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A Study on the Spatial Organization of Post-Revolutionary Houses in Tabriz (1980s)

Tebriz'de Devrim Sonrası Konutların Mekânsal Organizasyonu Üzerine Bir Araştırma (1980'ler)

Maryam GOLABI, Fatma Cânâ BİLSEL

ABSTRACT

The present study aims to explore how socio-cultural values of post-revolutionary period influenced the spatial organization of dwellings in Iran. The Islamic revolution of Iran (1979) extremely changed many aspects of Iranians' private and public life due to its religious nature. The notions of 'social space', 'physical space', and 'habitus' -practice of everyday life- proposed by Pierre Bourdieu are used as conceptual tools in this research based on a case study. The attempt is to understand how the structure of social space, which was influenced by the ideology of the new state was mirrored in the domestic architecture. Vali-asr district in Tabriz, the planning and construction of which began during Pahlavi period, but predominantly developed after the Islamic revolution was selected as the focal point of the study. The houses that constitute the sample of this study were analyzed based on their architectural drawings, photographs, and interviews made with house developers and architects. Research findings highlight that most design principles implemented in the spatial organization of the houses studied are congruent with the Islamic ideology of the state. The separation of public rooms from the private rooms in the interiors of houses, the introversion of plans, the provision of a transition space between domestic realm and the street, and a walled courtyard are examples of those design principles that are consistent with the Islamic life style emphasized by the new regime.

Keywords: *Domestic architecture; Islamic revolution; socio-cultural values; spatial organization.*

ÖZ

Bu makalenin amacı, İran İslam Devrimi sonrası dönemin sosyal ve kültürel değerlerinin Tebriz'de konutların mekânsal organizasyonu üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktır. İran İslam Devrimi 1979 yılında, dinsel doğası nedeniyle İranlıların özel ve kamusal yaşamının birçok yönünü önemli ölçüde değiştirmiştir. Pierre Bourdieu tarafından önerilen "sosyal alan", "fiziksel alan" ve "habitus" -gündelik yaşam pratiği- kavramları, bu araştırmada kavramsal araçlar olarak kullanılmaktadır. Burada amaçlanan, devlet ideolojisinden etkilenen sosyal alan yapısının konut mimarisine nasıl yansıtıldığını anlamaktır. Tebriz'de planlanması ve inşası Pahlavi döneminde başlayan, ancak ağırlıklı olarak İslami Devrimden sonra gelişen Vali-asr bölgesi çalışmanın bağlamı olarak seçilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın örneklemini oluşturan konutlar, mimari çizimler, fotoğraflar, konut inşaat firmaları ve mimarlarla yapılan görüşmeler üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, incelenen konutların mekânsal organizasyonunda uygulanan tasarım ilkelerinin çoğunun İslam Devletinin ideolojisine uygun olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Konutların iç mekânlarında, kamusal odaların özel odalardan ayrılması, planların içe dönük düzenlenmiş olması, iç ve dış mekân arasında bir geçiş alanı sağlanması ve yüksek duvarlarla çevrelenmiş avlu, İslami yaşam tarzına yönelik uygulanmış olan tasarım ilkelerinden bazılarıdır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Konut mimarisi; İslam devrimi; sosyo-kültürel değerler; mekânsal organizasyon.*

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Introduction

In 1979, Iran witnessed an Islamic revolution, which changed every aspect of people's lives. Based on its religious nature, the revolution brought along the redefinition of the Iranians' identity and ways of life, particularly women's identity and gender relations. In the pre-revolutionary period (1925-1979), Pahlavi regime had implemented major social reforms including the introduction of modern gender identity, the banning of women's Islamic veil, and the abandonment of whatever considered to be traditional and replaced all these with new modern ideas in order to modernize the country. Therefore, parallel to the large-scale plans of the state, the daily and social life of Iranians, the architecture of the public and private spaces all became subject to many extreme alterations. In line with authorities, Europe-trained architects attempted to educate Iranian society to a modern way of life and to bring a reform in the cult of domesticity through the design of modern and functional dwellings. Consequently, extroverted houses with large windows and balconies facing the street replaced the traditional introverted houses that had no opening to the street except the entrance door of the houses.

With the emergence of Islamic revolution (1979), the religious authorities advocating Islamic life style rejected the modern identity and lifestyle promoted by the Pahlavi regime in the previous decades. Women's veiling (hijab) became officially obligatory with the establishment of new Islamic state. After the Revolution, the Islamic Law *(sharia)*, which had a leading role in the history of Iran, "returned to permeate the private, public, and political spheres of Iranian life" (Amir-Ebrahimi, 2008, p. 94). As many researchers have highlighted, dwellings are the physical mediums, through which socio-cultural values of a society are displayed (Weisman, 2000).

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of socio-cultural transformations of Iran in the 1980s on domestic architecture, particularly on the spatial organization of individual houses in Tabriz. Even though a number of architectural scholars have carried out valuable researches regarding Iranian domestic architecture, the post-revolutionary Iranian houses, particularly those in Tabriz have not been studied yet. Therefore, this study attempts to explore a neglected aspect of residential architecture in Iran by investigating the culture of post-revolutionary period as it also has represented itself within the domestic space.

