



Research Article

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# A Narrative Analysis of Women's Use of Space in Tehran Modern Housing: 1960-1980

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## Abstract

### Purpose

Iran's modernization process began from late nineteenth and early twentieth century with political and economic reforms that were followed by socio-spatial reforms. The state's policy of modernization intensified in the 1960s to the late 1970s following the White Revolution and economic boom. Tehran was considered as the capital of modernization and a ground pattern for socio-spatial transformation in the country. The images of modern living spaces and modern society with a focus on women as agents of change and discontinuity were imported from the west. Modern socio-spatial ideas in confrontation with traditional and local ways of life transformed and adapted the status quo. The purpose of this study is to analyze the women's use of modern domestic spaces constructed between the years 1960-1980 in Tehran, considering political, economic and socio-cultural dynamics.

### Design/Methodology/Approach

The factors that affected use of space and adjustments were categorized in accordance to user profile, dwelling unit and settlement. The data

**Keywords:** *Tehran modern dwelling, everyday life, modern domesticity, modern women, use of space*

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was collected through in-depth interviews with twenty women and analyzed through narrative content analysis.

### **Findings**

The results showed that several links existed between socio-cultural norms, women's everyday life and use of space. Some of these connections represented demographic and economic sources, whereas others had physical, environmental and socio-political sources.

### **Research Limitations/Implications**

Number of case studies were limited and making contact with the interviewees proved to be difficult due to security reasons of the settlements. Furthermore, in some instances it was challenging to have access to archives of buildings due to factors such as dissolution of companies in charge of planning in period of Iran Revolution (1978-9). The significance of this study was to explore broader aspect of architectural design, housing development and evolution in Iran and leads to new perspectives in other fields such as socio-cultural studies.

### **Practical Implications**

The investigation of practical aspect of modern housing through analyzing narratives of women dwellers provide useful analytical data for architects to consider factors such as household structure, privacy, everyday life and socio-cultural values in designing the domestic spaces.

### **Social Implications**

A comprehensive study of the users in Tehran, based on the experience of women living there, unfolded a new level of findings. It showed that determinative factors on gender, domesticity and the use of space are deeply rooted within the context-specific social or cultural norms.

### **Originality/Value**

The previous studies focused on political, social and economic aspects, whereas this study concentrated on gathering first-hand information from the occupants to provide data on the women's use of space in modern houses.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Modern domesticity and woman's image in Iran emerged under the modern-national hegemony of the state which defined new ideal models for both. Euro-American concepts of domesticity concerning women were considered from the turn of the century and intensified during the last two decades of Pahlavi period (1960-1980). Mohammad Reza Shah's policies of "making Iran a modernization showcase" (Little, 2002: 221 cited in Karimi, 2009: 21) in the Middle East led to socio-spatial transformation in the country.

Although imported patterns of modernism are similar in non-western countries, Iran had a radical approach to it in 1960s and 1970s as a result of the state's top down modernity policies and economic boom (Madanipour, 1998; Abrahamian, 2008; Karimi, 2013). Modern domesticity was idealised, and the modern woman image emerged as a result of the state's modernization aspiration and social opportunities with a growing number of

middle-class educated women with economic independence. The concepts of "modern home, life and woman" were promoted by Euro-American models.

Modern settlements constructed during 60s and 70s Tehran represent the social, economic and politic transformation in the country. Modernization became the government first plan and the White revolution (1963) of the Shah brought about social transformation that included women's freedom and immigration to the big cities. Furthermore, oil and industry dependent economic growth supported the state's plans. Tehran was selected as the capital of modernism and centre of the economic growth. Consequently, the construction of residential complexes and towers accelerated in this period with addressing new and educated middle class families.

In this framework, analyzing women's use of space provides further studies on the effects of the modernization, adoption and adaptation process and how political, economic and socio-cultural systems influence the process and how women use and modify the space during the time. Using narrative research methodology, the focus of this study was on the everyday life of women and the spatial connections. Particular attention was paid to the role of traditional, cultural factors and social change in individual relationships and alterations of domestic spaces.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Use, adaptation, modification of space are the practical sides of habitation. Spaces are used and modified in various patterns depending on the user's everyday life. There are different familial, economic, political, sociocultural, physical and environmental factors that influence the individual's use and modification of the space. There have been several studies on use of space in modern houses. Ghannam (2002) and Karimi (2013) showed how state and ordinary people, confronted with global notions of modernity, transform it to physical forms considering socio-cultural norms. Their study considered the struggle of power, family members and religious groups over use of space, while Foucault (1984), Lefebvre (1991) investigated similar issues in relation to political power and control mechanisms. The decision-making process by companies, families, "Popular" and "superior" taste about design, use of space and changes investigated by Bourdiou (1984), Kent (1990) and Cieraad (1999). Giddens (1984), Pader (1988) showed how changes in social relations affected the changes in spatial relations. Similarly, social and spatial relations were explored in studies of many scholars such as Edney (1976), Soja (1980), Hillier and Hanson (1984). From Wilk's (1990) point of view, houses symbolized the relationships among households and their

community. Heynen and Baydar (2005) examined a research finding by Denby and Fry to ascertain how changes in space and living practices created new types of people. Michelson (1994), using a time-use research method on the basis of interviews and diaries, assessed the peoples' activities over a period of time, their interrelated behaviours and the system of activities related to them. He was seeking the relations between everyday life and spatial-temporal constraints in housing. Wills (2001) discussed the women's everyday life and modern family in her study. Hayat Khan (2014) explored the explicit and implicit reasons of transformation in urban housing. The core values of the Islamic culture in related to home and women considered by Al-Kodmany (1999) and Madanipour (1998).

