

# Role of Social Trends in Appearance of Iranian National Architectural Movements

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**ABSTRACT:** Appearance of nationalism in each country is influenced by some social, religious and political factors throughout the history of that country. In Iranian contemporary history, this process has also been dependent upon opinions and thoughts of some of the nationalist intellectuals and modernists. Their intellectual products played an important role in various social, intellectual and even artistic areas of the country. Thus this paper firstly seeks to introduce nationalistic social trends in Iran and classify nationalist architectural tendencies influenced by nationalist social trends besides explication of nationalist principles of each tendency and in the following, along with explanation of nationalist tendencies in architecture, some architectural works are introduced as examples.

**Keywords:** nationalism, architecture, liberal, religious, ancient – oriented, Iran.

## INTRODUCTION

In late decades of 19th century, political and social situation of some west Asian countries was transformed and between 1880-1900 /1300 -1320 AH works by a generation of authors and writers were published in Tehran, Istanbul, Cairo, Teflis and Kolkata who all pursued modernism based on keeping national values.

In Iran, This group consisted of writers, political, officers and even intellectual business men who distributed modern thoughts and fought autocracy and retardation via publishing articles, treatises and books and tried to create an ideological and intellectual basis for changes and reforms and do what had not been conducted in the past. Members of this group had 2 characteristics. Firstly, most of them lived overseas or were in travel between various countries and secondly, most of them can put into both groups of constitutionalists and cultural and social modernists on the basis of their works.

Meanwhile, people were assisted by intellectuals and clergymen in fighting foreign capital and government civil service and obtained a significant majority in first parliament. This group demanded freedom (i.e. free trade), equality (i.e. being equal with nobles and dignitaries in advantages), centralization (i.e. an strong central government) and nationalism (i.e. fighting foreign capital dominance).

Tendency of Iranian intellectuals towards Germany is a point

can not be ignored. In this period a group of poets, authors and journalists took the part of Germany because of dissatisfaction with Russia and English. Meanwhile a group of Iranian experts went to Germany, came together and after a comprehensive reflection concluded that west modernity should be adopted. Of course, it was patriotism that led them towards modernism and west. Thus appearance of nationalism occurred via different approaches in Iran.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Considering the content, this research is a qualitative one. At first a historical study is conducted but the basis of this research is an interpretational – historical one and research approach (theoretical framework) is based on the influence of environmental, formative and semantic factors.

### The historical background of nationalism in Iran

From a historical viewpoint, human has expressed his loyalty to several Centers. For a certain time, political container was tribe and also it was naturally the loyalty center of people. At another time, political container was empire incorporating various tribes and at later time this political container converted into modern country system. "Nationalism in its modern meaning is a product of the time when national governments were formed in other words it is a product of France great

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revolution .The appearance of national government was based on the principle that said people residing in a certain territory and having common features had the right to control their fates"(Ghamari,2001).

"As the term itself shows , in national government the sovereignty is in the hands of the nation . Thus it is necessary to provide a definition for nation , so that in this way the definition of nationalism which is the national government ideology becomes clear . It is necessary to remind that there is no consensus on the meaning of nation among experts . some consider it as a psychological phenomenon while some other take it as a sociological and historical phenomenon"(Alem,1994).

But from their general views it can be concluded that nation consists of a group of people united via such linking elements as language, race ,religion , territory or geographical area , culture and history , economic relationships and political factors . A person considers himself as belonging to a certain group according to the above – mentioned elements tries to distinguish him self from other groups .It should not be thought that in order to create a nation all of these elements are necessary because in some cases ,presence of one or more of those elements has led to creation of a nation and there is no single rule for appearance of all nations . Thus the importance of each element forming a nation ,varies between various nations.

In Iran ,It seems that the thoughts appeared through the encounter of Iranians with west , was a factor created different kinds of nationalism in Iran.

Liberalism , religious thoughts , ancient orientation , socialism and thoughts against foreigners are of the most important intellectual items which have combined with nationalism and given it an special nature .since the combination of these types of intellectual items with nationalism has occurred in various time periods , the nature of nationalism in each period is also different with others.

Constitutional revolution was also a result of the thoughts of the same intellectuals having relationship with west in some way. One of the main messages of this revolution was nationalism and this revolution marks the beginning of the appearance of nationalism in Iran .Of course some believe that Iranian nationalism is not a new phenomenon and has been existed from olden time even at the time of Greek attack , Arab attack and governance of Bani Umayyah and Bani Abbas caliphs .