The assumption of this study is that the redefinition of women identity and gender relations (male-female segregation in social events) after the Islamic revolution have influenced the organization of domestic spaces. In line with the aim of the study, Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on social space, physical space, and habitus were adopted as conceptual tools. Through selecting a case study in Tabriz and analyzing a number of houses, the study aims to explore how architectural patterns and elements in domestic space have been articulated to fulfil the Islamic requirements of the new religious state. The organization of interior spaces, semi-open spaces including balconies, and open spaces such as courtyards were investigated in relation with the concepts of habitus and social space. Information and data regarding the Vali-asr district, its emergence, master plan, and aerial photos were accessed from the Ministry of Roads and Urban development of East Azerbaijan and Tabriz Cartographic Center. Architectural drawings of the houses that constitute the sample of this study were mostly accessed from the archives of Tabriz Municipality. In addition, the drawings and layouts of ten houses were surveyed personally and their plans were drawn by one of the authors. The drawings were supported by the photographs taken by the respective author. A number of residents living in these houses, architects and house builders who were practicing in Tabriz during the 1980s were also interviewed.

Conceptual Framework of the Study: Social Space, Physical Space and Habitus

In order to explore the relationship between socio-cultural shifts and the architecture of domestic space, this research refers to the notions of 'social space', 'physical space', and 'habitus' proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. 'Social space' is associated with the arena of organized relationships and their manifestation in the social sphere. It represents itself in many different contexts in the form of "spatial oppositions and inhabited or appropriated space" which performs as a kind of spontaneous and unplanned representation of social space (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 13). 'Physical space' relates to a planned template in which the structure of social world is mirrored or translated (Fogle, 2011). Conveying meanings and oppositions, physical space demystifies the 'social space'.

'Habitus' as the practice of everyday life is proposed by Bourdieu as a fundamental concept for understanding the interaction between social space and physical space (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu attempted to formalize the function of practice in the organization and meaning of the socio-spatial structures (Lawrence & Low, 1990). The habitus is a set of organized and organizing dispositions around which an individual's belief and actions are shaped (Archer, 2005). Habitus, as a product of the social conditioning, is a relation between the situation and the practices; it designates how the individual gives value and makes choices to a way of life among practices within a subculture (Bourdieu, 1996).

Built space acts as an apparatus in which people create an identity and express social relations. The permanent capability of spatial form is to maintain and naturalize these identities, social relations, and dispositions within society (Archer, 2005). As it was emphasized by Bourdieu, in any society, the physical space is used as a reservoir for social meaning (Bourdieu, 1996). Therefore, human habitations can be seen as means to create, strengthen, and change social meanings and relations (Rotman, & Nassaney, 1997).

The Context: Vali-asr District in Tabriz

In line with the theoretical framework, a case study was conducted on the houses located in Vali-asr district in Tabriz. The transformation of Tabriz into a modern city began during the first Pahlavi Period. The implementation of various land reforms, the establishment of industrial plans, the construction of the Tabriz airport and the railway station, and the migration of people from rural areas to the city due to the mechanization in agriculture led to the growth of Tabriz and changed its fabric, identity and functional order. Studies of Tabriz master plan started in 1966 and the plan was approved in 1970. The plan was prepared by Iranian consulting engineers (Moghtader-Andreef) in collaboration with Michel Ecochard, French urban planner who was specialized in Eastern, North African and Islamic cities. The major intention in the preparation of this plan was to delimit the boundaries of urban growth in the next 25 years (Dallalpour-Mohammadi, 1999). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, new towns and residential districts were developed in Iranian cities due to the rise of new middle and high income groups (Gorji, 1997). According to Dallalpour-Mohammadi, during the 1970s, congestion and crowding in central areas, air pollution, insufficient facilities, and increased mobility led to an outward movement of middle and high-income groups in Tabriz (Dallalpour-Mohammadi, 1999). Consequently, new residential districts were planned in the East and Northwest of Tabriz to respond the housing needs of these new emerged groups. Vali-asr district (Kooy-e Vali-asr) was the first modern residential district that was designed according to the new urban regulations in the East of Tabriz city (Figure 1).

Although the plan of the district was prepared in 1956, its construction was done in 1969. It was also the first residential district that included urban infrastructure and public utilities, for instance, sewage disposal system, piped drinking water, electrification and asphalted roads. The founder of Vali-asr district, Morteza Khoie, who initiated the project in a joint venture with Tabriz municipality, envisaged it as a modern neighborhood for upper-middle income group. The pattern of Vali-asr district was based on geometrical grid network of streets; the majority of the main roads were east-west, and thus, the parcels were located on a north-south axis (Figure 2).

After the revolution, many parcels in this district were expropriated by the Islamic state regarding the *Ghanoon-e Zamin Shahri* (Urban Land Act) enacted in 1979 (Dallalpour-Mohammadi, 1999). According to this law, the properties which exceeded 1000 meter square surface had to be divided and distributed to the poor; as one of the slogans of the Islamic government was to forcefully bring an equality of wealth in the country (Gheissari, 2009). Therefore, the urban plots in Vali-asr district became

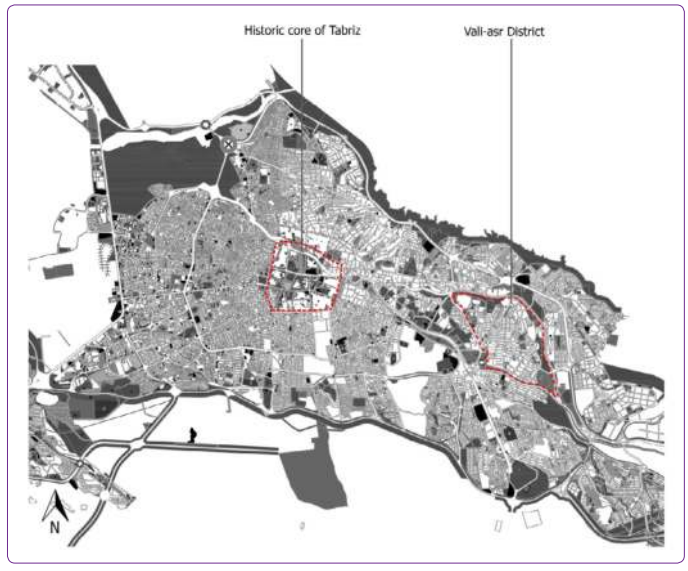

Figure 1. The location of Vali-asr district and its relationship with city center (Tabriz Municipality Archive, 2018).

