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## The Reflection of the West Culture in the Life Style and the Architecture of the Houses in the Late Qajar Dynasty in Hamadan

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### Abstract

The term lifestyle which comprises social, cultural, and economic elements has a profound impact on behavioral patterns and mental attitudes of individuals in the society and affects the architecture of their living place. In the recent decades, the discourse of housing choice pattern and living space in relation to lifestyle as a new subject has attracted the attention of the researchers and scholars in various fields of study including architecture and urbanism. One of the manifestations of the lifestyle is the quality of housing choice pattern as well as the quality of the living place which in turn exerts an influence on the architecture of the houses. The present study sets out to investigate the extent to which western lifestyle affected people's lifestyle in the late Qajar dynasty in Hamadan and the influence that this kind of lifestyle had on the architecture of the houses in this period. The study employed a historical-interpretive analysis methodology. The data for the study were collected using library resources and field study. The samples for the field study were selected based on purposive sampling. In order to select the sample houses, all the documented houses which dated back to the late Qajar period and lent themselves to field study were examined. As many as six houses which displayed greater architectural developments due to lifestyle changes were selected. More specifically, the houses which were affected more profoundly by the western lifestyle in terms of architectural features in three macro-level, middle level, and micro-level were selected. The results showed that lifestyle changes occurred in social, cultural, and economic levels which in turn overshadowed the architecture of the houses, too. These changes were first demonstrated in the houses belonging to the grandees and merchants. The architectural evolution in these houses was examined at macro, middle, and micro levels. At the macro level, the simplicity of form and the elimination of multiple courtyards were significant. At the middle level, an evolution in the organization of the interior space and its development was observed. Finally, at the micro level, the symbolic significance of some architectural elements such as columns, stairs, and decoration was notable.

### Keywords

Western culture, Interior space evolution, Lifestyle, Space organization, Differentiation

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## Introduction

A house reflects the cultural and social values and beliefs. As such, it is described as a place where the expectations and needs of the family can be satisfied. In order to understand the concept of house and its status in the system of social relations, among people and in the society, all the symbolic, institutional, materialistic, and aesthetic aspects of the house or the lifestyle must be taken into consideration. Lifestyle that is the byproduct of personal and group human behavior and interaction shapes the space of the living place. In the recent decades, the discourse of housing choice pattern and living space in relation to lifestyle as a new subject has attracted the attention of the researchers and scholars in various fields of study including architecture and urbanism. The present study sets out to investigate the extent to which western lifestyle affected people's lifestyle in the late Qajar dynasty in Hamadan and the influence that this kind of lifestyle had on the architecture of the houses in this period. The late Qajar dynasty was selected as the focus of the study due to the fact that the first wave of modernization to comply with western culture in cultural, social, economic, and political areas which consequently impacted the architecture of the houses, too, appeared in this period.

## Research Questions

1. What are the main roots of the western culture that affected the lifestyle of people in Hamadan during the late Qajar dynasty ?
2. To what extent lifestyle changes influenced the architecture of the houses?

## Statement of the problem

Life style and behavioral patterns that are the products of individual and group human interaction and behavior form social spaces. The discourse of housing choice pattern and living space in relation to lifestyle as a new subject has been the center of attention in various fields of study including architecture and urbanism in the recent decades.

Lifestyle in general terms refers to the way in which people choose to behave or choose to act so as to display a distinctive type of character (Rappaport, 1969: 15). Lifestyle in particular had led to the selection of the quality of life, activities, and practices. Pierre Bourdieu (2001: 54) defines lifestyle as classified or classifier practices with distinctive features that are represented in the form of distinctive space form (Bourdieu, 2011: 14). In this space-based approach, the house is deemed as a place for the practices and the interactions of people. It is a place whose spatial organization and its elements are constantly changing in accordance with the changes in lifestyle. Fundamental changes in lifestyle following the West and subsequent effects on the contemporary Iranian house space dates back to the late Qajar period and roots from the interaction and the discourse between Iran and the West at the time. The evolution of the new life style started in the noble and the rich families and gradually entered ordinary people's lives in the subsequent periods (first and second Pahlavi period). The main approach employed in the present study was to examine space in relation to lifestyle and behavioral patterns and its impact on architectural space. This study is an attempt to examine the transition from tradition to modernity in the late Qajar period and to investigate its effect on the architecture of houses in Hamadan.

