

The Space of Intimacy as The Most Important Islamic Cultural Value in Traditional Architecture in Iran

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the critical reading of individual areas of traditional Iranian houses. According to the expert's opinion, 7 traditional houses in Iran are chosen. A deductive content analysis in three steps including, preparation, organization, and the final report is used to assess the space syntaxes. In the preparation step, the individual and family territory in Iranian culture is defined. In the organization phase, reviewing plans, maps, and visual observations of houses and territories are classified. Finally, the conclusion from the situation of privacy and individuality in houses is given. It seems family privacy is the main function of traditional Iranian houses. Despite the spaces which could be as personal and individual territories, practically it's not so, and individualism and individual values have been forgotten. Individuality is not considered as a valuable being who needs his/her own territory, but this role is determined in relation with the other people.

Keywords: Mahram Territories, Personal Spaces, Space Syntax, Territoriality, Traditional Iranian House

INTRODUCTION

Space is the hidden dimension of behavior and we make a relationship with each other by space (Hall et al., 1968). Researchers have considered several important cases by focusing on human space needs in a living environment such as; space security, social relationship, readability, privacy, human dignity and identity (Aiello & Thompson, 1980; Shemesh et al., 2017). Most of these needs can only be taken by the space syntax of the living environment. A space syntax of residential place needs spatial, functional, social hierarchies that have unbreakable relation with the concept of territory and territoriality (Koohsari et al., 2016; McCormack et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2015). Humans and animals show territorial behavior in different ways. Animals take territorial action based on biological principles and they use it as a way to occupy a spatial area. Although this action for humans depends on the norms and cultural criteria of society. Humans usually protect their territory by many physical and chemical barriers or some marked symbols (Guilfoil, 1991; Knoblauch, 2020;

Lang, 1994). Every personalization and marking environment or protection against disturbance are known as territorial behaviors. The concept of territory isn't only a spatial matter, its' also a social event. In fact, a territory can be known as the position and the place of a community in space(Bourdieu, 1996; Low, 2016). The territory has a basic role in human life. And it may help one to organize their environment and get it a personal or collective identity. According to Lang, the territory has 4 characteristics (Lang, 2006, 2014):

1. Personalization and marking a place;
2. Supplying some functions from physiological needs to psychological;
3. The right to defend against disturbance;
4. Ownership sense and human rights to a place.

Altman (2020) also provides a general category; that is: First; territory, second; public and public territory, sequentially. He said "territory must be designed in such a way that people can recognize whether it's primary, secondary or public one" (p. 500). First territory: The primary territories are owned and used by just a person or a special group. Others also know that these people are the owners of this territory. The second territory has a less exclusive role. 2nd territories are available to the public and also are controlled by some invariant users. In fact, this concept refers to half personal and half public space of Alexander and the interactive space of Layman and Scott(Wells et al., 2016). The public territory is a temporary realm and almost everyone is available and all of the people can use these places. This territory is called a free area or public space. Chermayeff and Alexander presented a plan of communication realm and privacy from absolutely personal space until public spaces(Lawrence, 1984; Rossi, 2017). These space syntaxes consist of 1) Personal syntax which is related to one such as a personal bedroom. 2) Familiar syntax which is related to the primary group, for example, a house is kind of it. 3) Personal syntax of a greater group which is related to secondary groups, for example, personal management from all of the residents of an apartment. 4) Public syntax of a greater group including the intersection of a greater group with the public such as some spaces with limited control. 5) Half public syntax of urban areas which can control government or special institutions like; banks, post offices, airports, and town hall.6) Public syntax of urban areas with public ownership and complete accessibility for all people, such as parks and streets.

