be discussed.

**Ethnic and cultural identity**

Ethnic identity is a form of collective and social identity which refers to cultural features that distinguishes one nation from another and has created a sense of belonging to each other between members of an ethnic group and makes them coherent (Ahmadlo, 2002: 123). Belonging to particular ethnic group is the identification and recognition base in the ethnic identity. Because of
the extensive concept of ethnicity which often brings the concept of nationality, various elements such as language, religion, race, special customs and sometimes certain nationalities form an ethnic group (Ahmadi, 2009: 63).

In the other words, culture is a factor that directly affects its religious and identity. Culture surely should be the most important and richest source of identity which in this regard, people find identity by relying on multiple cultural elements and in other words, culture integrates and consolidates the space (Behzadfar, 2007: 22). Cultural factors, as they are created in a long time are more durable and stronger than other factors and form the main part of human social identity. Cultural factors change the shape over time, but the themes are with less immediate or cyclical developments (Soltani, 2012: 2).

Therefore, in the course of human social life, their belonging to a social group that has specific cultural characteristics, people find a sense of belonging to it. Sometimes these nations and cultures are not large enough, even in a family or neighborhood that are called subculture.

**National identity and unity**

National identity is a sense of commitment and emotional attachment of a person to a national community and contributes to the unity and cohesion of a society. In a sociological perspective, national identity means the feeling of belonging and commitment of members of a society to secret and cultural symbols such as norms, values, language, religion, literature and history that as a result, distinguishing it from other communities and also community cohesion and the Grand National Assembly (Ghasemi and Ebrahimabadi, 2010: 96). The most important national symbols include land, religion, customs and rituals, history, language and literature, people and government. Within a national community, belonging and loyalty of members to each of the mentioned elements and symbols defines their sense of identity (Yosefi, 2001: 74).

If families and small groups gather in one place and will surely strive to achieve unity at the level of its national identity is preserved and strengthened. To achieve this goal it is necessary that people interact with each other in this place and in order to maintain and strengthen national unity essential elements include land, government, religion, the official language, customs and common history (Ghasemi and Ebrahim Abadi, 2010: 99-100).

**The pursuit of regional identity in an architectural space**

In order to show solidarity as well as preserving of the ethnic, cultural and national identity among the people in a region and to identify them from other people of the region and outside community, it is necessary to feel it and to visit it in front of their own eyes. The architecture space is the best which can take the advantage of the architectural elements and demonstrate all the conditions in public.

To illustrate this situation in terms of architecture, it is important to consider regional identity that is subject to geographical, architectural, cultural and ethnic characteristics of the region, because despite the differences in the architecture of the land, it has a great effect and inherent, dynamic and gradual characteristic that is called identity (Taqvaee, 2012: 65) and the created space should have an identity that bear the characteristics of the region.

Human, time and location are the main factors for the identity of architectural space. Time is a very important component but it is outside of the human control and each of these factors are the time debtor. Therefore, for such identity, the architecture space should be designed based on region and beliefs of people of the region and also be measured in relation to time. The building that time presence can be felt more than anywhere else is the "Museum". Museums are also historical and national identity. Museums are the story of life in the past and we define them for survival. The museum protect and screen what nature and human hands have made throughout the years (Aberi,
Therefore, the museum which is supposed to be designed to identify an region should be named regional museum.

**Regional museum, a space to pursue regional identity**

Based on the definition of National Committee, ICOM is a museum that its cultural activities are in a relatively large area that create a natural, cultural and social or economic unit. The museum represents a "region" from the perspective of a human and cultural unit and is the first base for understanding cultural issues resulting in ties between the regions and the creation of national dignity beyond local features (Nafisi, 2001: 34-35). In fact, natural, historical, artistically aspects of a region or province are displayed in these museums. The aim of these museums is to offer special regional capacities and introduce features and natural conditions, its historical and artistic and industrial position. The museums are in the service of equal society and are yet responsible for introducing it to outside the community (Hekmat Kenarkoob, 2002: 34).

The only purpose of this study is not to identify the region, but strengthening ethnic, cultural and national identity and unity, thus, the regional museum should be designed in a context such as garden to reach this goal.