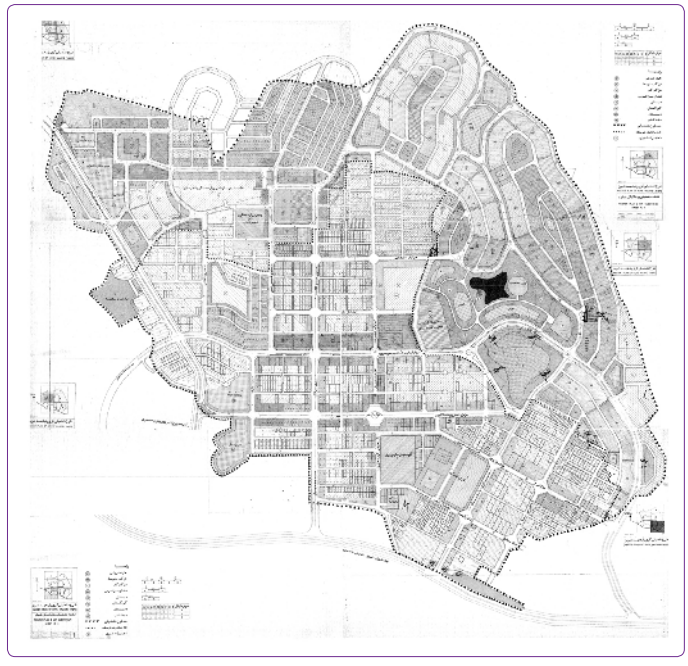

Figure 2. The plan of Vali-asr district (1969) in Tabriz (Archive of the Ministry of Roads & Urban Development of East Azerbaijan, 2018).

smaller in comparison with the size of land parcels formed in previous decades.

The particular types of dwellings surveyed in this study are one-to-three storey single houses. Among the forty houses that constitute the sample of this study, the architectural drawings of thirty houses were accessed from the archives of Tabriz Municipality. The drawings and layouts of ten houses were surveyed personally and their plans were drawn by one of the authors. The drawings were supported by the photographs taken by the respective author. Moreover, in order to gain more information regarding spatial organization and usage, a number of residents living in these houses, architects, and housing developers who were practicing during the 1980s were interviewed.

House Types Built in the 1980s

The new land subdivision system implemented after the Revolution was the determining factor in the house forms, sizes and shapes (Madanipour, 1998). The newly created parcels were in rectangular shapes,10-15 meters wide and 20-25 meters deep. The houses were constructed at the northern side of the plot, and the southern part was reserved to a walled yard. This type of building placement resulted in the emergence of two urban dwelling types. In order to distinguish the type of a house, one could refer to the placement of the yard in the lots and the type of access from the street to the interior spaces. In the first type, called *gate-e-ye jonubi* (southern plot), the access to the dwelling's interior is directly from the street and the yard is placed at the back side. In the second type, called *gate-e-ye shomali* (northern plot), the access from the street to the interior spaces is via the yard placed in front of the lot (Figure 3). In other words, the placement of the houses and yards was done categorically according to the direction to the sun. Yet, in both types of plots, high walls surround both the front yards and the backyards.

Central Plan Type in the Early 1980s

The central-type house plan was the most common plan type that appeared in the late 1930s in Iran in line with the transformations of urban patterns and continued to be used for many decades even for a short time after the revolution. During the urban modernization process, this type of plan replaced the traditional plan layouts of houses. With the exception of a few architects who designed a new type, i.e. the open plan, Iranian architects continued to design central plan layouts for decades. The central-hall house is to some extent a modified form of the traditional dwellings in Iran. Similar to traditional Iranian dwellings in which all rooms situated around the central courtyard, in the central-hall houses, the rooms are organized around a central space. Doors of all rooms are opened into this central hall, which turn it into a distribution space giving access to other rooms. The hall is placed in such a way that everyone who comes into or leave the house normally pass through it (Figure 4). In some cases, in addition to its distributing function, the central hall performs as a family sitting space where the household eats and watches TV. The size, the form, and the furniture of the hall are determining elements when it comes to turn it into the main living room. Central-hall house types fulfilled the given social relations of Iranians, that is, the segregation of women from men during social events and the separation of private life from the public life. In these types of houses, sharp separation and demarcation boundaries and partitions were designed between private and public rooms. However, in some houses, two bedrooms or the dining room and the reception room were divided through sliding partitions in a way to be connected during a large gathering to provide sufficient space (Figure 5). Folding partitions between the spaces accomplished the desirable enclosure and openness for inhabitants in different occasions. They brought flexibility and comfort to the enclosed plan layouts when a spacious room was needed during the large social meetings that occur frequently in Iranians' houses. The introverted-ness is the principal characteristic of the central-hall houses. The placement of spaces around the center of the house increases women's

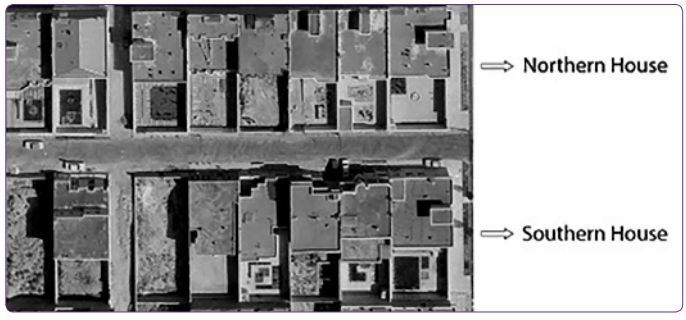

Figure 3. Northern and Southern houses (Tabriz Cartographic Center, 2018).