However, mentioned studies mostly focused on a general inquiry on the use of space, gender and domesticity affected by political, social and economic conditions. This study took the investigation one step further and outlines several of those dynamics from different literature, comparing them with the ones gathered during the study in the context of Tehran's Modern settlements constructed during the 1960s and 1970s. The factors categorized in the user profile, dwelling unit and settlement domains give a more comprehensive picture of the use of space in Tehran modern houses. This study is about digging deep into the different effective factors of women's use of space in different levels.

## METHODOLOGY

The research question focused on the women's use of space in Tehran modern houses constructed in the last two decades of Pahlavi period (1960-1980); their everyday life, modification and appropriation of space. How do women use and modify the space and how do socio-cultural, political and economic factors influence the use of space? As a qualitative approach, the narrative inquiry was considered in accordance with the study's socio-cultural contextual undertone and based on the users' experience of living in modern houses constructed in the defined time period. Women's experiences of the use of space, their personal and social interaction, the continuity with the past, present and future and place were considered in this method of research. Narrative inquiry was used as a method of study that concentrates on stories individuals tell about themselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007). The women as active users of domestic spaces have a story to tell about their everyday life with the interplay of other socio-cultural, economic and political factors. The data collection process involved in-depth interviews, analysis and interpretation of stories,

observation, memoirs, archival documents and photographs (Riessman, 2008; Marshall & Rossman 2011).

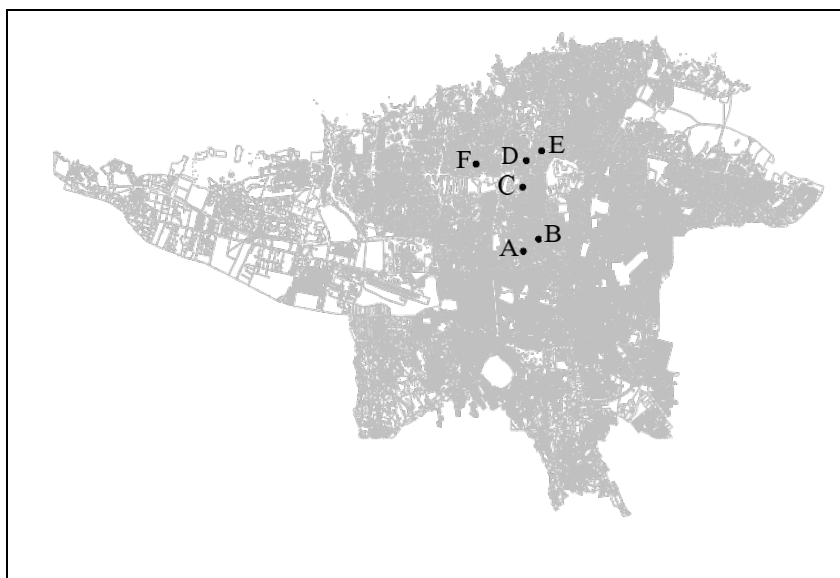
The women's interpretations that assigned to the modern home spaces with its practical aspects such as changes in use revealed many facts about modern houses, user interaction, the impact of socio-cultural, political and economic dynamics. The qualitative approach gives a voice to the users of space to convey the meaning of modern houses from the users' perspective. In fact, factors that contribute to the use of space by women in modern houses have been linked with issues that border on socio-cultural, political and economic factors.

The study sites were selected from the residential apartments constructed during the years 1960-1980 in Tehran. These settlements (Behjatabad, Saman, ASP, Eskin, Le Parc Des Princes, Zomorod) were constructed during the process of modernization of the capital and promoted new and modern lifestyles for the newly emerged modern middle-class (Table 1). These settlements are situated in district 6 (central), district 2 and district 3 (North and North West) of Tehran (Figure 1). The dwelling units were 83 m<sup>2</sup> to 276 m<sup>2</sup> and included one, two- and three-bedrooms apartments and duplexes (Table 2, 3). Twenty women aged 38-72 were selected through the snowball sampling method (Table 4). Participants were found by the reference of friends due to the difficulty of entry to the buildings and houses because of security and privacy issues.

The inclusion criteria for participants included: a) women who had lived there for more than 5 years for considering the use of space and modifications, b) the households which were homeowners as well for monitoring their authority for use and modification of space. The exclusion criteria were: a) tenants, b) recently moved households, c) suits. The participants were asked through an in-depth interview to tell the story related to the research question. The interviews took 60-120 minutes and were conducted in two different time periods, October 2016 and November 2017.