**Garden, a suitable space to pursue regional identity and unity**

Garden is a term that means a standing unit in Pahlavi, Sogdian, Persian and Arabic languages and Parade means paradise (Hossein Moghadam, 2012: 12). "Garden" is a traditional phenomenon which carries issues related to traditional culture and faces us with a wide sphere of original meaning of Persian culture (Khansari and others, 2004: 9). The relationship is between the physical and semantic systems by a person in a garden: Garden physical systems cause the concentration in the garden which simultaneously affects all human senses and creates a sense of closeness and separates him from the outside space. In the first place with separation from the external environment, a kind of peace for human will arise because this capability is due to the creation of concentration system. But the concentration system invites people to think. At this point man in the garden, based on the prior information, can understand and achieve the garden meaning systems and link to them. The next step is to satisfy the need for peace and desirable quiet in the garden, he is invited for self-assessment and self-analyzing. Possibility of achieving perfection in individual and social life arises in the next stages. The focus of the garden has multiple effect on the human being and is very effective on human perception process of the environment (Shahcheraghi, 2009: 80).

**The model of recognition of regional identity in the architectural space**

Along with required conditions inside the garden that serve regional museum as a palace, we can provide conditions that in addition to introducing the region and the unity of the region relatives, it would preserve ethnic, culture and national identity and will be named as regional garden museum. In figure (1), a model of recognition of regional identity in the architectural space is shown.

**Case Study: Azerbaijan Region and designing Regional Museum of Azerbaijan with Persian garden pattern**

Iranian political independence and national identity has started from Azerbaijan, since the first national government, the government of "Mud" is established in this region (Ismaili et al, 2012: 77). Azerbaijan region in Iran can be recognizable with the four provinces of West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Ardabil and Zanjan with valuable features and works (Figure 2).
Azerbaijan has always been home to a variety of people with different cultures. Culture of the people of this region is associated with multiple geographical, historical, religious factors and multiple cultural tendencies have been formed under social influence (Haidari, 2003: 53) and has created independent folk culture. Azeris, Kurds, Assyrians and Armenians each have their traditions based on their religious and ethnic characteristics. In all parts of the province, there are different ways of life, dialects and accents, beliefs, mourning and celebration, music and storytelling and interesting stories that can maintain familiarity with these treasures and add them richness (Ismaili and others, 2012: 62-63). Culture of Ardabil province is full of religious and national identity and each has significant relationship between religiosity and deep-rooted customs of its people (Moqadamiya and others, 2012: 74). Zanjan has particular customs and culture where has placed Turks, Kurds, Persians, Tats and each of these people have specific customs (Ahmadi et al, 2012: 54).
The purpose for the introduction of the four provinces in Azerbaijan region was that regional museum should demonstrate these features to the peoples and cultures should come together in it. Also, the place of Azerbaijan regional museum should provide conditions that strengthen ethnic, culture and national identity and unity and solidarity of the people. Persian garden with its own properties provides such conditions and it is better for the museum in the garden to be designed as a palace.

Persian Garden is cultural, historical and physical phenomenon in Iran. Iranian garden, in fact, is the first model that satisfies the complex human needs (Khansari & et al, 2004: 14). Persian Gardens of combined water and tree cover and dry oasis in the heart of nature creates conflict due to the desert, the garden, and fresh allegorical landscapes (Ansari & Mahmoudinezhad, 2007: 44). Also, in Iranian gardens, plain of changes caused by human design is the exact balance (Khansari, & et al, 2004: 14-19). Falamaki defines Iranian garden as "the Persian garden during the experimental life has all characteristics of a phenomenon: the transformation acceptance, evolution acceptance, the experience of child birth and the environment acceptance (Falamaki, 2010: 662).