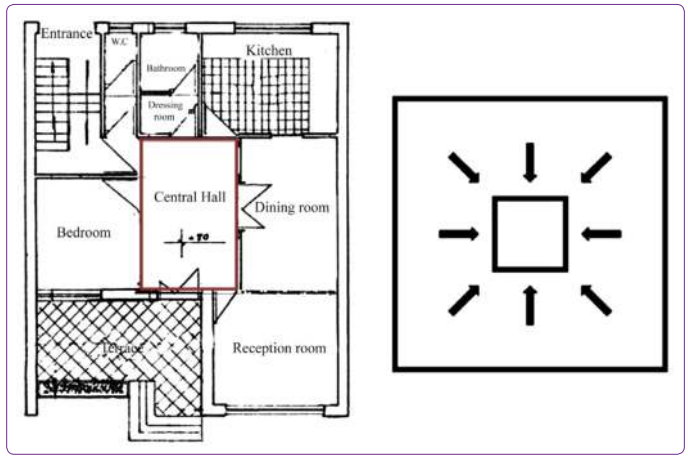

Figure 4. Exemplary central-hall plan layout built during the 1980s (Tabriz Municipality Archive, 2018).

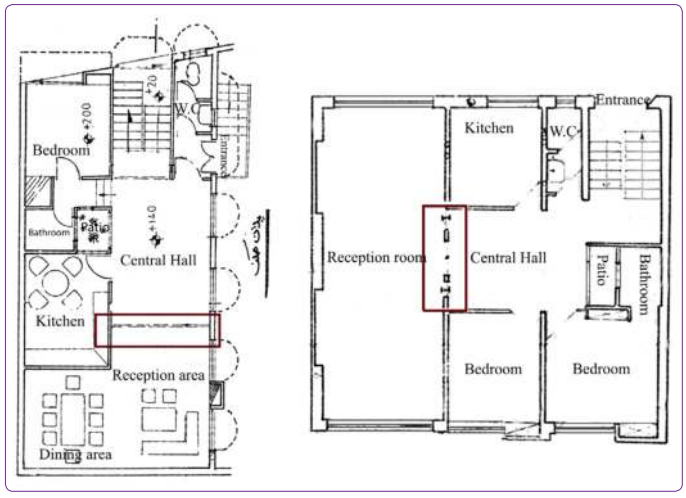

Figure 5. The separation of central hall and reception room through sliding doors (Tabriz Municipality Archive, 2018).

freedom of movement within their domestic realm while preventing from the possibility of being viewed from the street. The central-hall plan layout brings along a high sense of seclusion, privacy and invisibility from the outside world.

From the late 1980s onwards, in the period which coincided with the end of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), remarkable shifts happened in the plan layouts of dwellings. In that time, due to the housing problem, demands for small and low-cost houses increased and a considerable building boom happened. The early open-plan type, mainly appropriate for small houses, emerged primarily in apartment buildings, and then spread into all types of houses. Accordingly, the central hall as a living room was eliminated from the plan layouts or replaced with a small circulation corridor.

Regarding the acceptance of the open-plan type by Iranian architects and the populace, Abdollah Molavi as an Iranian architect who practices in Tabriz, in an interview with one of the authors stated that when the size of parcels was reduced, the open-plan was considered to be a more efficient choice for the use of space and for the replacement of a dark and narrow floor plan with a rather spacious one, which could fulfill households' needs (Molavi, 2018). In some houses, solid separating walls between rooms disappeared; in others, walls were replaced with archways to retain symbolically the functional distinction. It should be stated that, however, while the public rooms were combined to create a more spacious plan, private spaces including bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens maintained their distinct and separated identities.

Courtyard as the Enclosed Open Space

In the sample of study, every house was surrounded by three neighboring houses on the narrow rectangular lots and the yards were enclosed through solid walls with

Figure 6. Views of the walled isolated yards of some houses.

Figure 7. The walled yard provides a visual privacy for a housewife.

about three-meter height, which hide the yard and the interior spaces from outsiders' gazes (Figure 6). In the majority of houses, fences were used on top of the walls to deter burglars. Our observation concerning the use of spaces within surveyed houses highlighted that unlike some spaces the function of which changed throughout the time, the primary and traditional function of the yards, which were used for daily activities including food preparation, cooking, washing up, and resting have remained intact in contemporary times. The construction of high brick or stone walls between neighboring dwellings and the street hinder the visual access to the yard and women's outdoor activity spaces (Figure 7). The sample of study shows that the yards of houses are related to neighboring yards and to the street in such a way that there is a minimum degree of visual dialogue among them. Similar to the interior spaces, the yard as an open private space (physical space) closed itself completely to the public world to keep females and their daily practices (habitus) visually inaccessible to strangers.

