

The Impact of Geopolitical tourism on Convergence of Space political units (Case Study: Iran-Azarbayejan)

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Abstract

Vicinity in its various dimensions (Geographical, Political, cultural and etc) has Fundamental importance in convergence and common understanding of the political units. This factor led to Convergence and sustainable security in various aspects of economic, socio-cultural and environmental. Therefore, Health infrastructure, cultural heritage, economic interests and ... have important from the perspective of Geopolitical tourism. Accordingly, this study has raised the question that is the geographic proximities such as Geographical neighbors, Identity – historical, Common cultural heritage, Health, environmental problems, economic interests, political and etc, in relation to Iran and Azarbayejan (Geopolitical tourism) of the two countries can be resulted in sustainable convergence and security. Explaining the question has been done by the Analytical-Descriptive method and the collection of Data and Information have been done by library study. The results show that in the world of highly evolved, that threats Show themselves In newer dimensions day by day, Geopolitical Tourism can determine the convergence And common understanding between political units - Space of geopolitical contexts. In the meantime, whatever this proximities more and deeper, Tourism geopolitical power as a parameter in the field of convergence and convergence of political - space units - would be more practical. Since the two countries of Iran and Azerbaijan have a variety of cultural, social, environmental, economic interests, etc proximities, Geopolitical Tourism can provide the contexts of shared understanding and the convergence between the two countries.

Keywords: *geopolitics, tourism, geopolitical tourism, convergence, Iran and Azerbaijan*

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Introduction

Today, tourism in the world has become as an important source of income and at the same time effective factor in the cultural exchanges among countries (Kazemi, 2007:1). For this reason, researchers and professionals interested in to study the role of tourism in economic and social development of host communities at different levels (national, regional and local). The importance of this industry is that it is named by Tourism Organization as one of the largest and most profitable industry in the world (WTO, 2006). Given that 10 percent of the world's GDP and 10 percent of employment accounted for itself (UNWTO: 2008). Given that the number of international tourists has increased from 25 million to 903 million from 1950 to 2007, and income from these activities reached \$ 865 billion and it is predicted that by 2020 the number will reach 6.1 billion (Moreno et al, 2009:1550; WTO, 2006). Different Countries try to provide opportunity of Satisfaction and benefit from the positive aspects of the industry by providing and worthy of Tourist attractions in potential areas (Rosentraub et al, 2009:759-770).

Nowadays, Tourist activities about the geopolitical capital, to be seen a new and surprising development came in the realms of pre-modern (nature and human) and taking advantage of it (Papli Yazdi, 2006: 120). So that Regional integration has been ceated between the political space units in many areas. Obviously, it would not be possible without the participation of governments, on the one hand, they have special attention to the development of tourism industry and they have Effective role in legislation, planning and management of customers of this industry in a geographic spaces by Decisions (Buckinghamshire, 1999:69). On the other hand, they have role in Provision of basic infrastructure In order to support and protect of investors in this industry through Financing, institutional support and marketing facilities, Provide security for tourists, capitals And satisfaction of tourists (Lickorish & Jenkins, 1997; Owusu, 2008:3). In

this regard, Nilsson and colleagues (1993), stated that the concept of development-oriented state show that state can help to promot sustainable development and integration of society using his power (Nelson, 1993)

Also, Ferguson investigations (2010) in the Caribbean nation has shown that Tourism and its development as an important development strategy in the region countries has helped to Strengthen the solidarity, Trans-regional convergence and national development. So that in the light of such activities, the Central American Common Market formed and flourished in the 1970s (Ferguson, 2010:4). So, today, researchers believe that by the positive development of tourism and its dynamism in economic activities at the international level it can be used as a factor for creating multi-sectoral economic opportunities and a factor to the balanced development and regional integration (Gligorijević and Petrović, 2009:123). Based on the above, the research studies the role of Iran and Azerbaijan Tourism that they faced with growing interactions in recent years and created political Space integration and have had important relations in the field of export, import, transit of goods and services between the two countries And have an important role in the development of regional integration between Iran and Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan in particular. So, the main question is that Is the territorial proximity, historical affinities, shared interests and ... (geopolitical tourism) could play a main role in the convergence of Iran and Azerbaijan?