### **An introduction to nationalist tendencies**

Since late 19th century , the main issue Iran facing with was that how legal institutions should be formed , developed and enhanced . Thus a new element entered our national identity due to the changes outside the country which was attention to European modernity and international features .On the other hand constitutional revolution in 1906 was also one of the movements formed in social – human milieu of Iran country. But constitutional revolution was followed by dictatorship of Reza khan .Thus such factors as constitutional revolution

,effects of achievements and progress of Iranian elite and west and change of governance from Ghajar to Pahlavi are factors prepared the ground for creation of nationalist thoughts in Iran . "In order to resolve the problem of identity in Iran, some type of harmony should be created among three sources of Iran , Islam and west liberalism . Iran and Iranism is a historical and territorial source of identity. Islam is an spiritual and moral source of identity and an extensive political and social ideology. West liberalism is a philosophical source with economic, political and even cultural functionalities"(Sariog hlam,2007).

### **Liberal national identity**

One of the main characteristics of Iranian liberal nationalists was their attention to reason , science and progress. From their viewpoint ,progress and improvement were dependent on presence of law and law in turn originated from mankind reason . Liberal nationalism advocates claimed that the reason for European countries progress lied in enacting laws having , reasonable basis and if such laws appeared in Iran , Iran would also progress similar to European countries .

"Liberal national identity , was the first shape of nationalism appeared in Iran at early current century and was same as the nationalism appeared in west with France great revolution , values honors by this type of nationalism consisted of freedom , equality , brotherhood and national sovereignty all had western origins and practically appeared in constitutional revolution"(Ghamari,2001).

One of the aims of Iranian liberal nationalists was to reach a high level of progress and improvement and in order to achieve this aim , they hoped that schools and factories would create in Iran in a modern style on the basis of western modernity . These schools and factories were products of west modernity and if such products were to be created in Iran , west modernity principles were also should be accepted . Here there is a conflict in liberal nationalist views because if they followed nationalist principles , they should pay attention to their own modernity and culture because accepting west modernity and westernizing the society are in conflict with nationalist principles meaning attention to our selves .

That was the conflict which Iranian liberal nationalists simply overlooked and in this way they showed that in order to modernize Iran , even were ready to sacrifice Iranianist signs .Malkam khan Nazem–oddole was among the leaders of the above – said intellectual trend .

### **National – religious identity**

At first glance it seem that nationalism and religion can not converge because nationalism follow certain goals at country – wide level but religion has more general aims associated with human guidance , while nationalism seeks to establish national sovereignty and fight against such factors as religion limiting this sovereignty . The main point in this apparent conflict is the view of national sovereignty towards the role played by religion

in defining government structures which in countries such as Iran generally having a single religion was able to express its loyalty towards nationalism under the guidance of clergymen. Thus the reason for connection between nationalism and religion in Iran was independence of Shiite clergymen from the government.

"In the course of events relating to France revolution , since there was a closed relationship between the church of this country and pre-revolution autocrat regime , France clergymen advocated autocrat regime and stood against France revolutionists - Because of this , after revolution , revolutionists who over turned autocrat regime also targeted the elimination of clergymen and church ; But in Iran clergymen not also established no relationship with the ruling autocracy but also opposed it and became significant leaders in constitutional revolution . Thus the ground for opposing religion in this revolution was not the same as France great revolution"(katem,1992)." Direction of religious nationalism in Iranian history has been against the ruling autocracy.

Among other important aims followed by religious nationalism, removing foreigners influence and preventing their dominance over Iran can be mentioned"(Ghamari2001). obtaining freedom and equality by limiting autocracy and establishment of constitutionalism was targeted by religious nationalism.

### **Ancient-oriented national identity**

Political evolutions and struggles of 19th century prepared the ground for realization of nationalities and emergence of nationalist movements . The realization of national identity in these countries was partly due to the emphasis of governments on glorious history or ancient modernity of these nations . Iranian nationalism emerged as its novel shape since the end of 19th century , revived with the help of government policies and sometimes it was used by governments in order to make mythical old times and thereby prove their genuineness and legitimacy . This glorification of ancient orientation also occurred in some other countries and even in societies having no continued history helped in creating national unity.

"considering the fact that at the beginning of 20th century, novel nationalism with a global definition was inserted in to global arena , thus in Iran , Iranian nationalism was also fully informed of the historical awareness importance and knew that how this historical background could spread nationalist feelings . Reza shah also significantly exploited from national unity weapons in pursue of his goals which one of them was ancient-oriented architectural style"(Kiani,2004).