## Research Methodology

The study employed a historical -interpretive analysis methodology. The data for the study were collected using library resources and field study. Library resources included primary sources such as historical documents, travelogues, memoirs, and newspapers. One of the travelogues used in this study is that of Jackson and Broogshn (1907) who visited Hamedan in the Qajar period. Moreover, one of the important memoirs used in the study is Zahir-al-Dole who was the ruler of Hamadan in the late Qajar period. In addition to these, data was also collected based on the field study

and sampling. Sample selection was based on purposive sampling. In the next section, the information and documents are examined on the basis of the factors of the independent variable, i.e. lifestyle. The data were analyzed qualitatively. In the end, a comparative table of the analysis of the conceptual relationship between the factors of lifestyle and the development of architectural space of the houses is presented.

### Review of the Related Literature

Investigating and analyzing the architecture from the lifestyle point of view has been addressed in some books, articles, and dissertations. Bromberger (1991), for example, discussed the architecture of the houses in Tehran in the 12th century. The author deals with different aspects of people's life in relation to the house and introduces the architecture of the old houses in Tehran in relation to social and economic status (Shahri, 1990). Haeri Mazandarani (2009) discussed some of the traditional houses in Hamedan, Rasht, Kashan, Shiraz, and Bushehr in his book "House, Culture, and Nature". He finally concluded that a relationship break between contemporary houses on one side and culture and nature, on the other side, can be observed. (Haeri, 2009). In her doctoral dissertation, Armaghan (2013) studied the relationship between lifestyle, architecture, and decorations of the mansions and palaces in the Qajar dynasty and concluded that the western lifestyle influenced the interior space in an imitative manner. Varmaqani's (2015) thesis was concerned with the relationship between gender and living space and focused on the houses in the northern Iran. She concluded that the architecture of the tradition houses in the north has its root in the cultural, social, and economic patterns. No studies have to date examined the effect of the lifestyle on the architecture of the houses in Hamedan.

### Theoretical Foundations

In recent decades, using interdisciplinary approaches in the architectural research become increasingly

popular. The reason underpinning the popularity of such approaches which introduce new methods and views can be the multi-dimensional nature of architecture. Theoretical approaches to the relationship between lifestyle and the choice patterns of living place has attracted the attention of the researchers in different fields of study including social sciences, behavioral sciences, architecture and urban development since the sixth decade of the twentieth century. Some of the scholars who have written about the nexus between lifestyle and living place choice patterns are Chopin Vasul, O'Brien, Bourdieu, Segalon, Rapport, and Thomas Hejrab. Chopin Vasul noted that the lifestyle factor is meaningful in association with residency, type of house, living room furniture, and other visual effects. O'Brien (1999) defined lifestyle in terms of the location of the living place, local participation, type of house (with a yard, garage, workshop ...), type of school, children's place of education. Bourdieu (2001) described lifestyle in terms of assets such as houses, villas, cars, furniture, and differentiating activities such as the type of dress, games, and appearance. On the other hand, Segalon stated that the relationship between houses and the lifestyle affects the segmentation of the interior spaces of the house including the public and private spaces. Another prominent researcher who has studied the relationship between lifestyle and the living place choice patterns extensively is Rapport (2000: 10). He sees lifestyle as a part of the culture which influences the quality of life and the constructed spaces. In his book entitled "Nation, Culture, and lifestyle", Thomas Hejrab, the Danish ethnologist, introduced three types of lifestyle: self-employed lifestyle (integration of the workplace and the house), bread salaries, and professional occupation at home. This classification indicates that the income level, workplace, and individual work style changes the requirements and priorities of the houses. Regarding the relationship between lifestyle and the use of space in the houses, Lawrence (2007) noted that the hidden features in the design of the houses can

be understood by the way behaviors and activities are regulated in the residential areas through the enforcement of customary laws and rules. Life customs are of significant importance given that they play a pivotal role in this regard and can shed light into the way spaces are used. Table 1 presents the above-mentioned scholars` perspectives and conceptual ideas about the relationship between lifestyle and the living place choice patterns. The different ideas regarding the relationship between lifestyle and the quality of the living place shown in the table indicates a variety of perspectives in this field. However, all these scholars agree that lifestyle exert an influence on the quality of the living place. This has been reflected in evolution of the architectural space.

