

# The Impact of Women on the Middle Class Houses of the Qajar Era (Case Study: Northern Cities of Iran)

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## Abstract

Gender expresses the social and cultural identity of men and women in society. It has balance or not, considering various factors such as cultural, religious and social beliefs, norms and values, the level of women and men's liberties in the family and society, the structure of power (patriarchy and maternity) and the degree of their cooperation in providing livelihoods. The purpose of this paper is to study definition of gender in the northern cities of Iran and, in particular, to compare this concept in two cultures of Guilan and Mazandaran in the Qajar era. Although it seems that the Qajar houses of Guilan and Mazandaran are very similar to each other because of the climatic similarity of the two regions; but the comparative study reveals differences in the shape and organization of the space, the degree of privacy, the manner and degree of controlling private and public realms; which is due to the importance of gender components in the formation of traditional housing. The present research claims that limits of privacy and the methods of creating visual and physical barriers in the Qajar houses of Guilan and Mazandaran have been distinguished from one another due to different ways of life in these two regions. This paper first considers cultural differences to measure this claim. Then, it studies the effect of gender identity components on the physical structure and spatial structure of the houses by the selection of eight case examples from the middle class houses in the historical context of cities in Guilan and Mazandaran provinces. The results of the analysis show that life style, livelihood, social relations, religion, security and women's veil have influenced the concept of gender and the difference of this concept in the cultural structures of the two communities has caused obvious differences in the ways for making privacy.

**Keywords:** Women, House, Culture, Qajar era, Guilan, Mazandaran.

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## 1. Introduction

The topic of gender is an adaptable problem based on various factors such as economic, political, social and cultural factors that change with the transformation of society (from the viewpoint of spatial and temporal changes). In other words, it is culture that ranks roles for both genders. Various viewpoints to social phenomena associated with gender, appear in a variety of ways at different times and locations. Hence, "in the future, it can have other manifestations" (Nersicians, 2011: 60). Although the concept of gender and the definition of Personal Space and territory for the inhabitants of the Caspian Sea coast is very similar, but it is not completely identical. This dissimilarity, which can be studied in general form and all spaces of the houses in these areas, could be caused by cultural, environmental, economic and social differences in the two study areas. This article, first of all, emphasizes cultural differences by prioritizing culture in the formation of housing and then, illustrates effectiveness of this culture on the way and rate of controlling the spatial domains in the houses. It should be noted that these cultural differences are considered in the middle class homes of the Qajar era. So, their impact on this category of houses is evaluated. This research assumption is that the classes of the Qajar society are divided into three groups (aristocratic families, middle class and poor class families), from the viewpoint of

social, economic and lifestyle aspects. In this study, the middle class is selected to investigate the components related to the gender, culture and lifestyle of this group and examine the impact of these features on their homes.

The general hypothesis of the study is that "gender and methods of creating gendered boundaries in Qajar houses of Guilan and Mazandaran differ from one another due to different ways of living in these two regions. To evaluate this hypothesis, after reviewing the subject literature and in order to clarify the issue, a number of middle-class houses belonging to the Qajar era are selected and their physical and spatial elements are analyzed.

The questions of this article are as follows:

- 1) Is the shape and spatial organization of Qajar houses are correlated with cultural characteristics in Guilan and Mazandaran?
- 2) Noting the relationship between gender and space, does the reflection of gender differences in two regions affect privacy concept and the ways for making boundaries?
- 3) Which features in the examined houses indicate gender differences?

The results of the study about the abovementioned factors and the comparison of constructional typologies revealed different characteristics of gender identity in spatial domains. This paper analyzes reflection of gender on the confidentiality hierarchy through measuring life style,

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livelihoods, social relationships, religion, security, and women's clothing and their veil.