Transition Spaces

The analysis of houses revealed that transition spaces were placed between the street and the entrance door in both plan types. Being different in the northern plots and southern plots, the transition space acted as a filtering space prohibiting the exposure of the dwellings' interior to the public street. The transition space helped the household not to be disturbed when someone appeared at

Figure 8. Transition space in the northern houses is the walled yard (above) and in the southern houses is the entrance space after the entrance door (bottom).

the entrance door. In northern plots, the yard between the houses' interior and the street acts as a transition space, whereas in the southern plots in which the yards are at the back of the parcel, a corridor or a closed entry space between the front door in the passageway and another door, which was opened to the interior rooms functioned as a transition space. In addition to the creation of visual privacy, transition space fulfills a function for "the ritual of purity" as well. Iranians take off their shoes outside in the yard in the northern houses, or in the stairway in the southern houses (Figure 8). In no way, shoes worn in the street are used inside of the domestic space. Iranians mostly wear indoor slippers within the domestic space; or in social gatherings, female visitors bring clean shoes just to use indoors. Through the removal of shoes outside of home, the carpets are maintained free of the outdoor dirt and other filths. Accordingly, carpets stay "ritually clean to be prayed on, slept on, and having a meal spread set on them" (Koutlaki, 2010, p. 15). Some residents have not abandoned their traditional life style and they are sitting with their legs folded on the floor during meal time, hence, floors had to be clean. The stairs and the stairway in individual houses are considered to be part of the interior space, and they are also covered with carpets.

Placement of the Interior Rooms in the Plan Layouts

As seen in Tables 1 and 2, in the majority of houses with central plan and early open plan, the reception room and the living room are located on the southern side, parallel to the yard. The intention for the exposure of living rooms to the south was to warm them up in the daytime, accumulate heat for the nighttime, and also to have a direct view to the enclosed yard. This type of placement was favored by home owners because it provided direct daylight and high visual privacy for the residents. A number of the residents interviewed reported that the living room fulfilled different functions including sitting, sleeping, and dining. It can be argued that this provides a different type of 'flexibility' in an enclosed and introverted plan. Awotona and Teymur state that "the rooms that are configurationally identical can easily take on a new use without disturbing the principles of integration and segregation which dictate that some rooms act as foci for domestic life, whilst others are systematically separated out" (Awotona & Teymur, 1997, p. 104). According to the houses surveyed, the reception rooms were mostly in 'L-shape' rather than being rectangular in the houses built in 1980s. The kitchen and bedrooms were usually placed in the northern part of the buildings (Figure 9). In the majority of examples, the kitchen and the bedrooms

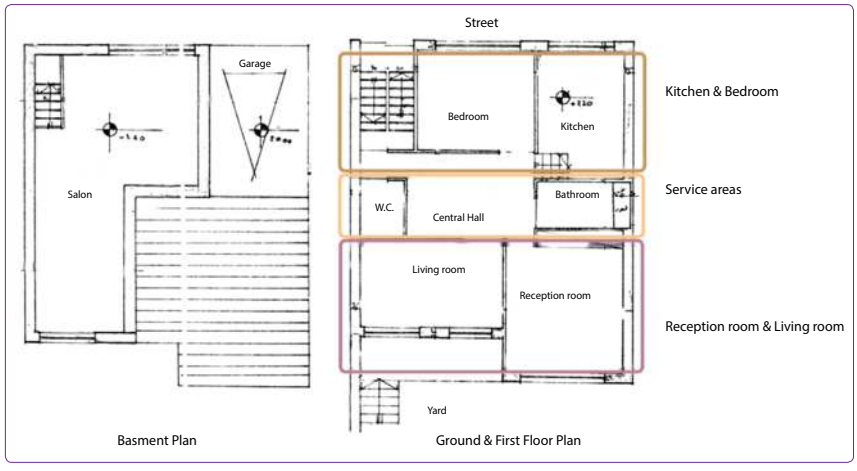

Figure 9. The placement of spaces in the central-hall plan layouts of houses built in the 1980s (Tabriz Municipality Archive, 2018).

Table 1. Plans of Exemplary Central-hall House Types Built during the 1980s in Tabriz

have similar sizes and shapes. They are only distinguished through their appliances and furnishings. In both plan types, balconies were designed on the façades facing the houses' yards. However, in the building regulation in Iran, there was no article that prohibited the construction of a balcony on the street side, yet a majority of houses had no balcony on the street façades. Even in those small number of houses that had a balcony on the street side, the balcony was useless or covered with some physical elements. It seems that the behavior and dressing code the new Islamic state had defined for people, especially for women, made the balconies useless. During their presence in the balcony,

Table 2. Plans of Early Open Plan Houses Built in the Late 1980s in Tabriz

it was obligatory for the women to follow Islamic principles in their behaviors, that is, they should wear a proper veil and they should not look at or talk with na-mahrams (non-family male individuals) in the street. These conduct codes, which were added to the women's habits during that time, influenced their bodily movements and practices in the physical spaces; in the case of balcony, they preferred not to use such semi-open spaces. Therefore, the design of

semi-open spaces including balconies on the street side of houses noticeably decreased during the 1980s.

Although, it should be mentioned that in a majority of houses built before the 1980s, semi-open spaces including balconies and semi-private spaces including visible front yards were used in abundance. As seen in Table 3, the spatial layering and sequences such as solid and void composition, setbacks and projections were significant and eye-catching elements that were taken into account in the organization of street elevations of houses built in the pre-revolutionary period. In opposition to the pre-revolutionary period, the street looking façades of houses built during the 1980s were very simple and monotonous in terms of material and composition. Moreover, there was a noticeable reduction in semi-open spaces, semi-private spaces, and the number and sizes of window openings on the street façades of houses.