Analytical Framework of the Study

The analytical framework of the study is based

on the conceptual elements of lifestyle obtained from the comments and ideas of the scholars. In this model, the conceptual elements of lifestyle such as social, cultural, and economic factors are first addressed. Subsequently, the representation of the relationship between lifestyle evolution and living place choice pattern which resulted in social differentiation, gender space system, social groups interaction, accommodation and choice. Architectural analysis in relation to lifestyle changes in the architecture of the houses can be examined through studying the elements of architectural house space and macro, middle, and micro space patterns. Diagram 1 has depicts the analytical framework of the study.

Discussion

The Lifestyle Changing Elements:  
Lifestyle Change in the city of Hamadan in the late Qajar and especially after the Constitutional

Table 1. The relationship between lifestyle and living place choice patterns from the scholars` point of view. Source: authors.

Row	Scholars	Definition of Lifestyle	Conceptual Elements	Elements of Architectural Space Representation
1	Chopin Vasvul	Place of residence, house type, the living room furniture, other visual effects of dignity	Residence as a social differentiation	Macro and micro architectural pattern
2	O'Brien	Place of residence, local participation, type of house (with a yard, garage, workshop, etc.), type of school, children`s place of education	Residence as a behavioral pattern representation for social differentiation	Macro architectural patterns
3	Bourdieu	Assets such as houses, villas, cars, furniture, and differentiating activities such as sports and recreational activities	Residence as a behavioral pattern representation for social differentiation	Macro- and micro architectural patterns
4	Segalon	Housing (segmentation of the interior space of the house including separating private and public spaces and internal and external recreational spaces), socializing and relatives` relationship network	Residence as a social interaction between family and society	Macro and middle patterns of space
5	Lawrence	Everyday lifestyle and how to use space and to understand its hidden features	Residence as representations of space for being	Middle patterns of space
6	Rapport	House as a part of the materialistic culture influencing the quality of life and the constructed environment	Residence as a representation of the cultural pattern	Macro and middle patterns of space
7	Thomas Hejrab	Changing the house priorities according to income, the workplace , and the individual work style, the needs	Residence as a representation of economic power	Macro architectural patterns

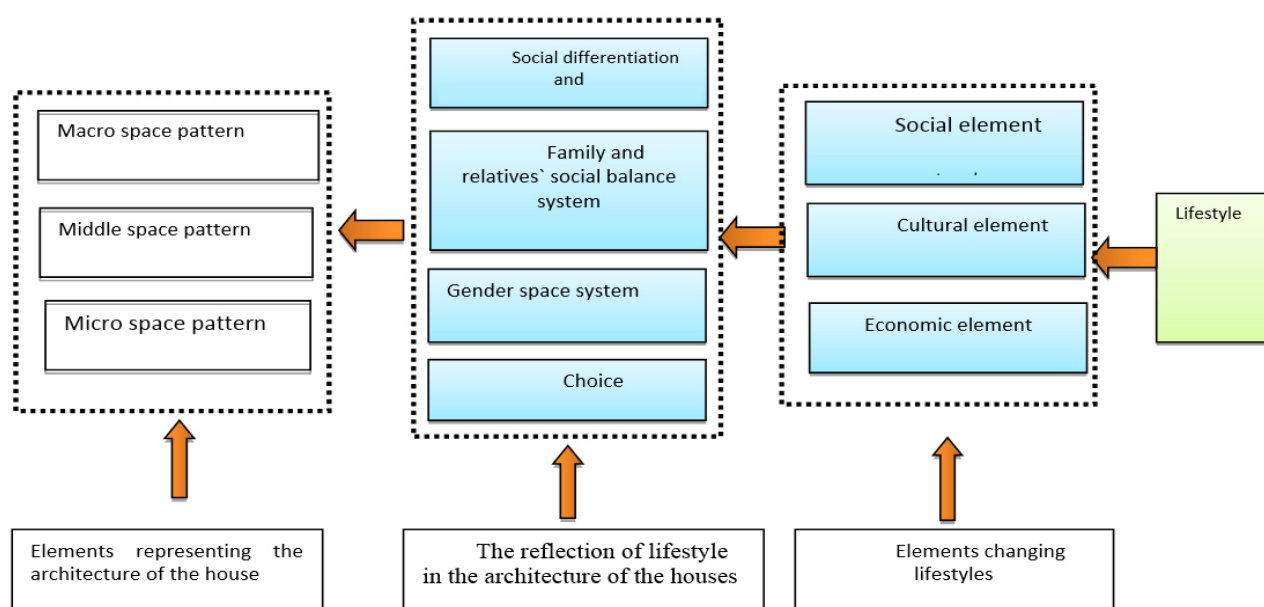


Diagram 1. Analytical Framework of the Study. Source: authors.