**Table 1.** Settlements' information

Settlement/ Dist.	Constr. Date	Number of Dwelling Units	Number of blocks / storeys	Total area(m <sup>2</sup> )
Behjatabad/6	1964-70	384 apts.	14 B. 14 S.	35000
Saman/6	1969-70	210 apts.+19 coms.	2 B. 22 S.	33000
ASP/6	1969-74	250 apts.+120 houses +140 coms.	3 B. 24 S.	112000
Eskin/3	1972-77	180 apt. +100 coms.	3 B. 23 S.	47000
Le Parc des princes/3	mid 1970s	330 apts.+30 coms.	A: 24 S. B1, B2, B3: 19 S. C: 15S.	68000
Zomorod/2	1975-76	749 apts.	Phase 2: 4B. Phase3: 4B. 5, 12, 18, 26 S.	50000

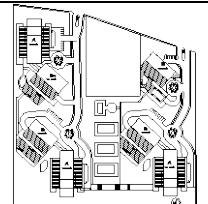
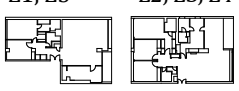
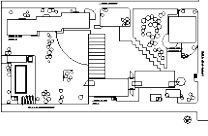
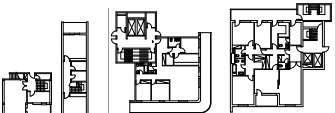
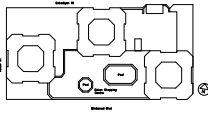
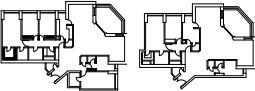
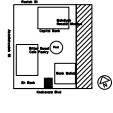
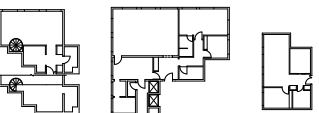
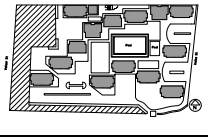
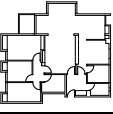
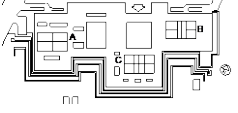



**Figure 1.** The Location of settlements; A: Saman, B: Behjatabad, C: ASP, D: Le Parc Des Princes, E: Eskan, F: Zomorod.

**Table 2.** Houses' information

Settlement	Name	Block	Floor	No.Beds	Dwelling Size m2
Zomorod	Z1	Apadana;wing B+	20	2	172
	Z2	Perpolis; wing B	17	3	209
	Z3	Saadi; wing B	14	3	209
	Z4	Bistoon; wing B	18	3	209
	Z5	Bistoon; wing B+	10	2	172
Le parc des princes	P1	C	14	Duplex, 2	132
	P2	A	12	2+1 service	224 (154+70)
	P3	B	10	3+1 service	217 (187+30)
Eskan	E1	A	16	3+1 service	205
	E2	A	12	2+1 service	185
	E3	C	8	3+1 service	205
Saman	S1	2	1	Duplex, 1	84
	S2	2	9	2+1 service	220
	S3	2	7	1	83
	S4	2	9	3+1 service	170
	S5	2	14	1	83
Behjatabad	B1	15	2	3	240
	B2	15	4	3	240
ASP	A1	C	4	3+1	276
	A2	C	12	3	205

**Table 3.** Site plan and plan of case studies

Settlement	Site plan	Plan
Zomorod		Z1, Z5      Z2, Z3, Z4 
Le parc des princes		P1      P2      P3 
Eskan		E1, E3      E2 
Saman		S1      S2, S4      S3, S5 
Behjatabad		B1, B2 
ASP		A1      A2 

**Table 4.** Demographic information of participants

Name	Age	Job status	Education	Marital status	Children	Years lived
Z1	65	Manufacturer	University	Married	2	30
Z2	60	Retired	University	Married	2	20
Z3	58	Housewife	H. school	Married	2	31
Z4	42	Housewife	H. school	Married	2	5
Z5	48	Housewife	H. school	Married	2	5
P1	65	Teacher	University	Married	-	22
P2	50	Architect	University	Married	1	15
P3	62	Retired	University	Married	2	30
E1	58	employee	University	Married	2	34
E2	46	Teacher	University	Married	1	20
E3	65	Retired	University	Married	2	32
S1	60	Retired	University	Widow	1	34
S2	60	Retired	University	Divorced	1	35
S3	38	Employee	University	Married	-	6
S4	48	Housewife	H. school	Married	2	20
S5	54	Housewife	University	Married	2	24
B1	38	Housewife	H. school	Married	2	7
B2	40	Housewife	H. school	Married	2	5
A1	72	Retired	University	Single	-	30
A2	72	Retailer	University	Married	-	30

The set of questions included in the interviews was used with the aim of understanding the major modern housing dynamics,



actors and factors in 60s and 70s Iran, to study women in their everyday life and use of space during the years, considering the socio-economic and political factors. The interview questionnaire was conducted with 20 women dwellers of the 6 settlements. The questionnaire was organized in three major parts; 1) demographic information, 2) the story of their house, 3) dwelling and site information. The first part's questions included age, education, employment status, marital status and changes in household structure. In the second part, the participants were asked to tell the story of their house and settlement, their everyday life, use of space and alterations. In the last part, questions were about general information of dwelling and site such as size, layout, placement in the building, location, neighbourhood and date of construction.

The data was analysed in narrative terms through the interpretation of what was said (Riessman, 2008). A qualitative software package (Atlas.ti 8.0) was utilized to assist with data organization, analysis and management. The process of interpretation commenced with the identification of codes within stories and writing comments on them (Table 5). Then searching back and forth for what was significant about the stories and what was common to more than one story led to identification of themes. Afterwards a second round of analysis was undertaken to compare and contrast important and distinctive features to establish sub-themes. Finally, all this information was compared with relevant literature in the use of space and women in modern houses and lifestyles, and socio-cultural studies in order to elucidate the final results, discussion, and conclusions.