Human territoriality is a set of attitudes and behaviors in and toward given physical areas and home is one of its expressions(Raffestin, 2012; Sebba & Churchman, 1983). As Porteous (1976) has pointed out, "at the core of the ethological concept of territoriality lies the place we call home. We personalize and defend this territory, and it, in turn, provides us with security, stimulation, and identity." (p. 84) It is a basic reference point for the structuring of space and the focus of spatial activity (Narjinari, 2020). Home syntax seeks to explain how spatial configurations express social or cultural meanings. The aim of space syntax research is to develop strategies of description for configuring inhabited spaces in such a way that the underlying social meaning can be enunciated. This in turn can allow for secondary theories or often practical explanations to be developed regarding the effects of spatial configuration on various social or cultural variables. A related theme in space syntax research is to understand configured space itself, particularly its formative

process and its social meaning (Dursun, 2012; Karimi, 2018). In brief, Space syntax is an attempt to constitute a configurational theory in architecture by generating a theoretical understanding of how people make and use spatial configurations, in other words, an attempt to identify how spatial configurations express a social or cultural meaning and how spatial configurations generate the social interactions in built environments (Griffiths, 2017; Refaat, 2019; van Nes & Yamu, 2021). One such meaning is Mahram Space (Hereinafter is called an intimate space or the space of intimacy), which was mainly introduced into Iranian architecture as a result of religious beliefs. In Iranian architecture, Mahram space (the space of intimacy) is viewed from the aspect of privacy and it is a kind of family spaces.

Iranian houses were the result of cultural domination and spiritual values and lifestyle. While a house is a place for resting and mental space and a shelter for the family and emotional needs for everyone. The concept of territory was so important in the architecture of Iranian houses because a house isn't apart from its outside. Territorialities determined how to organize inside spaces of traditional houses from outside and public syntax. Imagining a range of private syntaxes till public relations in a place that's actually private is possible. But this range in the architecture of Iranian houses focused more on the relation of households with others than the relations between each other. In the past, personal values and freedom were neglected in Iran in various ways. Examples of this neglect are seen in Iranian architecture and urban planning that reflect the culture of their society. We believe that one of the important aspects of critical readings of traditional architecture goes back to the position that human beings and human values have in them. And then, it tries to combine individual values with traditions to create new architectural spaces that have both valuable cultural elements of the past and give more value to human beings. Accordingly, the main purpose of the present study is to investigate private syntaxes in traditional Iranian houses. The study consists of the following parts: First; the methodology of research, second; a definition of the concepts of personal and family syntaxes and their features. Then, different spaces of Iranian traditional houses are identified and analyzed, and finally, a critical review of private syntaxes of Iranian traditional houses is discussed.

The Spaces and Syntaxes of intimacy

Canter (1997) believed that the meaning of place is due to the triple relationship between activities, concepts, and physical features. Then for developing his theory, he points to four factors, including functional differences, the aims of a place, interaction scale, and design aspects. The functional differences are related to current activities in place. The aims of a place and interaction scale are related to personal, social and cultural aspects and designing aspects are related to physical features (Cupers, 2017; Gustafson, 2001; Sebba & Churchman, 1983). Hence, for investigating the syntax in traditional Iranian houses, we should consider the triple of activities, concepts and physical context which activities for what purposes take place in different spaces.

The syntax of intimacy in Islamic sexual jurisprudence is related to the word Mahram. A Mahram is a member of a person's family who is allowed to enter the house and is trustworthy. Thus, Mahram territory syntaxes bring intimacy, kinship, and closeness (Aryanti, 2013; Majid et al., 2015). The meaning of intimacy in urban and architectural space is making a place in a way that has privacy from two aspects,

including physical and meaning. Having privacy in physical contexts is more focused on spatial security and in conceptual contexts gives worth and reverence to architectural space. In such a way, a person feels relaxed (Golshan, 2020; Memarian & Sadoughi, 2011). The house forms and its location is determined according to religious beliefs. Usually entering to a house has some admission rites. Strangers must have entrance permission. In architecture, intimacy is formed by separating inner space from the outside. This separating and acquisition of the space is because of intimacy that makes the home calm and comfortable for a household and the passage of any space and the permission to enter each space is done according to the hierarchy. The houses that focus on intimacy and privacy have some features that are:

Narrow passages and often dead ends, terrace absence, not having any window to outside, the existence of decorations inside the building and construction outside without façade along with high walls and fences for courtyard (Babaei et al., 2012; Habib et al., 2013; Hajian et al., 2020; Karimi & Hosseini, 2012).