Table 3. A comparison between the façades of houses built in the 1970s and the 1980s

Façades of some exemplary houses built during the 1970s		
Façades of some exemplary houses built during the 1980s		

Figure 10. All houses built in the 1980s had a toilet in the yard.

Another important issue is that most of the houses had a basement, which was a half level below the street; it contained usually a bathroom, a kitchen, a storage room, a mechanical room, and a large multi-functional room for sitting, eating and sleeping during the hot summer time because of its cool and pleasant atmosphere, given the fact that the section altogether is underground and mostly protected from the sun rays during day time.

Regarding the service spaces, without exception, all houses had one toilet in their yards mostly used by male guests during large gatherings. This practice confirms that the traditional spatial organization in which toilets situated in the remote part of the courtyards was not abandoned completely (Figure 10). In the interiors of some houses, toilets were placed in the entrance hall separated from other interior spaces. However, in some other cases, service spaces and particularly bathrooms were located half-way between the public and private rooms. Toilets have mostly two separate spaces. The first entrance space was reserved to a washbasin, and the second space was for the closet. The washbasin space functioned ritually as a buffer zone between the pure domestic space and the impure space of the toilet. Similar to toilets, bathrooms had two separated spaces: one was the actual bathroom which had a bathtub, and the other was the dressing room.

Patio

The patio (*passio* in Persian) was a common and inseparable element in the spatial organization of the houses built in the 1980s. In order to provide natural light to the interior spaces especially in the houses on northern plots, the patio was taken into account as a key element in the plan layouts. In additional to its functional role, in some houses, particularly in southern houses which had an abundance of natural lighting, the patio was used as a decorative element. When introduced into the domestic interiors, it became an enclosed glass box that was decorated with plants, flowers and greenery as such (Karimi, 2013). The location of the patio in the plan was dependent on its role and function. In some interiors surveyed, the patio with its glass roof was the only solution

for directing sunlight into the windowless spaces such as bedrooms or the central hall (Figure 11). Throughout the time, the glass partitions of the patio were removed by the residents and this elimination brought an openness and spaciousness to the plan layouts.

However, the patio was highly used in the central-hall house type for bringing daylight into the interior spaces, but it was also used in the reception room of the early open-plan houses merely due to its aesthetic aspect. The location of the patio in the plan was a determining factor in the shape of the reception rooms. As seen in Figure 12, in some houses, the patio was located on the corner of the reception rooms that led to the L-shaped reception rooms. In others, it was placed at the middle of one long side of the reception rooms that led to the 'U-shaped' reception rooms.

Regarding its aesthetic aspect, a number of residents stated that the physical attributes of the patio including its material, plants, and light are effective in their sensory experience. The patio creates a bright pool of light to the domestic interior space. The sunlight that diffuses into the interior of the house through stained glass of the patio's roof creates diverse visions unique to the specific moments of daytime (Figure 13). The aesthetic experience

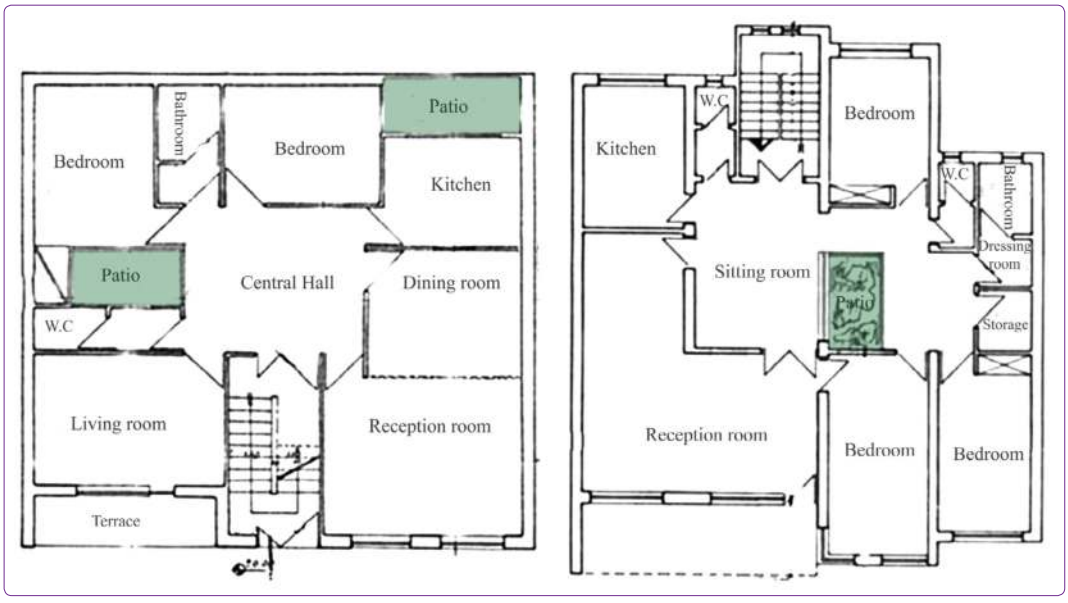

Figure 11. The patio is used to illuminate the inner spaces deprived of natural light.