period was manifested in the development of new schools, development of social interactions with religious minorities and foreigners, changes in the city management, imitating the western architecture, and economic interaction with the west. In the late Qajar and after the Constitution Revolution, Cultural development was boosted in Hamedan. Modern schools were first established by the religious minorities the late Qajar. Alias school or the Union of Jewish Religious Minority was the first Western-style modern school established in Hamedan in the 1900. Other Iranian Western-style schools were subsequently established in 1901. Zahir-Al-Dole introduced Fakhriye Sherafat School in Hamedan as the first western-style school in Iran in his writings and memories.

Establishment of modern schools and having a passion for science can undoubtedly have a profound impact on people's mental attitudes and tendencies to embrace the modern world and lifestyle. In this new lifestyle, paying attention to women and their role in the society was gradually accepted. This had a great effect on minimizing the distance between femininity and masculinity. Moreover, there was a significant number of religious minorities such as Jews and Christians in Hamadan during the Qajar period. In his memories, Zahir-Al-

Dole, the ruler of Hamedan, recorded the city's population as hundred thousands of people out of which two thousands were Jews and eight hundreds were Armenian. (Zahirodolle 1990: 56) The Foreigners living in the city displayed their culture in the form of various behavioral models such as holding meetings and gatherings, special ways of getting dressed, eating style, and social interaction with the family. A noteworthy point is the interaction between Hamedan people's lives and the western culture in the Qajar dynasty. William Jackson visited Hamedan in 1904 and described this city in his travelogue as "I visited the telegraph and the Shahi Bank which are the most recent manifestations of modernity in Hamedan. This bank is a branch of the Shahanshahi bank in Tehran whose head is one of the Armenians. He was hospitable enough to invite me to his house which was partly equipped and decorated in European style and was adapted to the needs of Iranian life.

This is a good example which shows that Iranians are prone to mingle western civilization with Eastern life under certain conditions. Economic relations with the West were also effective in lifestyle changes. In the late Qajar period, the special position of Hamedan which was on the way from the west to east and central Iran increased the commercial



importance of the city. The role of foreign goods and commodities such as Russian and English goods and the importance of objects in people’s lives were heightened. Grouteh (1990: 58) , the German traveler, referred to the significance of the objects in people’s consumption patterns on his trip to Hamedan and mentioned some commodities such as Russian glasswork, lights, plastic products, copper utensils, equipments made in Moscow, fabric, canned food, and chocolate. The architecture of the foreign residents was another factor changing the architectural taste of people especially the nobles and merchants. Some buildings were constructed often by foreigners, mostly the English and American. Moreover, social, cultural, and economic changes which was occurring gradually in people’s lives in this period had a profound effect on the architecture of the nobles and merchants` houses.

**The Analysis of the Architectural Developments of the Houses**

The field study of the houses and examination of the documents, maps, and photos as well as interviews with with experts who had studies Hamedan paved the way for studying and analyzing the architecture of the late Qajar period. To this end, all the houses dating back to late Qajar period were examined. In the first step, fifteen houses with maps and permission for photography and preparing a report were identified. In the second step, purposive sampling was employed to select

the desired sample. The criterion for selection was the amount of architectural developments due to lifestyle changes. In this model, the measurement indices were architectural parameters (macro, middle, and micro levels). Overall, an attempt was made to select houses with the greatest impact and architectural transformations at different levels. Table 2 presents the architectural indices for the purposive sampling.

Previous studies on the architectural evolution of the selected houses showed that a new type of architecture was developing in which the structure of the form, the interior space organization, and the architectural elements were transformed. At the macro level, the dominant structure of the forms of the houses understudy was an imitation of foreign residents` houses which were often very simple in form. As a matter of fact, a movement towards simplicity and smaller spaces could be observed. Most of the houses understudy had one courtyard. This shows that the number of houses with multiple yards was decreasing in this period. In this model, the building was established mostly in the northern and southern fronts so that the northern side was the main place of residence and interior space while the southern side was a place for services and functioned as an exterior space. The most obvious examples of this change was observed in Ahmadi’s house (House No. five) and Sharafi’s house (house No. six). Moreover, it needs to be noted that the main architectural changes were related to the interior

Table2. Factors of architectural indices for purposive sampling. Source: authors.