Personal Syntax

Personal space is a special behavioral environmental concept. Sommer (1969) believed that personal space is a protective, small and invisible territory that makes a bubble between oneself and others (Sommer, 1969, 2002). Personal private space is dynamic and creative. A person may feel annoyed because of the infringement of others in this space. Personal specifications (Personality, emotions, gender, and age) along with physical environmental contexts like social norms and cultural rules affect personal space (Hecht et al., 2019; Wells et al., 2016).

One of the new concepts that is seen in environmental psychology studies frequently is privacy. This concept implies humans need to be alone. Privacy is a process that helps a person to adjust his or her relationships with others and approach introspection and it shows itself in houses more than anywhere else. Privacy doesn't mean avoidance and preventing being with anyone, but it's the existence of the right to choose spatial and behavioral hierarchy. It's a layer for social and geographical distancing (Gifford, 2007; Steg et al., 2013). Also, Westin (1968) explained privacy in four kinds: isolation (being free from other vision), Proximity (close relationships and being free from the environment), Anonymity (being unknown among people), tolerance (using psychological barriers for controlling unknown disturbance)(Roberts & Gregor, 2017).

Differences of Personal and Mahram Syntaxes in Islamic Culture

The personal syntax has a spatial character and has a physical and material dimension; the personal syntax does not necessarily mean to be alone or stay away from others. Solitude or individuality can be considered as a boundary through which a person can control and monitor interaction with others. But the Syntax of intimacy (Mahram) indicates a human characteristic and has a spiritual and non-physical dimension. By analyzing the contents of personal and Mahram syntaxes, their comparison is presented in the following table.

Table .1 The comparison of the two concepts of personal space and Mahram space.

| Personal Syntax | Mahram Syntax |
|---|--|
| It shows the relationship between a person and a special space. | It's considered a relationship between at least two people with each other. |
| One needs this syntax and tries to reach the level of desirability | Efforts are made to protect it from the influence of strangers |
| In a place and with personal criteria and needs and existence situations are defined. | It's depended on culture and custom and it's defined without the need for time, and place. |
| It's a relative matter and depends on many diversities. | It's less relative and religious customs and beliefs are its main variables. |
| To have less stability | It has more stability |
| To have reverence | It has intimacy, holiness and worthiness |
| It's the need of all people | Hierarchy and introversion have the main role in its making. |
| It creates solitude and loneliness. | It creates kinship, and closeness. |
| It's depended on personal and environmental patterns. | It's affected by normal, and customary patterns |
| It's almost synonym to some concepts like; solitude, calmness, and self-contemplation | It's almost synonym to veil, privacy, zeal and chastity |

Source: Authors

METHODS

This research is done with a deductive content analysis method. The meaning of content in content analysis is all kinds of documents that suggested the relations between people. According to this, the paintings on the wall of caves, music, books, articles, handwritings, postcards, films, maps, direct and indirect observations, and... are included in the content (Banks, 2018; Flick, 2018). Accordingly, content analysis as one of the methods of qualitative inquiries explicated and summarized the data. Researchers use deductive content analysis methods when they want to study concepts, categories, theories, or any conceptual structure in a new context. It is also applied in qualitative research and the data collection method aims to reach data saturation (Kyngäs & Kaakinen, 2020). As this research wants to survey the territoriality and private syntaxes of the traditional Iranian house, deductive content analysis has been used. From this way in this method, trying to infer and reveal hidden forms in the documents, maps and observations. The qualitative analysis method consisted of 3 steps; preparation, organization, and conclusion (final report). In the preparation step, first an attempt is made to provide a definition of personal and family syntaxes based on theoretical foundations. Also, based on an interpretive and documentary study, the differences between individual-personal and intimate-family syntaxes in the Iranian cultural system are classified. In organizational step, First, we studied some main documents and texts of Iranian traditional architecture, and then arranged 5 unstructured interviews with some experts in the field of Iranian traditional houses to reach theoretical saturation. Most important question in the interviews was, could you please mention some paragons of Iranian Traditional houses? Accordingly, a list of 7 houses was made including, Boroujerdi House,