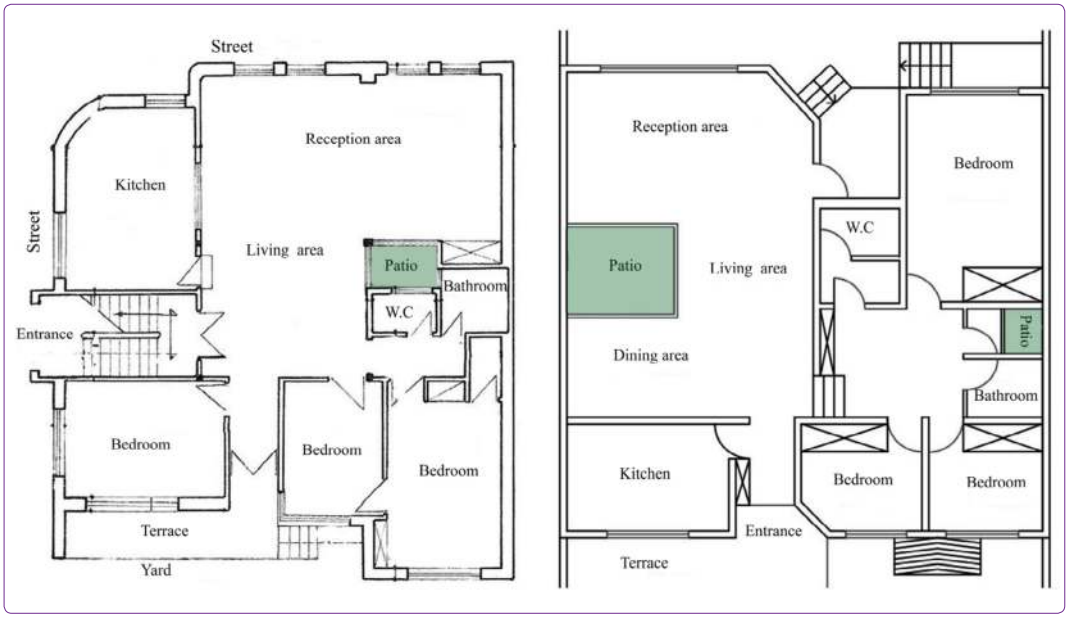

Figure 12. The location of patio influenced the shape of reception room to be "L-shaped" (Left) or "U-shaped" (Right).

Figure 13. The use of patio for aesthetic purpose.

gained from the patio is not only visual but also olfactory due to the plants that are located there. Therefore, the popularity of the use of a patio in the houses was due to both functional and aesthetic reasons.

Public-Private Division in the Interior Spaces

Based on religious beliefs, one of the main concerns in the spatial organization of Iranian houses has been to separate family life from non-family members. Households intend to reduce the contact of their private and family life with especially the non-family male guests. This demand is usually met through setting aside a separate reception room to serve as the setting for important social events. In the central-hall plan layouts, the spaces accessible to visitors are separated from those that are considered for inhabitants. Regarding the sample of study, the reception room is the most spacious and largest room of the house and takes about 1/3rd of the area of the floor plan. It is usually a closed and separated room, which is always kept tidy for the reception of guests during large-scale occasions. The 'L-shape' reception rooms enable the segregation of women from men during religious or social events taking place in the domestic space (Beiyzaie, 2010). During large-scale domestic gatherings including weddings, birth, and death, males and females occupy different areas of the house if it is possible. In 'L-shape' guest rooms, men occupy one wing of the room and women occupy the other one. At meal times, two separate cloths are spread on the floor and males and females serve food separately. In those houses that have a rectangular reception room, sitting arrangement is hold in two ways during meal times; in the first way, two separate cloths are spread for females and males. In the second way, only one cloth is spread and the location of individuals around the cloth is defined. The guest men sit adjacent to the household's male members while the guest women sit near the female members of the family. This condition can be interpreted as a symbolic translation of Iranians' social relation, that is, gender segregation in a small space, where there is no physical barrier for their separation. It is revealed that how the practice (habitus) is able to function in the production and reproduction of the socio-spatial orders. Similarly, a certain form of room (L-shaped room), which was set aside for gender segregation in social events acted as an apparatus through which people could maintain specific social relations.

In a majority of two-storey houses, public rooms including the reception room are located on the main level, and the more private rooms are placed above or in the basement. Figure 14 illustrates one of those two-storey houses in which the main floor features a number of rooms for social gatherings, as well as the service area