Space pattern	Factors of architectural Indices
Space Macro Pattern	Special macro form pattern- Space variety (semi-open-closed-open-covered) - special access to environment pattern-specific pattern for residential spaces and services -specific pattern for gender space segmentation (external and internal)
Middle Space Pattern	Specific organization of the interior space-especial pattern of horizontal and vertical communication pattern-specific pattern of segmented and stop spaces-specific patterns of gender spaces in behavioral patterns of the family (private, semi-private, and public spaces)- the extension of outlook from the inside out
Space Micro Pattern	Special decorations architecture-specific elements

space and closed space had greater importance than the open space.

In previous architectural patterns, the organization of space and activities focused on the open spaces and courtyards. In the late Qajar period, however, the organization of space focused on a central hall or corridor. The development of a central hall in the houses to imitate the architecture of houses and consulates of foreign citizens gradually entered the interior space of the houses. These central halls got their light from the skylight. One of the most

beautiful skylights in the halls was observed in Momghani`s house (house No. four).

Another main development in the middle space was that the outside yard decreased in importance. Instead, one or more rooms, often located at the entrance, began to appear in the houses. These rooms were known as the upstairs rooms (Balakhane). In Seifi`s house (house No. one) and Samadi`s house (house No. two), there is an upstairs room in the entrance vestibule. Figure 1 shows the development of the interior spaces of the selected houses in terms of central space.