History Research

Study and research of studies are necessary that have been done about the subject in any scientific research. Because without access to the results of other research and their development, it is not possible to achieve an appropriate response and better analysis. Afzali, et al. (2014) in their study with Title "Diplomacy of tourism and its impact on Cooperation and integration among the countries of the Persian Gulf region, they reached to this conclusion that Using library and field study that the Persian Gulf region- including Eight political units- has Unique geopolitical situation in the world. Common points of convergence among regional countries such as Cultural, historical, religious similarities, geographical proximity, Ethnic ties and Economic benefits are much higher and stronger than the differences

and divergence between them and the common factors provide areas of convergence and cooperation among countries in the region especially cooperation in the field of tourism, security, health and the environment. Qadiri Masoom, et al also (2010) In his study entitled " Limited regional integration and cooperation, a strategy for development of cultural tourism " Using library and field study concluded that the identification of barriers to tourism in three countries (Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan) and Provide strategic solutions in the field of cultural tourism cooperation Could have an important role in furthering the objectives of the three countries. Nabakooei. et al (2013) also in his study so-called "The impact of tourism on the development of regional integration of the countries of South-West Asia" Using library and field study concluded that The need to improve security in the region And an emphasis on tourism as an Convergence factor In various areas of political, cultural and economic can outline the field of limited or wide convergence development and changes in geopolitical equations in areas of South West Asia. In this context, the present study is going to consider tourism from different perspective and to explain geopolitical role of tourism in the convergence of political units.

Theoretical Foundations

Today, tourism is considered as one of the effective factors in the development of integration of political-space units in social, cultural and economic dimensions of countries. Some political experts and scholars' show off important role to tourism and knows it's synonymous with the word development. Therefore, tourism known as a growing activity that has the economic effects and can thereby deepening the bonds of convergence of political-space units in social, cultural and economic dimensions among Border countries together and to consolidate national unity and a sense of place and help improve the security environment and political integration.

A) Geopolitical and Tourism

Geopolitics as "knowledge of competition and expand the sphere of influence" of governments and political groups is Seeking power and access the instruments and levers and geographical opportunities that it offer them the possibility power to overcome the Competitor. Therefore, they compete and try to develop further its influence in the

geographical areas to achieve the opportunities and possibilities in the location and geographical space (Atootal, et al, 2001:33). However, Geopolitics has been emphasized that by this definition which is taken with the knowledge of geography or geographic strategy (Karimipoor, 2015:8). It will be possible due to political units to use the role of geography Such as integrating factor.

Tourism is considered one of the important and effective factors in dynamic economy and sustainable development of countries. The rapid growth of tourism in the world and benefits from it, has led Special attention of governments and planners and have followed the formation of new ways of policies in this field. Tourism is an integrated process of physical space and human society that its New forms is as a result of changes in values and attitudes of human life, advanced technology, The explosive growth of information and political forces(Friedel et al,2008:29).

The importance of tourism is to the extent that on the one hand, known as a social phenomenon in providing places and cultures (Hulman and Hall, 2011) On the other hand, it plays an important role in interaction The interaction among tourists, Capital,, governments and host communities, Universities and non-governmental organizations(Warver ,2000 :3). So, Tourism is a cultural – political matter before it is presented as an economic phenomenon (Bonnie Face, 2001: 9). However, culture is as Major tourist attraction.

D) Geopolitical tourism

Areas of concept and meaning of geopolitics Knowledge have features that study Space tourism economic consequences in terms of the science. This means that the human need to circulate, recreation, relaxation, Fatigue relieving the mental stress of modern urban life, and protection from physical and spiritual health Tourism category has set in the field of cooperation and development of political units.Hence, in addition to, it has affected the fate of the countries, International relations and national and global economies and also has attracted the attention of the government and nations as an emerging, progressive industry and activity. And countries try to attract tourism, processing potentials especially in the international dimensions and on the one hand, they provide the capacity of their new tourist attraction, Not only to introduce the culture, country, land, people, history and

national identity itself to the world, But they won good economic benefits and Increase international understanding through the development of social relations and to improve Its geopolitical position and prestige in the world(Griffin, 1996: 39).

Countries can earn money in different ways such as agriculture, industry and services that each of them requires special facilities and special resources. Many communities do not put money on it in good condition many communities do not earn through mentioned, are not in good condition but all countries can earn revenue through tourism almost in postmodern conditions. So tourism can be considered as an two-way approach; meaning that in the same way, a country earns foreign exchange earnings by attracting tourists, Foreign exchange costs will be borne either by Traveling the its country residents out of it. Therefore, the net use of tourism related to the relationship between income and the cost of its that it is considered as a Part of the invisible exports and imports (Badii, 1993:559).