Bekhradi House in Isfahan, Zinat al-Muluk Qawam House, Ansari House in Oromie, Samadian House in Isfahan, Tadayon house in Semnan, Behashti House in Qazvin. The plan of these houses and their spatial relationships diagram are provided and examined in the following table. Then, two of them were selected in detail. In the third step, characterizations of Iranian traditional houses, space syntaxes, and personal and intimate territories are assessed and critical reading is presented.

Table 2. Selected Iranian Traditional Houses based on Expert Opinions.

| Case studies | Plan | Spatial Relationships Diagram | Description |
|------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|--|
| Boroujerdi House | | | <p>Boroujerdi house is an example of a house with a central courtyard and a building on both the east and west sides. One of the most important features of this plan is the separation of special entrance and general entrance in the northern and western parts of the building.</p> <p>In the house of the Boroujerdis, the living quarters of the family members (red) and the accommodation of the guests (yellow) were separated.</p> |
| Bekhradi House in Isfahan | | | <p>In this plan, the entrance is separated from the main building as a corridor. In order to maintain complete privacy, this entrance first leads to the porch and then to the courtyard.</p> |
| "Zinat al-Muluk Qawam" House | | | <p>The house of "Zinat al-Muluk Qawam" is an example of a house with a central courtyard, built on all four sides of the courtyard and all windows and doors open into the courtyard.</p> |
| Ansari House in Oromie | | | <p>The entrance of Ansari House is a covered corridor that first leads to a rectangular courtyard. The building is in the central part. This building leads to the garden from the north and east.</p> |
| Samadian House in Isfahan | | | <p>Organizing the "Samadian House" is one of the houses on both sides of the building and between them is the courtyard, and the windows and entrances lead to the courtyard.</p> |
| Tadayon house in Semnan | | | <p>This house has two parts, exterior and interior. The inner part was the living space of the family members, which included summer and winter halls, and the outer part was intended as an office for the homeowner's business meetings.</p> |
| Behashti House in Qazvin | | | <p>In this plan, the entrance from the northern part leads to the central courtyard through a corridor. On the three sides of the central courtyard, there are buildings and their openings, and it leads to the backyard from the east.</p> |

Accordingly, trying to answer these questions: Do joint features exist in all of those houses for signifying personal syntaxes and the syntaxes of intimacy? What are the value and the situation of personal syntaxes and the syntaxes of intimacy?

And in the last step, a conclusion of privacy and individualism is presented. Which syntax did have more value? And which syntaxes and activities have been neglected?

RESULTS

As Generally, there are 5 syntaxes in each home: family, individual, welcome, service, and courtyard syntaxes. These syntaxes have special hierarchies in the Iranian traditional houses. Traditional architecture of Iranian houses separated houses into two parts: inside and outside. One of the features of traditional houses in most of the cities of Iran is their large area. The important parts of the house in the architecture of Iranian houses are: bench, entrance, vestibule, balcony, courtyard, hall, parlor, and inside (Memarian & Brown, 2006; Memarian & Sadoughi, 2011; Nabavi & Ahmad, 2016).