"Ancient-oriented nationalism was used by Reza shah as a tool for implementing his ambitious policies . Reza shah had an ambivalent approach to such idea ; i.e. on one hand relied upon Iranian ancient traditions and on the other hand sought to modernize Iran and these two items i.e. paying attention to ancient traditions and modernization of Iran were in conflict with each other" (Hambly,1993).

Throughout the previous Century, European archeologists discovered a significant part of unknown history of ancient Iran and these discoveries became a pretext for some Iranian intellectuals and historians for promotion of Iranian nationalism by referring to them . Ancient-oriented nationalism honors Iranian cultural achievements and sought a pure Iranism of Sassanid kind and on the other hand emphasized the permanence of Iranian nation and its culture in Islamic period because of the richness of this culture .

This nationalism in its extravagant form relied upon a pure Iranism image which was inevitably in opposition to a foreign religion or tended to overlook it or if possible create an Iranian religion or revive previous Iranian religion"(Ghamari, 2001).

## **RESULTS**

### **Iranian architecture nationalism in first Pahlavi era**

Most of critics believe that Iranian architecture traveled its evolutionary path under the influence of internal and external factors up to the end of Ghajarieh period and experienced various ups and downs with keeping its specific identity and originality. At the end of Ghajarieh and beginning of Pahlavi era, Iran witnessed a substantive transformation mostly caused by external factors. This transformation occurred in various political, cultural and social areas is known as "revolution and disconnection" period," transformation and transition" period and etc. in architectural scope .In the field of architectural nationalism most of experts believe that architects with that tendency have sought to use pre-Islamic architectural elements. Dr Vahid Ghobadian believes that formation of "national style" occurred in this era. From their viewpoint, national style is display of some ancient architectural ornaments in first Pahlavi era architecture.

In classification of first Pahlavi era architectural styles, Dr Mostafa Kiani also introduced 3 architectural styles i.e. traditional style, ancient style and modern style and believed that nationalism in architecture of this era was one branch of ancient architectural style.

It is worth to not that in first Pahlavi architectural era, in addition to special attention of government to ancient orientation in architecture, architects in this era, in addition to experience ancient orientation also paid attention to some post-Islamic architectural factors and occasionally tried to express national identity in Iranian architecture through applying national – religious identity by combining pre-and post – Islamic architectural elements and ornaments. Thus first Pahlavi era can be considered as the beginning of nationalism in Iranian architecture and emergence of these movements was on the basis of 3 major form of being influenced by social trends as follows.

- A) Nationalist architecture based on tendency towards west modern architecture.
- B) Nationalist architecture based on tendency towards post-Islamic architecture.
- C) Nationalist architecture based on pre-Islamic architecture.

### *Nationalist architecture based on tendency towards west modern architecture*

In first Pahlavi era, considering the presence of German advisors in various fields and transfer of ancient-oriented approaches to Iran a long with dominance seeking of European fascist dictators, so in architectural scope also some evolutions occurred on this basis. Active and extensive presence of foreign companies, mostly German ones, which generally were active in construction of state buildings for example municipalities and police headquarters buildings in various Iranian cities such as Tabriz, Orumie, Shiraz, Rasht, Gorgan, etc led to formation of a type of architectural nationalism on the basis of west modern architectural models while leaving some limited ornaments relating to pre-Islamic period in building elevations .

Among the other characteristics of this nationalist movement in architecture using materials on the basis of modern architectural features can be noted .

Among this group of buildings the following can be mentioned.

- 1- Justice Ministry palace ,by Gabriel Gueverkian, Tehran, 1937 -1946 (Fig. 1).
- 2- Iranian National Bank ,by Mohsen Foroughi ,Tabriz .
- 3- Iranian National Bank ,Tehran market branch ,by Mohsen Foroughi, 1941.
- 4- Iranian National Bank by Mohsen Foroughi ,Shiraz(Fig.2).

### **Nationalist architecture based on tendency towards post-Islamic architecture**

Considering the fact that first Pahlavi government had a movement and shift from promotion at religion in first decade to opposition to religion in second decade , this phenomenon can be observed based on the effects on the continuity of Iranian traditional architecture . Some of the buildings constructed in first Pahlavi period in Iran were on the basis of traditional architecture and Islamic background . Dr Mostafa Kiani in his book " first Pahlavi era architecture" ,considers these buildings as 2 types i.e.

First, buildings their usage were already existed and mostly

included some public buildings , mosques , Shrines , theological schools and some times personal houses and since central government authority did not influence the construction of them it can be said that the new period had almost no effect on their traditional historical trend .