The government will be successful in this regard that have Tourist attractions building capacities in the field of historical and archaeological, land and ecotourism, Cultural and ethnological, Religious and Pilgrimage, Resorts and accommodations, etc. Second, they shape and process national policy on Focus on the development of tourism and attract foreign tourists. So tourism has emerged as a competitive activity in the international arena and Governments somehow compete with other Governments By adopting an open policy and facilitating the entry of tourists into the country And the development of tourist attractions And other necessary measures Such as equipping tourist infrastructures and any attempt to attract more tourists To benefit from the related resources. Obviously, Countries with closed system against to an open system countries, will be losers in this competition (Hafznya, 138: 103). This will require changes in legislation, design, modernization and regionalization of tourism structures (karimipoor, 2015:320). In this regard, what is considered from the geopolitical tourism? Includes these concepts that pay attention to the trends and patterns of tourism is essential In the process of national borders and in an approach to reconstruction of Tourism Space In the land space.

Chart (1) conceptual model

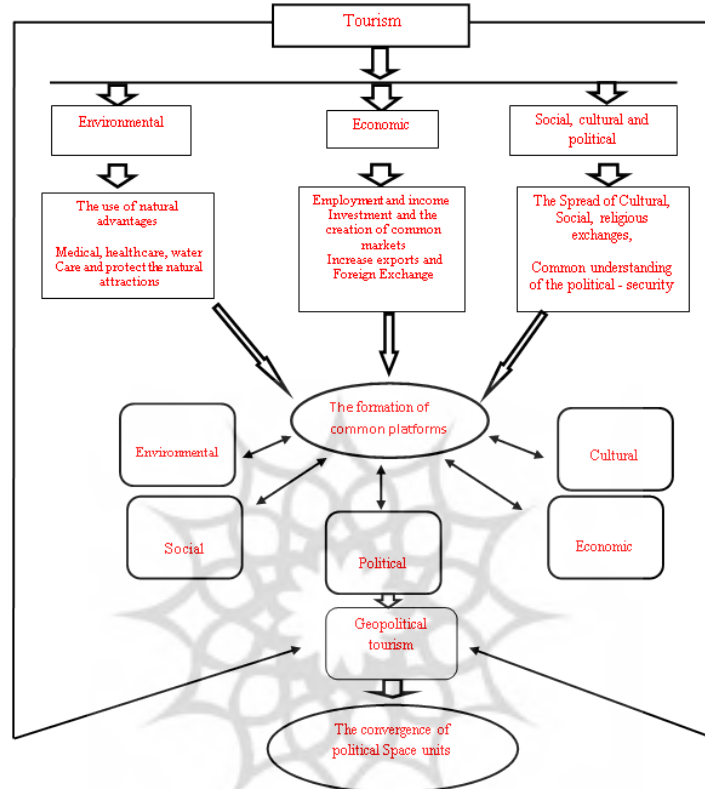


Figure 1: conceptual model

In the above model has been argued that Tourism encompasses a variety of areas and also Areas provide In addition to field of common understanding Between political units, In a reciprocal relationship with each other and determine geopolitical tourism and finally, geopolitical tourism as a identified whole leaves its effects and consequences on the convergence of political- Space units.

Research methodology

The purpose of the study is applied and has been done by the Analytical- Descriptive method and the collection of Data and Information have been done by library study. In this framework, first, the data was provided by library studies (internal and external), Then, by using the analytical Descriptive method, the data was analyzed.

Ecology

One of the prominent characteristics of current century is

Development of relations between countries and today the necessity of establishing relations with neighboring countries globally is accepted as a principle. In this context, the geographical position of each country in relation to its neighbors has special importance. The land of Iran is a large part of the Iranian plateau that is located in the Southwest Asia and the southern half of the northern temperate zone Between latitudes 25 and 40 degrees north And 44 to 64 degrees east (Safavi, 2009: 81) and is one of the countries of South West Asia (Middle East) that it is Neighbor with Azerbaijan in the northwest (Ibid: 82).