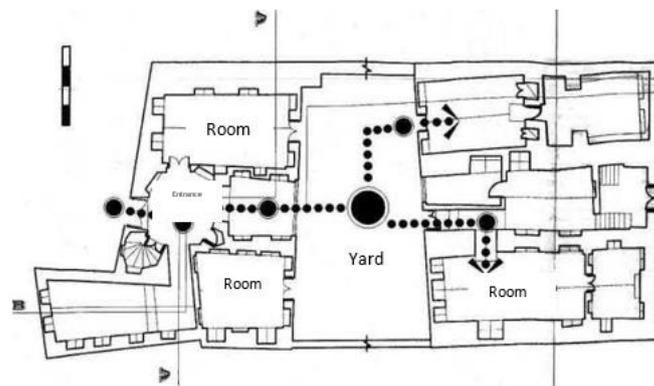


Figure 1. The plan of Samadian's House in Hamadan.
Source: Kabookarc.com

According to Figure 1 (The plan of Samadian's house in Hamadan) which is an example of a plan with Iranian traditional architecture, we can understand the concept of Mahram territories in its true meaning. As it's obvious from the building plan, the structure of Samadian's House is a kind of house where buildings are on both sides and the yard is between the buildings. The entrance leads to the yard. Samadian's House has three porches. Because of the privacy of these rooms, they don't have a direct entrance from the yard and a corridor is provided for each entrance. In general, the structure of traditional houses is meant to keep the private space for residents. But from the past until now, the matter of personal spaces and individuality has always been neglected by designers and residents. In the past, large families didn't have enough space to dedicate an individual room for each person and family members had to share rooms at home. For this reason, family members couldn't easily find a place to be alone.

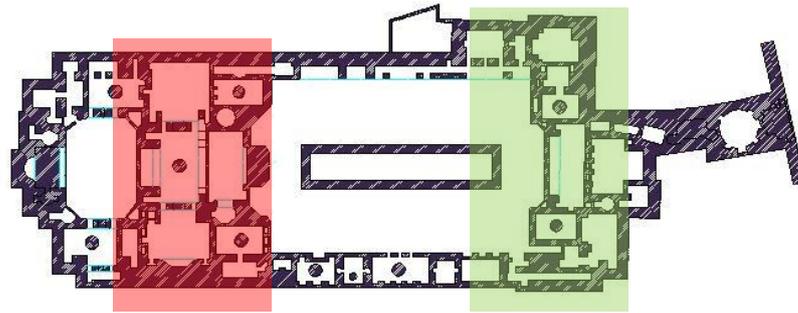


Figure 2. Boroujerdi's House in Kashan.

Source: Nakhlesabz.ir

In Figure 2 (Boroujerdi's House), the importance of the issue of Mahram territories in traditional Iranian architecture is obvious, separating the entrance path and also closing the corridor of view from outside to inside and creating a porch and frontage with platforms for guests waiting has been done in order to create privacy and Mahram space in the central courtyard. Boroujerdi's house has three entrances: the north entrance is the main, the west entrance is for religious and other ceremonies and the south entrance is for specials. The opening only leads to the courtyard and a complete wall without any window or view from outside shows the importance of this issue. In the architecture of Boroujerdi's house, the space of the family members (red section) is completely designed separately from the guest's room (green section) and the central courtyard is located in the center. Also, sometimes, two types of percussion (Figure 3) have been used at the traditional Iranian entrance to differentiate the sound until the landlord realizes that a guest is a man or a woman.



Figure 3. Two types of percussion at traditional Iranian entrance.

Source: Authors

It should be noted that Iranians from ancient times, according to their perception of home and family, have shown a tendency to introverted architecture. Basically, in the forming of different spaces. Especially residential spaces, Iranian beliefs and specific issues of Iranian have been effective. One of these is Iranian self-esteem, which has been effective in forming an introverted house. One of the principles that affected vividly in forming Mahram territories in Iranian traditional buildings was the matter of introversion. Introversion is a concept that was a principle in Iranian architecture and with obvious presence in various ways is

realized and seen (Nari Qomi & Momtahn, 2020; Raviz et al., 2015). Introversion itself originated from territorial behavior. The society factor that causes introversion in Iranian houses is the issue of protecting the inviolable privacy of the family away from the eyes of strangers. Being quiet, a tendency to inner states and avoidance of pretension are the examples of being introverted in Iranian architecture, which appear in the form of tortuous passages, mud and soil walls and simple buildings from outside but the beautiful and detailed interior design (Razavizadeh, 2020; Safarian & Azar, 2020). Creating Mahram spaces induces introversion. Therefore, the character of introversion in Iranian traditional houses, in which the family has special respect, has been completely compatible with the culture of society.