Second, buildings were de fined on the basis of new needs and modern life style .

In relation to these buildings, various architects tried to express the national identity of Iranian architecture along with preserving post-Islamic architectural elements and ornaments and sometimes combining them with pre-Islamic features. Among these buildings the following can be mentioned .

- 1- Hospital Shah Reza(Imam Reza peace be upon him)by Karim Taher zadeh Behzad, Mashhad 1928(Fig.3).
- 2- central Post office ,by Nicholai Markov, Tehran, 1934 (Fig.4)
- 3- American college (Alborz high school) by Nicholai Markov, Tehran, 1925
- 4- Iranshahr school ,by Andre Godar, Yazd, 1934.

### **Nationalist architecture based on tendency towards pre- Islamic architecture**

Throughout 18th and 19th centuries , fad for archeology reached it's maximum level in USA and Europe along with publish of various books on Rome and Greek old ruins archeological excavations and explorations and also establishment of museums and this had a serious effect on formation of architecture and the product of this insight was emergence of 2 styles of Gothic and Neo classic .

Also Iran witnessed presence of scientific characters e.g. Arthur pope from USA and Andre Godar from France in the field of Iran post architecture studies .

Holding significant congresses with approach to introduction of Iranian ancient art to other countries and also International millennium congress of Hakim Ferdowsi in Iran and establishment of national works council in 1925 were among the factors led to promotion and extension of archeology in Iran.



Fig. 1: Justice Ministry palace , by Gabriel Gueverkian , Tehran, 1937 -1946 (Source: Rajabi, 1976)



Fig. 2: Iranian National Bank by Mohsen Foroughi, Shiraz (Source: Bani masoud, 2009)



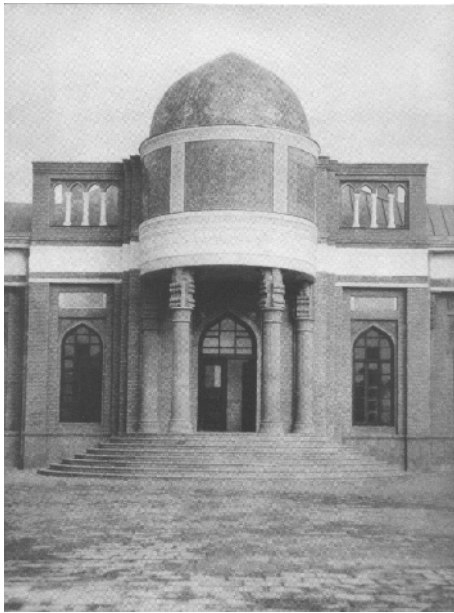


Fig. 3: Hospital Shah Reza ( Imam Reza) by Karim Taher zadeh Behzad, Mashhad 1928  
(Source: Daniel et al., 2005)

In revival of and exploitation from ancient oriented architectural works.

Only features of pre-Islamic architecture were considered. Columns, Column capitals, stairs and ornamental designs and so on were borrowed from Sassanid and Hakhamanid eras, of course, respecting the necessity of devising new functions there was no need for considering the pre-Islamic pattern of



Fig. 4: Central Post office, by Nicholai Markov Tehran, 1934 (Source: Daniel et al., 2003)

plan design and architectural space. Buildings constructed in this period with ancient nationalist tendency can be studied as 2 following types:

*First:* Buildings in their elevation design, ancient elements and symbols were used. Among this group the following could be indicated.

- 1- Ferdowsi's Tomb, by Karim Taher zadeh Behzad, Toos, 1934. (Fig. 5)
- 2- North side of National consultative Assembly, by Karim Taherzadeh Behzad, Tehran, 1936. (Fig. 6)
- 3- police Headquarters palace, by Ghilich Baghlian, Tehran, 1936.
- 4- Iranian National Bank saving fund by Heinrich, Tehran, 1936.



Fig. 5: Ferdowsi's Tomb, by Karim Taher zadeh Behzad, Toos, 1934  
(Source: Daniel et al., 2005)



Fig. 6: North side of National consultative Assembly by Karim Taherzadeh Behzad, Tehran, 1936  
(Source: Daniel et al., 2005)

- 5- "Anooshiravan-e-Dadgar" school, by Markov, Tehran, 1936.
- 6- Iran's Booth in Brucel world Exhibition, 1935.