On the opposite side, Azerbaijan is located with an area of 86600 square kilometers at the confluence of Asia and Europe. It is located in the Caucasus region and it is Neighbor with Iran from South (Amir Ahmadian, 2004: 8). In this context, by the overview of space and existing fields, it can be concluded that Iran and Azerbaijan Can expand their relationships with each other and Have strategic relations due to geographic - geopolitical, advantages, Historical roots and cultural and religious, Ethnic and linguistic commonalities and geographical overlaps including Spreading Religious spaces(Shiite) And ethnicity (Azeri, Taleshi, etc.)



Map 1: geographical position of Iran and Azerbaijan

Findings

The Contexts of convergence of Iran and Azerbaijan

Cultural sphere

A) The same historical roots

Geographical space and the territory of the nation and the Iranian government has been greater in the past of what is today known as Iran. And all components of the nation in the framework of political unit and under a Condominium have a clear and Independent identity and this collection is called Iran. Even though Peripheral geographical and cultural units established regional Autonomous institutions in periods of political transition, they knew Themselves A larger and more immense part of larger reality as Iran. This continuous historical coexistence and the bitter and sweet commin experiences have created a sense of belonging to Iran and being Iranian between them (Hafeznia, 2002: 188). In this connection, Azerbaijan was one of the geographical areas in the first decades of the nineteenth century that was separated from Iran. However, still there is Historical, cultural and ethnic links widely between Iran and Azerbaijan. It would play an effective role in regional integration between the two countries which can be very effective in geopolitical tourism.

B) Religion

The majority of the people of Azerbaijan as Iran are Shia Muslims. Prominent Examples of the Iranian Cultural is the Holiness and Priority of religion over other cultural characteristics So that other cultural characteristics and Even Many economic fundamentals about religion have remained steady or unsteady. For example, with the popularity of Shia and Iranian public attitudes to this religion, actually decreased the severity of the Iranian cultural relations with Residents in the Persian language of Transoxiana. One of the common sources of convergence Iranians and Azeris is Islam and Shi'ism. Iranians and Azeris are Share with in holding Ceremony such as Islamic feasts and mourning ceremony of Imam Hussein (AS) and etc. and According to the people of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan comments their identity was made severely damaged in the last 200 years Apart from the flag of Imam Hussein (AS) who consider it a model for unity. Therefore, the religion of Islam and Shiism are two - sharedfactors for numerous political area and can play fundamental role in beliefs, attitudes and

behaviors of people And is known as convergence factor (Hafeznia, 2002: 189).

C) Language

Much of the plateau Azerbaijan, Zanzan province, north and east of the Hamadan province are the main areas and interconnected and the largest centre of Azeris of two countries. Until 2009, about 9 million Azeris lived in this area (the realm of Iran) and According to the census of 2015, more than 8 million Azeris live in Azerbaijan which can bring a sustainable convergence. Therefore, the two countries can have high consistency in communicate with each other due to the the role of tourism (Karimipour, 2000: 116).

D) National figures

It can be pointed to the role of national figures despite religious and cultural commonalities between the two nations of Iran and Azerbaijan, Which enables the convergence and effective development of tourism between the two countries and provides the introduction for attracting and visiting tourists from Regions each other. For example, Shahriar did not travel to the Caucasus and Azerbaijan but he has composed many poems about boobs and write a poem beyond the Aras to Azeri language that the statue of the Iranian poet have been installed in Baku. Real and mythical figures of Iran which are part of the Iranian culture, they are Common people of Iran and Azerbaijan. Figures suchas Ferdowsi, Saadi, Hafez, Nezami Ganjavi, Mohammad Fuzuli, Shahreyar, Shah Ismail Safavi, Pooria Vali etc Belong to all Iranians and always remembered to respect them. Azerbaijani people attach special respect to religious scholars and they follow Azeri scholars especially (Fazel lankarani, Ali Khamenei, Moosavi Ardabili).

C) Nowruz

Nowruz is rooted in the civilization thousands of year's people in the region and Rituals and rich traditions of Nowruz is one of the most important cultural and historical commonalities of Iran and Azerbaijan. In fact, in both countries, Nowruz is an ancient festival, and a common tradition that can have an effective role in the trend towards convergence of political space. It was tried to be removed from society the tradition of Nowruz in soviet-era but with the collapse of the country, Azerbaijan was successful to revive again

Norouz. However, Nowruz is a Persian word and means a new day but due to proximities and historical commonalities, this word is imbued with the culture and literature of Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani people know this Eid human values, and as they give Charity in Eid al-Adha and Ramadan, act in Nowruz in the same way. In both countries in Nowruz is recommended to Reunion, Reverence for elders, Learn from the past, Greetings from relatives and the the feast to youth and and the customs is national unity and friendship factor. On the other hand, Nowruz rituals In Azerbaijan including Wednesday's, popular celebrations, performing traditional rituals, Games and food rituals And Nowruz sweets. Holding the Wednesday's, before Novruz in Azerbaijan, in fact, to prepare and welcome the Nowruz. In general, people in both countries believe that Nowruz is not only a symbol of a great civilization, but also an international festival. The people of Iran and Azerbaijan throughout history, preserved Nowruz traditions and they have transferred it's to future generations by Enriched more.