Pirnia (2005) in "Islamic architecture of Iran" has mentioned that "from 6000 years ago, some houses can be seen with introverted design. In the houses that were built later, their residents didn't feel comfortable. The inside of the house was a place where a woman or a child lived. And it was being built in a way that housewives could work easily and no one could see her." (p.79) In larger houses, private and public spaces are separated deliberately by sections like entrance, yard, porch, hallway, dooryard (Nejad & Abad, 2016).

Mahram territories from outside to inside:

The peak of improvement in the principle of introversion in Iran can be considered in the evolution of buildings in the central courtyard. Buildings with courtyards in Iran are about eight thousand years old. And other buildings, especially houses, have taken about six thousand years to get to the central courtyard (Soleymanpour et al., 2015; Soflaei et al., 2017). As Pirnia (2005) said, "in Iran, they build a garden and a pool in the middle of the house and the rooms and halls wrapped around it like a closed embrace." (p. 186) There was no window or a hole in the house, or outside the wall. So that it could be seen from the outside, and the exterior was designed with arches, gates and congresses. And only had a gate or headboard that considered opening.

Some features of Iranian introverted social architecture, the following can be mentioned:

1. Lack of direct visual connection among the interior spaces (private and semi-private) and outside spaces (public spaces),
2. Forming the spaces of the house with objects like courtyards and porches. So that the openings lead into these objects.

In Iranian Islamic architecture, not everyone is allowed to disturb the privacy of the family, and the order of entrances to Iranian homes is as follows:

1. Most of the houses had entrances, the side platforms in front of the entrances were flat, which provided a suitable space for those who wanted to see the owner but did not need to enter the house,
2. The connection between the inside and the outside of the house is not as it is today, the visual privacy of the residents of the houses was completely secured and not every passer-by could enter the house. Even in the garden house, the yard or garden was large enough that it was impossible to see inside the house,
3. In the urban size, the alleys path had mazes that have a role of sight breaking and cause private spaces along the private and public route.



Figure 4. Distinction between the exterior and interior space of a house in Birjand.

Source: Authors

Mahram territories from within

Introversion and Iranian architect's attraction to the courtyards and pits of gardens, porches and pergolas that surround the naves and create attractive and familiar environments have long been the logic of Iranian architecture. Privacy is one of the concepts and elements that was effective in the design organization of architecture and urban planning, and the architect has used special strategies to reach this need. Spatial order (step-by-step movement from alley or street to the entrance space of the house and then private spaces) as well as the internal and external system operation is a way to provide decent privacy.

In the Iranian house, there are three spaces: public, semi-public (semi-private) and private (Mahram territories).

Public spaces

Entrance

The entrance spaces themselves are part of the sequence of interconnected and related spaces of the whole house. For entering the building, the door and front of the house are both a barrier to entry and a place to greet semi-familiar guests. This space is used as a waiting entrance for newcomers, where the residents of the house make some usual compliments.

Next to the entrance, there are platforms called Pakhoreh, which passers-by sometimes stop for a while to relieve their fatigue under the shadow. Therefore, the location of two platforms on either side of the entrance is an expression of the value of communicating with neighbors and paying attention to citizenship rights. Individualize the door knockers of men and women on the doors proves the principle of secrecy. Muslim architects believe that the doors of houses in neighborhood units should not be opened facing or close to each other.