**Table 5.** Codification and quotations

	User
Quotation	Reasons for the move to this house
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Being close to the family and relatives.</li> <li>▪ Hotel like, security</li> <li>▪ Living in a high apartment</li> <li>▪ Previous bad neighbours</li> <li>▪ Easy cleaning</li> <li>▪ Good management</li> <li>▪ High quality of materials, installations, acoustic, lighting, airflow</li> <li>▪ Modern, open plan, proper size</li> <li>▪ Dream house, Peaceful, Happy and energetic, Love and joy</li> <li>▪ Homeowners, low density</li> <li>▪ Fame of the building and accommodation for famous and rich</li> <li>▪ Central, close to work</li> <li>▪ Space for Children</li> </ul>



Dwelling				Settlement		
Complains	Daily activities	Social/cultural activities	Significant factors in use of home spaces	Changes and alterations of the space	Home and immediate surroundings	Communal spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Large windows, Closed curtains most of the time</li><li>▪ Messy, busy and noisy place</li><li>▪ Lack of balcony, guest suite, bedroom downstairs, green storage, green space,</li><li>▪ Visual/audio pollution</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Organizing business, home office</li><li>▪ Exercising, going to walk</li><li>▪ Shopping</li><li>▪ Visiting family and friends</li><li>▪ Walking dogs</li><li>▪ Going to the bazaar</li><li>▪ Doing chores</li><li>▪ Watching TV</li><li>▪ Studying</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Restaurant out night</li><li>▪ Travelling</li><li>▪ Ceremonies and parties,</li><li>▪ Gym</li><li>▪ Masnavi-Molavi mysticism courses</li><li>▪ Monthly gathering with friends</li><li>▪ Dinner invitations</li><li>▪ Religious ceremonies</li><li>▪ Cultural activities</li><li>▪ Cahrshanbe soori, Eyde- Norouz (Iranian New year ceremonies on 21th of March)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Occupation of woman</li><li>▪ Daily and nightly activities</li><li>▪ Socializing patterns</li><li>▪ Individual activities</li><li>▪ Privacy</li><li>▪ Economy</li><li>▪ Formal/informal relationships</li><li>▪ Dirt/clean</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Segmentation of space, using partitions</li><li>▪ Opening the kitchen</li><li>▪ Adding Bar</li><li>▪ Interior design</li><li>▪ Decorative fireplace</li><li>▪ Renovation of bedrooms, service areas</li><li>▪ Use of Bedroom as second living room, TV room and work room, Gallery</li><li>▪ Change the bath to Traditional Hamam style</li><li>▪ Changing Servant room to Utility room or guests' room</li><li>▪ Interference in use and alteration semi-public spaces.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Domesticity and publicity interaction and interference</li><li>▪ Furnished corridors, lobby</li><li>▪ Busy and unsafe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Garden, hall, parks, supermarkets</li><li>▪ Space for walk dogs</li><li>▪ Bank branches</li><li>▪ Cafe shops</li><li>▪ Garden, yard</li><li>▪ Pool</li><li>▪ Restaurant</li><li>▪ Supermarkets</li><li>▪ Mosque</li><li>▪ Patisserie and Café</li><li>▪ Shopping centre</li></ul>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study and existing literature create a platform to investigate the use of space and modifications. The results show seven themes in according to user profile, dwelling and settlement levels (Table 6). There are two themes in the user profile level. The first is the demographic theme, characterized by the effect of sequential development of the different life cycle stages of the family on use of space. The second is the economic theme such as the women's contribution in the family's economy. The themes in the dwelling unit level were extracted from data collected with observations and in-depth interviews and narratives with women living in modern apartments and includes third and fourth themes; everyday life, time-space activities and socio-cultural norms.

**Table 6.** Theme matrix

	Themes	Sub-themes
User profile	Different life stages of the families affected the use of space	2
	Economy is a significant factor in space use and organization	1
Dwelling unit	Women use the space in accord to their everyday life	2
	Socio-cultural norms are determinative in use of space	4
Settlement	Communal Sites are women's extended domestic spaces	1
	Settlement characteristics affected the use of space	2
	Socio-political transformation affected the use of space.	1

The final major level is the settlement level and includes three themes: the first is the women's extended domestic spaces, that are context specific and provide more opportunities for women to use the space. The second is the settlement characteristics such as the need for security, cleaning, comfort, status, identity, good neighbours and central location. The last category is about socio-political themes such as change in the social and political relations and values affecting the use of space.

### Theme 1: Different Life Stages of The Families Affected the Use of Space

Here two sub-themes emerged: (a) Household structure is important in use of space, (b) Increasing age demands new changes in space.

(a) Make and use of domestic space should be considered in families' different life stages; past, present and future. In the cases of change in familial context, marriage status, death or birth, leaving the home for work or education, rooms may be without use or subject to change or overload of competing

demands. "we use the bedroom of my daughter after her marriage as second living room (Z2, two beds)" "my son's room is useless after his emigration abroad (S2, two beds)" "I can't use the bedroom after my husband's death (S1, one bed duplex).

The house is a stage for the manifestation of power relations between family members and genders in the struggle over space about how it should be used and presented. Family members as Kent declared, "negotiate, argue, fight or use deception in acquiring access or claim to space, in excluding others from it or in setting rules on its use" (Kent, 1990: 41). "I prefer to have an open kitchen, but my husband does not agree (P1, two beds duplex)" A study of the results of home alterations in Britain between 1986 and 1992 by Putnam (1999) revealed personalization was the most significant factor in the case of competing household members (Cieraad, 1999).