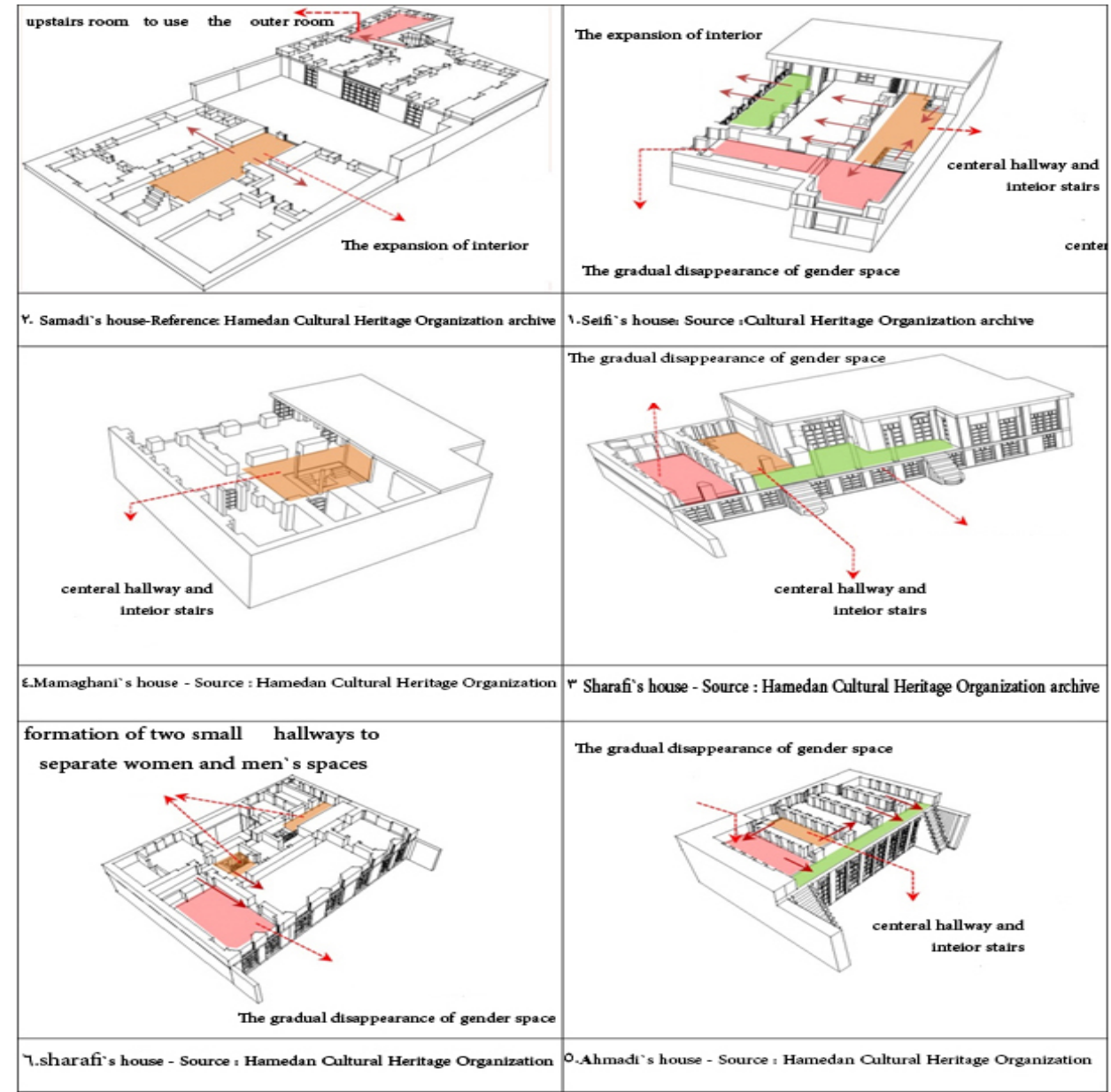


Fig. 1. Architectural transformations in the space of homes studied in relation to lifestyle. Source: authors.

At the micro-space level, architectural decorations such as acrography and paintings which are mainly imitations of the west architecture was observed in

the interior spaces, especially in the alcove and the main hall. Picture 2 depicts some decorations of the houses understudy.

		
The use of a decorative fireplace in Ahmadi's house hallway	The alcove of Kiani's house ( The use of acrography (and wooden on the walls and a decorative fireplace	An overview of Sharafi's house interior space the use of acrography and wooden decorations
		
The eye-catching and symbolic entrance of Samadi's house	The symbolic use of column with decorative bell in Sharifi's house	Mamghani's house central hall (The use of column in the center of the building and internal stairs)

Fig. 2. Developments studied interior design and decorating the house. Source: authors.

Data analysis

The study of the sample houses represents the discourse of new life and architectural cultural. This discourse can be analyzed for the impact of intangible concepts of lifestyle on architectural space concepts that are clearly observable. Developments in modern lifestyle which have their rooted in socio-cultural and economic changes following the western culture could potentially change the architectural space of the houses. One of the intangible components that increased the efficacy of architecture was cultural patterns which developed and extended the closed space and the central hall. The central hall not only organized the space but segmented the gender space. The interior space in this type of architecture is center-oriented and family-oriented. This space aimed to gather the family members irrespective of the social hierarchies. As such, the family members got together with the same status and that is a far cry

from the concept of vertical hierarchy of family and patriarchy. In the late Qajar period, due to the expansion of social and cultural interaction of the families and the acceptance of social presence of women, gender spaces such as the outer courtyard and long corridors began to disappear and the distance between femininity and masculinity were minimized. The independence of the house components such as rooms decreased and they were defined in relation to the central hall. The outer space is defined as a room placed next to the central hall with a short distance from the private space of the house. Social change was the second intangible factor affecting the evolution of architecture in Qajar period. Social changes resulted in the tendency for modernity and social differentiation. The impact of social differentiation on the architecture of this period is more conspicuous



at the micro level in the form of decorations, details and the elements of interior design. The decorations are mainly acrographies on the walls and wooden decorations on the ceilings in the form of clapboards. Stairs are placed symbolically on the front porch and inside the building. Decorative columns can also be observed both in the semi-open space and inside the building. In addition to their structural roles, columns are a key element of architecture in this period. The abundance of decorative columns in buildings and the use of stairs as an important architectural element for vertical

communication were imitations of the western architecture and express the sense of distinction and a new lifestyle. Economic factors were the third hidden layer overshadowing the role of the house as a livelihood and highlighting it as a place of residence. In this model, some of the service spaces were located close to the main spaces and the house activity patterns were pushed towards functionality. Table 3 presents the developments in the houses understudy using analytical diagrams at three levels: macro, middle, and micro architecture.