G) Interest in visiting each other

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iranian Azerbaijanis demonstrated his desire to visit Azerbaijan, Similarly, the people of Azerbaijan removed the Soviet – Iran border barriers and stepped to Iran with a heart full of love and friendship after more than 75 years and Able to meet freely with relatives and friends and relatives on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

This period represents the pinnacle of beauty and outpouring of clean feelings of people on both sides of Aras It also represents the culmination of dormant people feelings that During about 150 years after the separation of the Caucasus from Iran, yearning to meet each other. People on both sides of Aras are interested in each other's areas due to historical, cultural history, the past Relative and marriage Bonds and relations that already had with Iranian Azerbaijan and Convergence of factors that have geopolitical variables, People on both sides of Aras are interested in each other's areas. This leads to the development of tourism and a sustainable security in the region. The following table shows increasing trend of Azerbaijani tourists to Iran over the years.

Table 1: the entrance of Azerbaijani citizens to Iran (2008-2015)

country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Azerbaijan	225387	311198	724126	669894	769341	1098584	1091352	1032619

Source: Cultural Heritage and Tourism and Handicrafts organization

The environment area

A) The Caspian Sea

What has caused the Caspian Sea plays an important role in the relationship and the behavior of political and space actors and it changed in to the active parameter in the geopolitics of the region is The legal regime. In fact, Coastal countries of the sea have failed so far to access a legal basis applicable to the sea. On the other hand, in the regional level of analysis, two other regional system could affect the Caspian region. One of them is the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). This organization has significant potentials to expand economic cooperations and this cooperations can affect the Caspian region. Other organizations that can be formed in the future is Caspian Sea Cooperation Organization that was proposed in 1992 by Iran.

If the organization to be formed can have a great influence according to the sources of energy and be beneficial to the region countries. The importance of the Caspian Sea and its surrounding areas is due to the existence of energy resources such as gas, oil and water resources As well as Being located in the commissure of Axis of road And communication of North to the Indian Ocean And Europe to the Far East. Therefore, the region around the Caspian Sea, is a large area that Benefits from Effects and economic benefits, security and tourism in the convergence of the sea (Ahmadi-Pour, 2010: 22) And given that Azerbaijan is a landlocked country can use Iran's potential to get out of this dilemma and also iran benefits from Azerbaijan potency In determining the legal regime that meets the interests of Iran.

B) Aras River

The importance of water in a new era in human destiny and human societies determine Geopolitics water or Hydropolitics. In this context, Water geopolitics studies the role of water in human and social conflicts and relations of nations and governments, Both within countries, or between them and the transnational, Regional, global and international dimensions.

Inasmuch as Aras River is known as one of the most important border and international rivers Due to its special geopolitical, in addition to, it

Forms the border between Iran and Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia As well as the autonomous region of Nakhichevan, Could play an important role in The strategy of convergence in these areas So that historical past of the area, The joint And equal exploitation from Aras River Water Resources in the Soviet Union and then, has brought The positive trend based on technical, economic, agricultural and irrigation cooperations. So, the international and border River Automatically creates prerequisites for geopolitical and geo-tourism Geo-economic cooperation in the region due to geopolitical cooperation between countries in the region on the joint use of water resources of the Aras River.

The economic sphere

A) Border markets

Trade and economic relations is growing and the fields of development of tourism economic, economic and employment communications, was provided by establishing more border markets along the borders of Azerbaijan and Iran thousands of people of Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan travel to Iran to buy the daily necessities of life daily. This has led to the development of cultural relations and has led to greater convergence of population on both sides of Aras. The suitcase trade has been the amount of \$ 2906757 in 2007, over 39028446 dollar from the border markets to Azerbaijan in 2011, 32006959 dollar in 2013.