(b) Cases show that, the users' demands differ with their age. As a result, spaces lose their functionality or other spaces are laden with extra functionalities. "I can't use the upstairs because of my age and health problems such as backache" (S1, one bed Duplex) (Figure 2). She added the bedroom functionality to the living room. Or users have to alter the space to modify their needs or even think about changing their home: "I changed the bath to a traditional one which is easy use" (S1, one bed Duplex). "I am thinking to change my home to smaller one, I do not need so much space anymore" (S2, two beds).



This case shows the change in use of space during the time. Changes in household structure such as loss of a family member, increased age causing loss of bedroom functionality and living room in the ground floor overloaded with other functionalities such as sleeping.

**Figure 2.** Use of space in different life stages of a family (Davodipad, 2016).

## Theme 2: Economy is a Significant Factor in Space Use and Organization

Here one sub-theme emerged; (a) Women's economic contribution to the family affected the use of space.

(a) The interviewees divided the domestic space to provide the space for their work; the living room in Nil's home (S3, one bed) was divided into two parts; sitting/dinning space and workspace. Furniture is very important in the organization of space in her home. The working space was separated with a decorative partition from rest of the living room.

The main part of Sh's work (Z1, two beds) including managing and selling of the products is done at home between the kitchen and dining space. A small part in the dining area is separated using a partition and is used as the storage space and fitting room for customers. The countertop of the kitchen is her work desk where she manages her interior work as a mother and wife and her exterior work as a manufacturer. Moreover, she uses the bedroom for the storage of clothes. Del (S2, two beds) divided the living room for creating a workshop in it. She uses the second bedroom for displaying her art works as well. Zi (P1, two beds duplex) uses the corner of her very formal living room to teach piano lessons privately (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Living spaces (Davodipad, 2017).

These examples show how women partitioned living room to emerge workplace. Left; Sh (Z1, clothing manufacturer) used a folding paravane to emerge a space for trying cloths and storage. Centre: De (S2, painter) separated the atelier with a wall. Right; Nil (S3, massager) used a paravane to separate the space for her work.

### Theme 3: Women Use the Space in Accord to Their Everyday Life

Here two sub-themes emerged; (a) Users everyday life defines the use of space, (b) Kitchen is the women's place

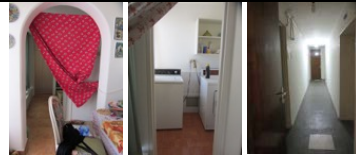
(a) "The growth of the culture of modernity was inseparable from a re-evaluation of everyday life" (Wills, 2001:47). Women's everyday life, related behaviours and contexts revealed many facts about changes in their daily life including changes in standards, in family structures, economics, housing, traditions, women's safety, the quality of child raising, employment and gender equity. Michelson (1994) defined everyday life as a great system of interrelated behaviours and system of activities including employment-related activities, household and child-

raising activities, recreational activities, and biological necessities over a period of time.

The everyday life of women changed with the introduction of modern life ideas, habits and objects and affected the combinations and patterns of activities they carry out as part of everyday life. Consequently, location, content and relative balance among daily activities and behaviours changed. Considering the daily life activities of participants in relation to space and time revealed that women use home and near neighbourhood over the day for their activities. Integrating the kinds of locations for child-care, jobs, shopping, social and recreational facilities into women daily life made these settlements desirable. This provided more opportunities for housewives, employed women, women with or without children.

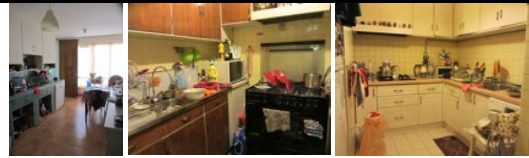
(b) New types of kitchens introduced to new homes through the period in magazines and according to the Anglo-American taste of design (Karimi, 2009). The kitchen's standards, place in home, relationship with other spaces, lightning, habits of taking meals and women's needs were discussed in magazines. Consequently, kitchens placed in one of rooms around the central courtyard with one brick stove and one water well moved to the inside of houses with smaller sizes and new appliances and shaped new forms of identification. Modern kitchens equipped with electric and time-saving appliances and different programs (such as Act of July 1951, Truman Program) for educating women in relating to home organization were aimed at creating labour-saving homes and women without the need of maids (Karimi, 2013). Labour-saving devices accelerated the demands for servants and more household goods needed more cleaning and maintenance (Wills, 2001). Therefore, rationalization of homes in favour of improving women's individual and social life increased the need for servants and related spaces as it is seen in the layouts of many constructed homes of that period. However, increasing women's rights in public and private realms, emphasis on the reproduction, childrearing, motherhood and nationalist circles, extensive domestic courses pushed women into housework and homes more than before. Furthermore, socio-spatial transformation after revolution intensified the situation. Kitchen is "a workplace to manage and organize customer viewings, deals" (Z1, two beds), "meeting friends" (S2, two beds), "a closed space without need continuous cleaning" (S3, one bed) "a private space" (S5, 2 beds) (Figure 4). Servant's rooms changed their functionality to utility rooms (S2, two beds), women's workspaces (A1, three beds) or guest rooms (E2, two beds). Kitchens were preferred to be used as closed spaces for providing privacy and cleaning issues (Figure 5).

**Figure 4.** Servant room, Saman building (Davodipad, 2016).



These pictures show the servant rooms and their separate entrance to the kitchen and shopping centre in the underground of the building. Over the years, servant's room changed to utility room and the servant's entrance was no longer used.