The basic factors and dimensions of regional identity of Azerbaijan in the four provinces are examined for receiving the common features in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic factors and dimensions of regional identity of Azerbaijan</th>
<th>Zanjan Province</th>
<th>Ardebil Province</th>
<th>East Azerbaijan Province</th>
<th>West Azerbaijan Province</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural factors (the effective factors of the climatic conditions of the city)</td>
<td>The provincial center is Urmia city and is located in the northwest of Iran and on the border with Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, Kurdistan, Zanjan and East Azerbaijan province</td>
<td>The provincial center is Tabriz and is located in the northwestern of Iran and on the border with Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nakhichevan, West Azerbaijan, Zanjan and Ardebil province</td>
<td>The provincial center is Ardabil and is located in northwest of Iran and the border with Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Gilan and Zanjan province</td>
<td>The provincial center is Zanjan and is located in northwest of Iran, bordering the provinces of East and West Azerbaijan, Gilan, Ardebil, Qazvin, Hamedan, kurdistan province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective dimension</td>
<td>● Natural attractions: Urmia Lake and its gardens, Sahoolan Cave Mahabad, Sardasht's forests and ...</td>
<td>● Natural attractions: Sabalan mountain, Nour and Shorabil lake, Fandoglo forest, Sareyn &amp; Heyran spa</td>
<td>● Natural attractions: waterfalls Syabkhrabh Jolfa, wetlands Gori Lake Bostan</td>
<td>● Natural attractions: Katalekhore Cave and ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Cold climate and Urmia Lake</td>
<td>● Cold climate Province</td>
<td>● Cold climate Province</td>
<td>● Cold climate Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>artificial factors (Man-made elements such as architecture elements)</td>
<td>historic centers: Orumiyeh mosque, market, Church, Takht-e Soleiman Takab and ... elongation buildings in the east - west direction • compression buildings due to the mountainous region • some flat buildings Takht-e Solomon built with Azeri style</td>
<td>historic centers: the municipal palace, mansion Elgoli, Blue Mosque, Kandovan and ... • stretch buildings in the east - west direction • compression buildings due to mountainous climate • Alishah Mosque and kabod Mosque made to Azeri style</td>
<td>historical centers: Market Ardebil, tomb of Sheikh Safi Ardebil and ... • buildings in the east - west direction • compression buildings due to the mountainous climate • Sheikh Safi some monuments of Azeri style</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>human factors (cultural, historical, religious, political Features)</td>
<td>history of Province includes three periods: prehistoric, pre-Islamic and post-Islamic • Shia, Sunni, Assyrian and Armenian minorities tribal habitat • Language of people, Turkish, Azeri and Kurdish • Most followers of Islam and other faiths religious minorities • Azerbaijan folk music • having various religious ceremonies and celebrations and accordance to religion of the people • Crafts: carpets and rugs, pottery, woodcraft has a national reputation and ... • car industry: Juicer manufacturing, sweat-making and ...</td>
<td>history of Province includes three periods: prehistoric, pre-Islamic and post-Islamic • Shia and Azeri population habitat • Language of people: Azeri Turkish and administrative language: Persian • people following the Twelver Shiism • Music Ashyqlar special ceremony Feasts and celebrations like Wednesday night ... • warp and handicrafts: carpet weaving, kilim weaving, knitting coatings, wood art, pottery, basketry and ...</td>
<td>history in three periods: prehistoric, pre-Islamic and post-Islamic • culture province, rich in religious and national identity • public speaking Azeri Turkish, accent Talysh and Tat • Some people staunch Shiite and Sunni religion Shafi‘i • Ashyq Azeri music • holding mourning month of Muharram, dating back several hundred years and a specific timetable • crafts: texture of old Zyrandazdaray, carpet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>subjective dimensions</td>
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Findings

The model presented in Azerbaijan region will be discussed in Figure (3) that after underlying basic factors and dimensions of regional identity of Azerbaijan, similar characteristics among these provinces have been obtained. Finally, research goals will be achieved through interactions between ethnic groups in an architectural space as a regional museum of Azerbaijan with Persian garden pattern.

![Figure 3: Explaining the model in Azerbaijan region (in the four mentioned provinces) (Source: Authors).](http://www.european-science.com)

In fact, the design of regional garden museum of Azerbaijan and gathering different ethnic groups should be facilitated by their similar and common characteristics to create unity and solidarity towards providing common conditions, land, language, and common religion. Thus, more common and the same points should be considered along with arts and culture in this garden museum and the space should be built inside the garden away from the bustle of the urban that people interact with each other and the unity and solidarity among the peoples of the region will be strengthened. To achieve this objective, national identity is preserved and strengthened.

Conclusion

The artificial and natural factors are objective dimensions and human factors are subjective dimensions of urban identity that are generalizable to the basic factors and dimensions of regional identity. Thus, a model of regional identity is determined in an architectural space that links the basic factors and dimensions of urban identity defined with regional identity and regional identity formation process and the knowledge derived from it. During this process ethnic, cultural and national identity and unity and ethnic solidarity are preserved and strengthened in architectural space as a regional garden museum.

By studying this model and obtained criteria from it, objective and subjective dimensions and basic factors of regional identity were determined in the provinces of West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Ardabil and Zanjan that these four provinces have to distinguish their differences, common similar geographical, historical, ethnic, cultural and architectural features. Thus, if in regional museums of Azerbaijan would have existed galleries that are specific to each province and
works to represent which is similar to the characteristics of other provinces, but it has to be different from that of belonging to a province. If this museum to be placed in the Persian Garden as the pavilion, it can be effective in creating ethnic solidarity as the Persian. Therefore, Persian Garden is historical and cultural phenomenon that makes interaction between humans with the physical and meaning system in it.

Finally, the results of the study showed that if regional garden museum of Azerbaijan to be designated with this condition, it can play an important role in maintaining and strengthening ethnic, culture and national identity and national unity and we can introduce it to the world.

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