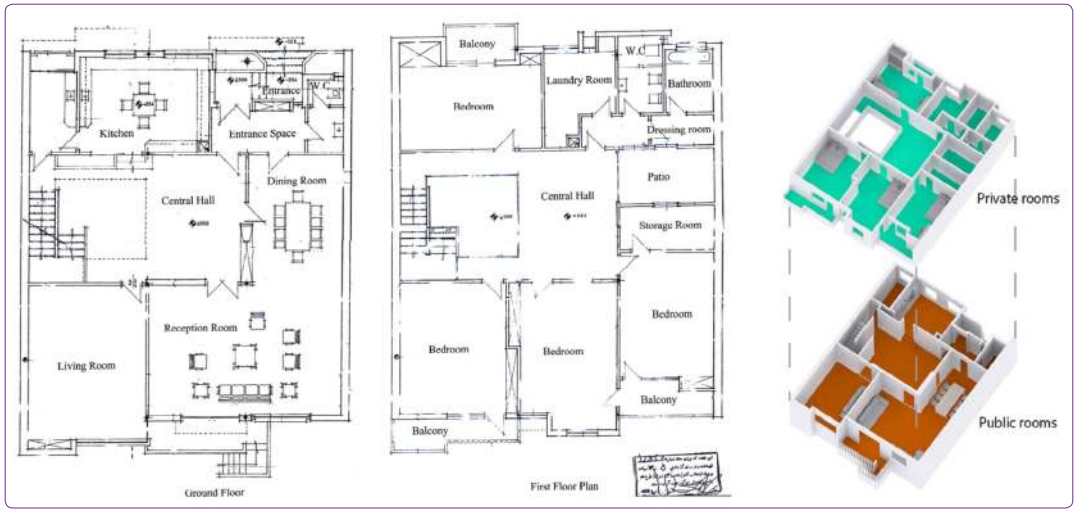

Figure 14. Left: The distribution of public and private rooms in two different levels in two-storey houses. Right: The ground floor is generally dedicated to the public spaces while the upper floor features private rooms.

set apart from the public parts of the dwelling while the second floor is dedicated to the sleeping and bathing functions. Accordingly, in this type of plan organization "going upstairs is a matter of entering a space that is private" as Morag Shiach points out: Privacy is supported by the association of bedrooms with the invisibility and isolation (Shiach, 2005, p. 261).

In the early open-plans, in spite of their open nature, the division of private living areas from more public rooms still exists. Although the reception room as a public area allow free circulation, the private rooms have been separated through walls or partitions that create a sharp division between them. In a number of houses, bedrooms and bathrooms have been segregated from the public rooms with a level difference. They have been situated in the raised part of the dwelling, which is 30 or 50 cm higher than the public living rooms. In some cases, the private bedrooms and public living rooms have been located at the same level but are separated through arched columns (Figure 15).

Kitchen, that is considered the females' work space, is particularly separated from the main living rooms by solid walls. Similar to traditional dwellings, the kitchen in these houses is a space for cooking and food preparation. No male guest enters the kitchen, hence, the housewife could prepare food without getting into contact with male visitors. In some houses, in order to provide a communication between the kitchen and the reception room, a small opening has been created between them (Figure 16). This practice is considered as an initial step for breaking down

Figure 15. The separation of private and public zones in domestic interiors through level change.

Figure 16. The connection of kitchen to the dining area through a small fenestration.

the solid boundaries between the kitchen and the dining room. It should be mentioned that this small opening was mostly created for functional comfort in carrying food to the dining room rather than to connect women's work area and the public reception room. Moreover, the small size of the opening disallowed females working on the kitchen to be viewed and disrupted by the male visitors sitting in the reception room, it is usually just wide enough to hand some kitchenware over.

Therefore, as Pierre Bourdieu states, the spatial organization of the human dwelling in every culture reflects the social relations of that society (Bourdieu, 1996). The separation of the private family life from the public life and the invisibility of females daily practices were fulfilled through the division of Iranian interior spaces into the private and public zones. It should be mentioned that the strict division in the spatial organization was mostly prevalent in the houses built in the 1980s when Islamic ideology and Islamic codes promoted by the state were at their climax in terms of their acceptance by people due to the revolution and also long eight-year Iran-Iraq war. From the early 1990s and onwards, the situation gradually changed and, particularly in the recent decades, land prices have highly increased and developers try to build luxury houses in terms of plan layouts and façades to make more profit.

Conclusion

This research investigated the relationship between socio-cultural transformation of the first post-revolutionary decade in Iran and the spatial organization of houses. Since 1979, Iranians' life style, social relations, and identity have changed in many aspects due to the religious nature of the Islamic Revolution. With reference to Pierre Bourdieu's argumentation around the 'social space', 'physical space, and 'habitus', in the present study the dwelling was conceptualized as a physical space that both reflects and

allows the social space- the organized relationships and their manifestation in the social sphere- to take form.

Through a case study conducted in Tabriz, it was revealed that in addition to the shape and size of the urban plots, which have been decreased since the Islamic revolution due to 'Urban Land Law' of 1979, the revision and alteration of social relations and habitus based on government reforms to mold the society with Islamic teachings influenced the spatial organization of Iranian houses. Gender segregation during social events, visual privacy and seclusion of women, Islamic ritual activities and private life have reflected on the spatial organization of houses even more than before.

Enclosed yards with high solid walls which had no visual connection with the street and neighboring houses were provided as private open spaces for households' female members for doing outdoor activities without being viewed by outsiders. Transition spaces between the domestic interior and the street were very influential for prohibiting the visual access from the street to the interiors. Due to their location between the street and interior spaces, transition spaces acted as buffer zones which prevented the transmission of the outside dirt and other filth to the domestic interior, which should be kept clean because the cleanliness of the space is obligatory for Islamic rituals, including daily prayer. The provision of solid boundaries between reception room and private rooms, the design of an enclosed kitchen as a female work space, and also the 'L-shaped' reception rooms were design solutions for gender segregation, seclusion of women from men during social events inside domestic space. Accordingly, the physical layout and spatial organization of houses were designed in line with social meanings and address silent commands directly to the body. Similarly, the relation of the body to the domestic space (the usage and the occupation of space) in Iran during the 1980s was definitely integrated and associated with the Islamic teachings promoted by the state.

The findings of the study highlighted that the spatial organization of houses, particularly the introverted-ness of plan layouts, the usage of sharp demarcating solid boundaries inside domestic spaces, and lack of balconies on the street façades of houses were considered as solutions to the socially organized system of values and the habitus of Iranians in the 1980s. In sum, the domestic space and the practice of everyday life were shaped in such a way to suit the new condition of the country and social dispositions.

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