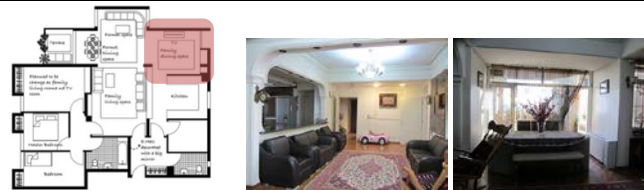
**Figure 5.** Kitchens (Davodipad, 2016).



Kitchen in these examples used as the back region and the private part of the home.

Having meals in these households has two shapes; formal and informal. The dining table in the living room is used in formal invitations and a small table inside the kitchen or family sitting room or on ground around "sofreh" is used in informal familial meals (Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** Back and front regions at homes (Davodipad, 2017).



In this case, formal and informal spaces for having meals by themselves and with guests were separated. The family used the space next to the kitchen for their taking meals on the ground, watching TV. The space decorated with sofas and dining table used for guests. The family decided to change the third bedroom to family living room "neshiman".

#### **Theme 4: Socio-Cultural Norms are Determinative in Use of Space**

The cases show that there are four sub-themes; (a) Privacy is the most significant social value, (b) Presentable/intimate spaces are different, (c) Clean/dirty concepts are significant, (d) Traditions evolved, duplicated, changed but never diminished; they got new definitions and spaces.

(a) Visual privacy, male/female physical spheres as main characteristics of Middle Eastern cities with Islamic culture and religion underwent radical changes with the working woman outside home and shaping her social life (Al-Kodmany, 1999). Physical and psychological opportunities for privacy increase in modern societies rather than primitive ones. While privacy is limited by gender roles, taboos and family responsibility, and ancestor demands in primitive societies, it is more flexible in modern societies (Kent, 1990). The economic and political



structure of the modern world resulted in individualization of household members and “privacy” changed to a main social value for bourgeois individual.

However, analysis of Iranian housing demonstrates that privacy of families in relation to social interaction and male-female segregation are more important than personal and interpersonal privacies (Madanipour, 1998). Participants defined different physical or behavioural barriers to control the intrusions. “Privacy is very important for me... the living room is the best place for guests” (Z1, two beds). Some participants alter their domestic space to gain more privacy; “Mo used wooden wall to separate private and public spaces” (Z4, three beds). Hierarchical access to the spaces, dividing the formal and informal parts through fixed or semi-fixed barriers are ways to provide privacy for the family. By entrance securities, ever-covered windows and unutilized balconies and adjusting other strategies of introversion, spatial hierarchies demonstrated new manifestations of privacy in modern housing (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Segmentation of space for privacy (Davodipad, 2016).

These are examples of space segmentation for emerging privacy. Left; user separated the private part of the house with partitions. Right; dining, sitting and entrance spaces separated using walls.

(b)Home is as “the archetypal “back region” in which everyone can relax and be himself or herself” (Giddens, 1984 cited in Munro & Madigan, 1999:115). Beside relaxing place, homes should be welcoming and presentable. Women often Create a tidy and respectable place and a social space for family (Munro & Madigan, 1999). Modern home in relation to gender is discussed as a reflection of its masculine architectural shell and as an extension of women’s identities defined from the body outwards. The domestic interior is identified as the women’s stage where they can represent their inner selves and act their lives; a site for self-expression. Home and its interior décor gain importance and change to an identity signifier and a way of keeping in time with social changes.

All families to be interviewed had separate parts of their home as presentable/intimate or front/back region. In spite of the elimination of guest room to prevent pretending and changing it to an all- in-one living room in modern homes people used to separate a place as guest space in their homes. Guest space represents the prestige of a home. The need for distinct room for guests in some cases causes the emergence of special corners in



an open plan living room. Mo uses a decorative fir place (Z4, three beds), Sh has separate space for guests (Z1, two beds), del has a representable living room and uses the kitchen for casual friends' visits (S2, two beds). Mar has separate guest and family sitting rooms (B1, three beds). Zi separated the presentable and private living room (P1, two beds duplex), Za used bedroom as private living room (Z2, three beds) (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Intimate/presentable living rooms (Davodipad, 2017).

The households tended to have two separate spaces for living room; for guest and for their everyday use. In these examples, users used one of the bedrooms as the family living room and living room for guests. In the cases with smaller size, households divided the all-in-one living room to formal and informal spaces.

(c) “Health”, “hygiene” and “personal cleaning” with their scientific meanings are significant in modern housing and related discourses. Cleaning has religious and cultural connotations in Iranian home culture. Cleanliness in religion is different from cleanliness in modern science and is on the base of “pure” (tahir) and “impure” (najis). According to Shiite belief, animals- dogs and pigs- are “inherently filthy” and settings affected by them considered impure or a “toilet was considered dirty and could not be inside house” (Karimi, 2009: 235). Water and related rules and rituals is the key substance to make everything pure that is not inherently filthy; these are included modern products, settings and activities. Therefore, the symbolic demonstration of the act of cleansing, rather than the actual cleanliness as measured by modern scientific standards, is what is vital in Islam.

In Iran, the purpose of cleaning preserves its cultural and religious connotations and is integrated to the new definitions of scientific dirt control. The term “nezafat”, cleanliness, is connected to “iman”, faith, and that implies to religious connotations and cleaning all the house twice yearly, the end of

summer and end of winter, so-called “khane tekani” which has cultural importance. The cultural and religious importance of water in cleaning homes caused many families to use ceramic or washable materials for floorings in bathroom, kitchen, and toilet. As cleaning is the same as washing in the culture of Iran. Changing the floorings from parquet to ceramics (Z4, three beds), removing the wallpapers and carpets in bath and toilet and shared corridors (E1, three beds), replacement of bathtub to traditional baths with ceramic floorings (S1, one bed duplex, S2, two beds) are examples of the appropriation of the meaning of cleaning to interviewees home life (Figure 9).