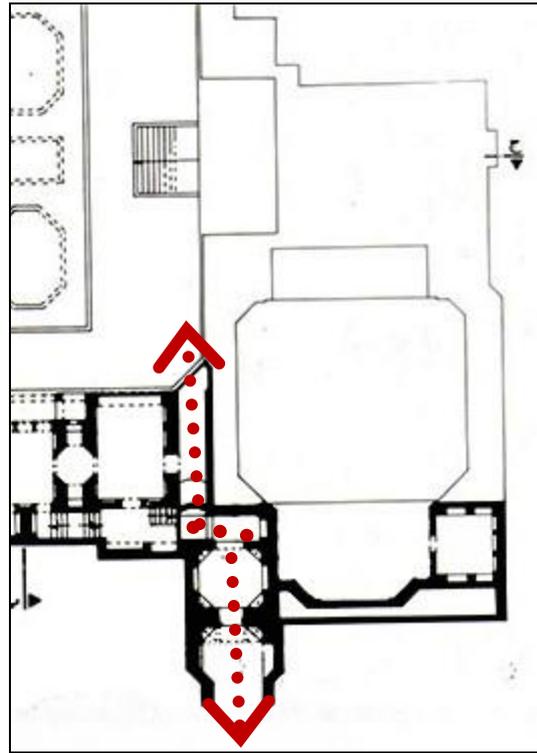


Figure 5. Diagram of how to enter Tabatabai's House.

Source: Nakhlesabz.ir

As shown in Figures 5 & 6, in the architecture of traditional houses such as Tabatabai' Houses, there is no view from the outside of the house to the inside, and the direct visual connection between the interior spaces and the outside space is completely cut off.

Porch and corridor

Porch or "karbas" is a space that has been designed and built in many types of entrance spaces. This space is often located right after the entrance space and one of its functions is to divide the entrance path into two or more directions. In some public buildings or houses, two or more paths led into the porch, each of which led to a specific space, including the interior of the building, which is the courtyard.

In buildings from which only one way out of the porch, the porch space did not function as a dividing space, but was used as a space for waiting and glorious entrance. Porches have regular geometric shapes with mostly low height and are suitable for the entrance space (Nabavi & Ahmad, 2016).

Dedicated dead-end or porch (semi-public space - semi-private space) has the following features (Figure 8):

- As the doors of the houses open to the space like a platform, porch, or dead end, it creates the feeling of ownership and security.
- Residents can come together and make decisions by consulting and contacting each other without any interference in their private space.
- Access order avoids crowds and public commuting
- Semi-private - semi-public spaces that belong to several families, have led to the visiting and familiarity of residents with each other and, as a result, residents are aware and careful about the area of their common space.

Therefore, the porches have both an architectural function and are harmonized with the elegance of social life.



Figure 6. Toraab house's Hashti and Masoudieh's porch for entrance of private syntax.

Source: Authors

Corridor

The corridor is the simplest part of the entrance space, the most important function of which is to provide communication and access between two places. In some types of buildings, such as houses, baths, and in some cases mosques and schools, the extension and direction of the passage has been changed in the corridor.

In this way, the issues of Mahram territory were solved by the corridor that led indirectly to the courtyard. The corridor is physically narrow and has low width. Of course, the width of the corridors was determined according to the function of the building and the number of users. The average width of the corridors of mosques and large schools is between 2 and 3.5 meters and the width of the corridors of small houses is about one meter on average (Mamani et al., 2017).

Semi-public spaces

Balcony

The balcony can be considered as a space filter and a common part between open and closed spaces. Open or semi-public. In general, the balcony is used as a jointing space in Iranian architecture.

Yard

Housing is important in Islamic architecture due to its direct connection with the private life and family life of the people. A Muslim's house should be the guardian of his family and should be built in accordance with the religion of Islam. In this regard, the main effect of Islam in the structure of a traditional house is introversion. Burckhardt (2009) describes the courtyard as an aspect of Muslims. He wrote in this case: Muslim houses receive light and air from their inner courtyards, not from the street.