*second:* Buildings in which design of volumes were conducted based on ancient structure without direct imitation of forms or elements of Hakhamanid , Ashkanid or Sassanid architecture. In this group of buildings , architects in their transition from uniform repeat and imitation and by relying on their taste and preference turned to design works which could be a representative of architectural character of their own time though in this process there were ancient orientation traces. Among them , the following buildings can be indicated :

- 1- Ministry of foreign affairs , by Gabriel Guevrkian , Tehran , 1933-1937 (Fig.7).
- 2- Iranian Ancient museum , by Andre Godar , Tehran , 1933-1935.
- 3- Isfahan National Bank , by Mohsen Foroughi , 1942 ( Fig. 8).

As previously mentioned , during 20- year ruling of first pahlavi, considering the evolutions and influence of west modern architectural thoughts , Iran became a bed for emergence and formation of several various types of architecture :

- 1- Modern architecture
- 2- Traditional architecture
- 3- Iranian ancient – oriented architecture .
- 4- West neoclassic architecture.

since these types had emerged in Iran architectural bed in parallel, thus in some buildings a combination of the above –

said types was emerged . But in this paper , considering the necessity of studying the way in which nationalism appeared in Iranian architecture , among 4 common types in this period 3 ones affected by nationalist tendencies were studied and their formation grounds were analyzed.

## CONCLUSION

According to above , some Iranian contemporary intellectuals and modernists who a part of their thoughts and opinions had a nationalist approach , have created 3 dominant aspects of nationalism in Iran i.e. liberal, religious and ancient – oriented nationalism .

From the author's point of view , those 3 main approaches led to appearance of 3 nationalist architectural tendencies each having their own specific characteristics of course it is worth to note that considering the roles played by such factors as ruling systems and architect attitudes , they should be separately addressed . Thus in a general conclusion the role of social trends in appearance of Iranian national architectural movements , can be grouped and displayed as the following table :

## ENDNOTES

This paper has been compiled in line with author's doctorate dissertation with this topic" The effect of social and political trends on emergence of national architectural movements(a comparative study of Iranian and Turkish architecture during 1920 -1950) at Azad Islamic University , Science and Research



Fig. 7: Ministry of foreign affairs ,by Gabriel Guevrkian,  
Tehran, 1933-1937  
(Source: Rajabi, 1976)



Fig. 8: Isfahan National Bank, by  
Mohsen Foroughi, 1942  
(Source: Bani masoud, 2009)

Table 1: Role of social trends in appearance of Iranian national architectural movements

Nationalist Intellectual Approaches	characteristics of nationalist social trends	nationalist architectural movement	characteristics of nationalist architectural Tendencies	Example for architectural works
Liberal	1-Attention to Reason, science And progress 2-Existence of law based on human reason 3-Freedom, equality and national sovereignty in west style 4-Common history, culture and language 5-Following west and adoption of European Modernity	Tendency towards west modern architecture	1- Applying west modern architectural patterns in designing volumes 2-Exploiting from some of pre-Islamic architectural ornaments in limited parts of building faces 3-Quality of construction and material tends mostly towards west prevalent architecture	1- Tehran Justice palace 2-Tabriz National Bank 3-Tehran market national Bank 4-Shiraz National Bank
Religious	1-Opposition to autocrat governments 2-Cutting influence foreign forces 3-Increasing religious power and efficiency 4-Removing superstitions from Islam 5-Muslims unity 6- Accepting modern science and techniques 7- Modern laws compatible with religion	Tendency towards post-Islamic architecture	1-Keeping post-Islamic architectural elements and ornaments 2-Occasionally combination with pre-Islamic elements and ornaments 3-Meeting new needs and modern life pattern	1-Central post office 2-Hospital shah Reza (Imam Reza) 3-American college 4-Iranshahr school of Yazd
Ancient-oriented	1-Historical greatness of pre-Islamic Iran 2-Removing west cultural traces 3-Attention to zartosht religion 4-Opposition to government autocracy 5-Adoption of west new political fundamentals And modernity 6-Establishment of national constitutional government	Tendency towards pre-Islamic architecture	1-Directly using pre-Islamic elements and ornaments 2-Over looking pre-Islamic plan design patterns and architectural spaces	1-Anooshiravan school 2-North side of national consultative Assembly 3-Police Headquarters palace 4-Ferdowsi;s tomb 5-Iran;s booth in Brucel
			1-Designing volumes based on abstraction of pre-Islamic buildings 2-Lack of direct imitation of pre-Islamic architectural elements and ornaments 3-Architecture should be a representative of it's own time	1- Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2-Iranian Ancient Museum 3-Isfahan National Bank

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