These examples show the changes in bathrooms. Bath tubes replaced with traditional stone bench. The toilet and bath areas separated with a wall. Water as the most important substance considered in the cleaning of bathrooms.

**Figure 9.** Bathrooms (Davodipad, 2016).

(d) There emerged two approaches to the traditions during this period simultaneously with spreading western lifestyle and acculturation. The first group aimed to popularize and standardize the Islamic values and religion to the everyday life of contemporary Iranians and created a modern Shiite society and the second group granted a modern and secular quality to the home and created a modern Iranian society. Tradition was presented as alternative to modern life and traditional views specified as the marker of appropriateness of imported goods and household objects in comparison to local ones. They were codified as halal versus haram or pure and impure. Humble home life was promoted, and foreignness was concealed by this group. The other group turned the tradition into an honourable object but not necessarily a part of everyday life. They considered the distinction between material and spiritual.

The contradictions of the views of these two groups continued in contemporary houses in related to religious traditions. As cases revealed some groups welcomed new ideas and the secularisation of traditional and cultural habits, whereas for some others Islamic and religious traditions were continued in their home life culture. “I prefer to plant a tree instead of sacrifice an animal”, “I go to “molavi” course instead of Quran sessions” (Z4, three beds). I had “abolfazl sofre” (a traditional and religious ceremony) in my house (B1, three beds). “...Me not but my neighbours if they have “nazri”, write and hang it on wall

(Z1, two beds). I don't believe in these things (P2, two beds). In the society of Iran being modern is in contradiction to being religious. The study results revealed that the contradictions in the two groups exist in other traditions such as marriage traditions and new year celebrations as well.

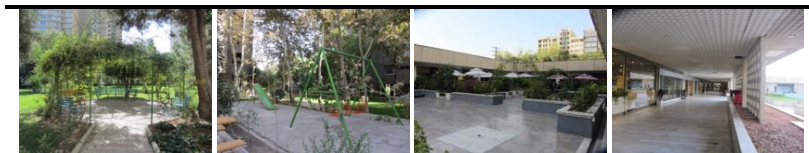
### Theme 5: Communal Sites are Women's Extended Domestic Spaces

Here one sub-theme emerged; (a) The settlement communal spaces provide opportunity for more uses.

(a) Use of spaces encompass activities and interaction with residential areas. People's interaction with their residential environment through activities is part of their use of domestic space. And there is a process of adjusting and adapting between individual and their surroundings to gain appropriation at homes. The identity of modern homes was shaped during the appropriation process. The interviewees mentioned the facilities of the settlements in their daily life. They use communal spaces for their everyday activities. "I use the common spaces; the garden and yard for chatting with friends and riding a bicycle and exercises in the morning" (B1, three beds). Sh uses the communal space in their building for showing the clothes as part of her job (Z1, two beds). Other interviewees use the facilities such as a sport area for doing exercises and spaces for walking the dogs. Shopping centres, café, restaurants and bank branches provide spaces for preparing home necessities, working, socializing and doing everyday issues (Figure 10).

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**Figure 10.** Communal spaces (Davodipad, 2017).



Communal areas included garden, playing area, exercising area, cafe shops and shopping centre.

### Theme 6: Settlement Characteristics Affected the Use of Space

Here two sub-themes emerged; (a) Living in settlement is like living in a hotel, (b) The settlement is a sign of status and identity.

(a) Utopian ideas, well-being of occupants, quality and quantity of zones were the main characteristics of modern homes (Cieraad, 1999). Qualities usually referred to women's liberation, a better environment for children, good neighbourly relations, meaningful leisure time activities. To reduce and simplify housework in order to enable for women to join the social life and labour market was the dominant goal in most modern residential. Accessibility to shopping centres, gym, children's

play area, have a separate space for servants all indicate the goals of these settlement in providing a field for the contribution of the women in social life and work.

Interviewees believed that living in these settlements is like living in a hotel because of facilities such as security, cleaning and maintenance. Entrance to the buildings is very hard and is possible only with previous appointment according to the strict rules of security in these buildings. "living in this settlement is like living in a hotel, it is secure, I can leave my children and dogs at home and go to the journey" (Z4, three beds). "Easy cleaning and on-time service charge are important" (E1, three beds, P1, two beds duplex). The interviewees mentioned also other qualities of buildings such as; material, structure, accessibility and centrality.

(b)The modern home functions as a marker of the modern middle-class socio-cultural identity involving particular patterns of consumption and lifestyle, and consciously set apart from other classes. "Upward mobility" was the main characteristics of the modern middle-class homes for showing their class aspiration and identity. New modern identity is represented by their ability to afford modern convenience, education, modern taste and modern looking homes. People promote identity by articulating the boundary between the self and non-self and establish their uniqueness and distinctiveness from others and marking and personalization of spaces provides a mechanism to reflect and extend their personalities, attitudes, values and beliefs, what they are or ideally what they want to be (Edney, 1976).

Most participants define the specific and attractive characteristics of the buildings as "most famous actors, artists, producers live in the settlement" (Parc prince, Behjatabad ), "the period prime minister, open-minded people, most of royal family and after the revolution officials live in the settlement" (Saman, ASP) "it was designed for the Shah guard and officials" (Zomorod), "people who are educated or have travelled to foreign countries live in this settlement" (Eskan). Therefore, these settlements have identities that are defined by previous and current residents and represent a different lifestyle.