Figure 7. Masoudieh's central yard

Source: Authors

Mahram spaces

Types of rooms

The most varied and widely used part of the house has been the interior so that the residents of the house do not feel tired and repetitive. The rooms in a traditional house were arranged around the yard according to their importance and use. Summer rooms were usually located on the south side to be less exposed to the sun during summer days, and winter rooms were located in front of the summer rooms and exactly on the side that gets the most sun during the day. Other spaces such as storage, kitchen and stables were located in the second row and behind the rooms (Mamani et al., 2017).

Service space

A backyard was a type of yard that usually had a secondary and service aspect and was designed and built in a part of the house to provide light and ventilation or as an open space for services, and its position and shape were very diverse. Usually, service areas, including the kitchen or bathroom, which should have been built away from the privacy of the house, have access to these backyards, and while providing services, it is responsible for staying away from public view and maintaining Mahram territories for the home's personal affairs.

CONCLUSION

According to Islamic-Iranian culture, a space can be considered a Mahram territory that physically has a social concept and it is considered at least in a relationship between two people and is different from personal spaces. The results show that despite the potential of those houses to create personal spaces and territories, they do not pay attention to these spaces. And the lack of complete personal spaces is very obvious in traditional Iranian houses.

Since ancient times, Iranians have shown a tendency towards introverted architecture according to their perception of home and family. Family privacy has been the main function of traditional Iranian houses. We see values such as Hijab (veil), cooperation, purity, contentment, God-centeredness and obedience and

humility. Therefore, the most private spaces are interactive spaces such as Mahram territories. This kind of territory is not a place that one can be alone. Rather, it is an interactive place for two or more people who feel comfortable with each other semantically, and physically, it creates security for them. Therefore, in the past, privacy was defined for a set of people and the house spaces did not belong to a specific person. The room where they sleep was the same space as the table for eating.

Every person wants to make a new and unique concept for his/her life with different facilities, tools, technologies and situations that they live in and he/she should find these facilities in his/her home. Changing the values from social values to personal values, and becoming freer the human subject from natural and social limitations causes a challenge to the meaning and power of individual subjectivity and agency. It seems that Iranian traditional houses can be the patterns and models of designing contemporary when they are redefined in a combination of modern and traditional elements. By valuing personal territories in combination with the territories of Mahram, while maintaining the peace and security of the inhabitants, they also cause personal growth. Having a home means gaining 'privacy'. Privacy is a place where man can have peace and live and behave as he and his individuality demand. Privacy is a place where human dignity is respected. Home is the "cultural space" that separates us from the others and at the same time makes our life and coexistence with others possible.

The concepts of privacy and individuality are cultural concepts that differ from one culture to another. In societies where individualism is more developed and individualistic values prevail, the personal territory in both its spatial and social sense is one of the key concepts of social life. In such cultures, the architecture of the house is such that each member of the house can have their own 'privacy' inside the house. Therefore, the most important issue is not the area or form of the house, but the way the space is distributed and divided. Conversely, in societies and cultures where Iranian traditional values prevail, the concept of privacy is different, and the cultural function of the home is above all to preserve collective values. In Iranian culture, the home is a place to express traditional religious values and preserve the family. In Iranian culture, the concepts of home and family have a common root. But in this culture, there is no syntax between members living in the house. Hence, the children of each house do not have their own private room.

Traditional houses had gender function and unequal concept. The house, like other social categories, was masculine because the basis of the house was based on the comfort and well-being of men and under the management and authority of the father and the protection of women. Women played the role of housewives in the traditional division of labor; however, everybody loves her and respects her much more than any other member of the family. One of the main functions of the house has been to protect women, a role that clothing and veils also play in a different way. From this point of view, it can be said that the gender function of the traditional house has been to create privacy for women and protect her by hiding her. And the house played the role of creating a distance (a veil) between women and the outsider and did not care about individual values and individuality. and a set of values such as putting veil, purity, cooperation and humility have been given the important position.

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