Table 3. The representation of the effect of lifestyle on the architectural evolution of the houses understudy at three levels of macro, middle, and micro space. Source: authors.

Micro pattern		Middle pattern			Macro pattern	
Interior stairs	column to expand	expansion system	Gender space organization	Interior space organization	Macro form pattern	Space activity pattern
		development expansion	Semi private Private	Internal connections	Grande Arena	Residential Services

Conclusion

The study of the houses build in the late Qajar dynasty especially after the Constitutional Revolution in Hamedan shows that lifestyle changes in the social, cultural, and economic arenas increased the efficacy of the architecture of the houses of grantees and merchants. In this period, extensive interaction with the west through exchange of goods and trade with Europe, the establishment of the consulates of different countries in Hamedan, and the existence of religious minorities in the city this exerted an influence on the attitudes and behavioral patterns in lifestyle. The effect of lifestyle changes can be seen on the values and cultural

understanding of the family system, the social significance of women, the gradual disappearance of the gender space, the creation of a sense of distinction and social understanding, and the importance of the objects. . The new lifestyle during this period increased the efficacy of architectural space of houses at macro, middle, and

Table 4. Conceptual analysis of the relationship between lifestyle changes in the architectural spaces of the houses. Source: authors.

The main variables of lifestyle change	The representation of the lifestyle changes in the house culture (intangible layers)	The representation of lifestyle changes in the architectural space of the houses (tangible layer)		
		Evolution in the organization of macro-level structure of form and space	Evolution in organizing interior space	Evolution in the micro-space (architectural elements and details)
Changes in social interaction	The tendency to distinguish from other social levels Interaction with religious minorities and foreigners and its effectiveness in the house behavioral pattern	The development of simple structure at macro level Elimination of multiple courtyards and the construction of houses with one courtyard Decreasing the public and private spaces border public and private spaces	The emphasis on interior spaces and the relative integration of public and private spaces –the symbolic use of decorative columns and stairs as a symbol of the new lifestyle	The use of decorations and architectural elements to imitate the architectural culture of the west for social differentiation and individuation
Cultural change in family system	Decrease in totalitarianism and patriarchy at home Undermining the system of values and religious beliefs at home	Symbolic importance of family, emphasis on family involvement in the closed space, and the gradual disappearance of yard as the agent of space organization	The development of the interior space and the importance and dignity of the family members as having the same status	Elimination of the spaces and connection architectural elements such as rooms intermediaries and in relation to the central corridor to increase interaction among family members
Changes in the social concept of woman	Shortening the border of privacy and women`s space at home, accepting the social presence of women in the society and, being extensively involved in activities at home	Eliminating some gender space elements such as the outer courtyard of the corridor	The development of women`s space at home and the decrease of gender-based routes through expansion and development of visual communications in the interior space	The formation of decorating and painting in space and sometimes the use of the image of women in decorating the interior spaces
Changes in the economic system	Tendency for to consumerism The importance of the objects in life	The economic importance of land, smaller houses, minimizing the role of the economic value of the house	Shorter distance between the service space and residential space	The symbolic importance of foreign goods And objects , limited use of furniture

micro levels.

Developments at the macro space brought about simplicity of form, smaller houses, one-courtyard houses, the disappearance of gender role of space by eliminating the courtyards. All the houses studied in the present paper had one courtyard, were under a thousand square meters in size, and their general shape was a rectangle. On the other hand, social and cultural transformation in the family system increased the efficacy in the spatial central organization and highlighted the closed space and the role of courtyard as an agent to organize the space weakened. Interior space was given a great deal of attention and the most important developments can be observed in the development of the interior space and the reduction of the femininity and masculinity space. In four of the homes studied, the central hall was built at the end of the building and two different staircases were used to separate the women's space from the men's space. These staircases lead to the central hall which is the only possible pathway from the outer room to the private room. Out of all the houses studied, only the central hall of Mamghani's house (house No. four) had one staircase. Besides, due to the development of the social interactions of the families and the weakening of the gender role of the space in the houses, the architectural independence of the rooms decreased as most of them are connected to the hallway. On the other hand, the tendency for social differentiation and individuation in houses under study can be clearly observed. The architectural manifestation of such tendency can be seen in the developments at micro-architectural space like stairs, columns, entrance, and the decorations. Table 4 shows the effect of lifestyle changes on the architectural developments of the houses.

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