### **Theme 7: Socio-political Transformation Affected the Use of Space.**

With one sub-theme; (a) Use of space changed with changes in socio-political relations.

(a)Social dimensions are known as the predominant factor in defining spatial relations, organization and use of space. As Soja (1980) declared, "space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience" (Soja, 1980: 210). "Societies

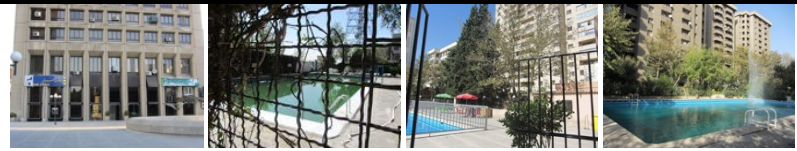
continually reproduce and re interpret social relations across space and time" (Pader, 1988: 253). Each society has its own specific modes of production and presentation and practice of space that can be revealed through the deciphering of its space. Space in addition to be a means of production, presentation and practice, specific in each society, is also a means of control and domination. Spaces are shaped in relation to power relationships, practices, identities, and subjectivities. As Ghannam (2002) mentioned "space is central not only to communal life but also to any exercise of power" (Ghannam, 2002: 22). Power relations are embedded and manifested in the struggle over space by regulating the relationships and activities. Ideologies are the main outcomes of socio-spatial relations. They form, reform, interpret and reinterpret the society and spatiality. Each ideology has its own language, objects and placement of objects in space (Pader, 1988).

In this relation, change in gender relations and order in society affect the order of spatial relations inside homes and residential neighbourhoods. The raising of women's position and a greater interaction of women with the world outside the family led to a new organization of space and new relationships inside the home. Whereas, restricted gender relations and women activities in the society pushed women to the homes.

In the case studies, the communal spaces' functionality changed after the revolution. many communal spaces in residential complexes lost or changed their function. For example, the café and billiard salons changed to mosques or closed (Saman), pools were filled in (Zomorod) or used just by children and as a place for gathering with friends (Behjatabad, Parc des prince, ASP), balconies were closed (Parc des Prince). Political transformation in the country followed by socio-spatial transformation such as developing religious places and closing communal spaces such as pools, cinemas to restrict western-like leisure and socializing patterns (Figure 11).

Furthermore, household as a sociogram reproduce the rules and resources of social system in accordance with changing social and power relations (Hillier & Hanson, 1984). In the case of Iran, people produced secularised private spaces in a society with conservative socio-political relations. Women prefer domestic spaces for social activities such as invitations, celebration and gatherings with friends.





These pictures show how communal spaces' use changed after the revolution such as changing the café to mosque and open-air pools to friends meeting places.

**Figure 11.** Changes in communal spaces' use (Davodipad, 2017).

This study tried to systematically analyse the narratives of interviewee women by the use of the Atlas.ti 8.0 software package. Narratives were codified and categorised in themes and sub-themes in three major levels of user profile, dwelling unit and the settlement. Narratives in the user profile level confirmed the importance of household structure and economy in organization and use of space. Domestic Spaces of participating women reflect their age, profession and financial situation. In the dwelling unit level, the spaces mirrored the everyday life, time-space activities of women and socio-cultural norms such as privacy, traditions, cleanliness/dirtiness and intimate/presentable concepts. In the settlement levels, participant women mentioned the communal spaces in the settlement as their extended home spaces that were used in their everyday life. Also, the narratives showed changes in the use of home and communal spaces of settlements in accordance with changes in social and power relations during the specified time.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present study was to explore the use of space in relation to the modern women and modern homes constructed between the years 1960-1980 in Tehran, capital of Iran. In terms of the use of space, the results reflected the importance of socio-cultural, economic and politic circumstances. Ideas of modern society and modern domesticity were imposed from above and occupants adapted and appropriated the concepts. The results show the spatial shifting of activities in modern homes. Closing off the open plan by building walls between dining and sitting areas, separating the public and private spaces, the adaptability to fit in with their changing lifestyle were some alterations in the spaces. In fact, the incompatibility between the modern approach of the state and residents' living habits led to modifications inside homes. Uses of space changed in accordance with changes in political, social and familial contexts and changes in ideas and the values of people towards their dwellings through the course of their life cycles.

People create a local type of modernity resulting from rejection, adjustment and the transformation process. Rationalized and functional domestic spaces adapted to users private, social and professional life. There was an attempt to move the socializing

and identification models from homes to public places, but conservative public life show the opposite of it. Traditionalist and modernist contradictory approaches to the home and lifestyle continue as in many other issues. Whereas tradition and culture were secularised in one group life, the other group adapt their homes in accordance with religious traditions and values and use Quranic verses, religious symbols and signs at home and employ religious traditions at homes.

Society and state have predominant power over the public and private life of individuals. Changes in policies about model modern homes and model modern women in pre and post-revolutionary era affected the home spaces and women's public and private relationships.

This study aimed to in-depth analysis of the use of space in modern homes using narrative inquiry as a qualitative research method without generalization. Women dwellers of modern home expressed different narratives of their everyday life and spatio-temporal relations. The investigation of Iran's modern domesticity from the women users' point of view with considering their everyday use of space, the importance of socio-political context of the place, provided some useful analytical data for further studies in this field.

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### Resume

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