B) Export - Import

However, the analysis of trade exchanges between Iran and Azerbaijan over the past two decades has been associated with the ups and downs, however, available data indicate that the volume of trade relations between the two countries had a decreasing trend. According to statistics on the State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan Republic (stat.gov.az) has been released, the volume of trade between Iran and Azerbaijan from 539 million dollars in 2007 to 263 million in 2012 decreased. So with convergence in the field of tourism would be to increase the more export and import On the other hand, provided the groundwork for the political space convergence and provide security and regional Border.

The political sphere

A) Tourism diplomacy and its position in the convergence of two countries

Diplomacy is actually is foreign policy executing in the framework of foreign policy doctrine of of any country. The purpose of foreign policy of any countries is providing general principles to guide foreign policy and diplomacy. This kind of understanding of diplomacy is defined in the context of traditional diplomacy. But, huge changes Incurred in the past century, changed Traditional diplomacy. The audience of Tourist diplomacy not only governments But also including all forces, institutions and elites who are advancing the field of diplomacy. This type of diplomacy literally, is the language of communication with public opinion And the main tool that governments regarding to persuade public opinion (Iran's share of tourism diplomacy, 2016).

Tourism diplomacy refers to the role of Tourism in peace, Booming economy and rising incomes, Neutralizing the negative propaganda of foreign and the position of government in achieving these goals. Success or failure of tourism in each country directly related to supportive government policies So that WhateverThe government support is broader than tourism, this section will be greater prosperity. Since tourism is cultural interaction among people, Can be a message for creating sustainable diplomacy and the destruction of many of the misunderstandings between nations and governments of Iran and Azerbaijan (Rezai, 2014: 161).

Azerbaijan as a country that has a lot of oil and gas, have performed relatively well in the field of tourism during the past years and the number of tourists entering to the country from 2008 has been increasing. The number of incoming tourists to Azerbaijan from about 1 million in 2009 reached to more than 1.3 million in 2013. In the meantime, the country's revenues from the tourism sector it grew faster. On the other hand, the purpose of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce tourism potential areas, attracting Azerbaijani investors to build hotel and entertainment venues and increasing tourist areas. For this purpose, The Iranian embassy in Azerbaijan has sent several media Committee of Azerbaijan to introduce tourism capacities in different provinces of Iran including Azerbaijan East and West, Ardebil, Gilan, Zanjan, Khorasan Razavi, Golestan, Mazandaran and

Kish Island. The two countries have been able to Identify the Capacities for cooperation in the field of tourism by Diplomacy is formed in the field of tourism in the private sectors Maintain their communications Considering the near distances and the economic costs.

Discussion and conclusion

The economy has serious role to guide foreign policy approach of countries in the new era. Naturally, prosperity and economic growth depend on ensuring sustainable global and regional security. North West Iran and the South Caucasus, has attracted A growing number of tourists in the region due to the existence of appropriate human and natural tourism attractions and infrastructures and Geographic proximities (geographic proximity, language, race and religion) In recent years. Research findings show that Aras people on both sides are interested in visiting regions each other due to historical, cultural histories, the past relative and marriage Bonds and relations are in the region. This leads to the development of tourism and the convergence between the two countries. The statistics also confirm the trend. Azerbaijani citizen's entrance to Iran in the periods (2008-2014) show that 1272961 people arrived to Astara borders, Bilesuar, Jolfa and have visited the attractions of the city. These areas will be more meaningful Given that developments in post-Soviet is towards the orientation of the military – geopolitical problems to the economic and geo-economic. These fields provide appropriate opportunities for tourism geopolitics that can play a vital role in the convergence of Iran and Azerbaijan political space units. So, given that Iran and Azerbaijan are rich In terms of tourism resources and attractions and in terms of cultural, religious, religious and even linguistic are unity and common origin, therefore, the authorities of the two countries towards the historical necessity of convergence must be shared In light of the strengthening of bilateral relations.

In light of the elements of convergence between the two countries, Effective management of lands in Iran sector Space can provide the groundwork for further political -space integration by the adoption of the policy of reducing tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan, supporting Freedom of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Setting up Rail line Nakhchivan - Julfa - Tabriz – Mashhad - Religious tourism that is

one of the requirements of Azerbaijani citizens for Religious tourism And Azerbaijan act also more rational approach to the issues of Iran, especially ethnic – cultural problems. In these circumstances, Geopolitical tourism in the field of convergence between the two countries entered politics as an effective parameter.

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