## **2. Research Background**

There is little documents about the relationship between gender and space in Qajar era of Iran. Some researchers have investigated this subject in present period in Iran. Sadoughianzadeh in her theses "Gender and Space in Tehran" has studied two subjects of gender identity and spatial structure of houses in Tehran today. This topic has been reviewed at three levels of the private space of the house, the semi-private and semi-public space (such as the terrace, the common courtyard and the roof of the residential complexes) and the public space of the city (Sadoughianzadeh, 2008). A Part of the book "a prelude to the feminine narrative of the city" by Sara Naderi, is allocated to the status of women in Iran during the Qajar era. The status of urban women from different classes, and the internal structure of the houses, and also their spatial separation are the topics mentioned in this book. Varmaghani and Soltanzadeh in the book "Gender and Space: public and private realms in Qajar era, Iran" investigates changes in the gender realms of urban, rural and tribal communities in the Qajar period in Iran (Varmaghani and Soltanzadeh, 2015). There is little information about Qajar housing in Guilan and Mazandaran. Professor Bronberger has studied the characteristics of ethnology and its impact on the northern regions' housing in his book "Habitat, architecture et societe rurale dans la Plaine du Guilan" (Bronberger, 1992). Sotoudeh has introduced the historical monuments of northern Iran, and describes its political, social, economic, legal and agricultural history in 10-volume collection of "from Astara to Astarabad". In the first and the second volumes, the works and monuments of Guilan have been illustrated; the historical ones of Mazandaran have been described in 4 and 5 volumes. Khakpour introduces some of the architectural features of houses in this area in her book "Architecture of Guilan's Houses" and examines the impact of climatic and cultural factors on housing form (Khakpour, 2007). Memarian in the book "Identifying Iranian Residential Architecture, Extroverted typs" illustrates native house types in the cities and villages of the northern country (Memarian, 2008). Although previous researchers have assumed that general characteristics of traditional housing in the northern regions are identical, the present research tries to identify the formal and spatial differentiations in the houses of Guilan and Mazandaran in terms of gender identity by relying on the cultural differences between the two regions.

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1. Gender identity and its effective factors**

Based on sociology and its following title, gender sociology, the behavior of women and men does not occur based on their biological differences (Goffman, 1959: 531); but people should also accept certain attitudes and behaviors with the acceptance of the community. In this

context, gender roles are defined as expected behaviors and preferences that a society attributes to every gender (Schaefer & Lamn, 1992: 173). Therefore, the appropriate role for men and women comes from the training that they have received during socialization process (South, 1994: 213). Women and men realize and discover their roles in the process of socialization and they also understand what society's expectations are. Some of these expectations is formed according to the type and amount of family's needs and community's expectances of men and women to earn a living. This means the volume of collaboration between both sexes to solve the issue of livelihood have a direct relationship with the possibility of equality between them. It is clear that gender role has no stable aspect in this discussion, and humans change their behavior according to the culture in which they live. Factors that can affect gender role can be expressed in three general terms: cultural aspects, spatial-geographical aspects and livelihoods. Figure 1 illustrates each of these components. Ann Stoller believes that the economic status is the base of gender role. He says that freedom and power are derived from economy. Freedom means that a person can voluntarily make his product available to the user, and social power means having the power to manage life, work, and production (Stoller, 1977: 93). When two domestic and public spaces are completely separated, those who work outdoors usually get more and more popularity (Martin & Voorihles, 1975: 231). Gender status will be more balanced if activities in both internal and external sections (indoor and outdoor of home) are not completely different "(Nersicians, 2011: 60). Gender is a social-cultural concept that changes through time and space. Therefore, the socio-cultural characteristics of people in different societies affect the way of occupying the realms and qualities of the social space. Physical space of the city and architecture, which includes the social space, is subject to transformation according to changes of gender concept.

### **3.2. Gender and space**

Gender is social and cultural identity that is created and maintained by communities. Different identities require various styles of life and prescribe different architectural forms. Rappaport count gender relations as a part of socio-cultural factors that contribute to the formation of house : "Some characteristics such as the type and time of family members' relationships, also the way of get-together, and the presence of women in the community, as well as the way and amount of men and women's relationships outside and inside the home have been effective in shaping house for any historical period" (Rappaport, 1969: 60-63). He believes that the factors of culture including religious believes, the social structure of the tribe and the family, the way of life, as well as the social communication of individuals, have played an important role in housing and its spatial organization (Ibid: 47).

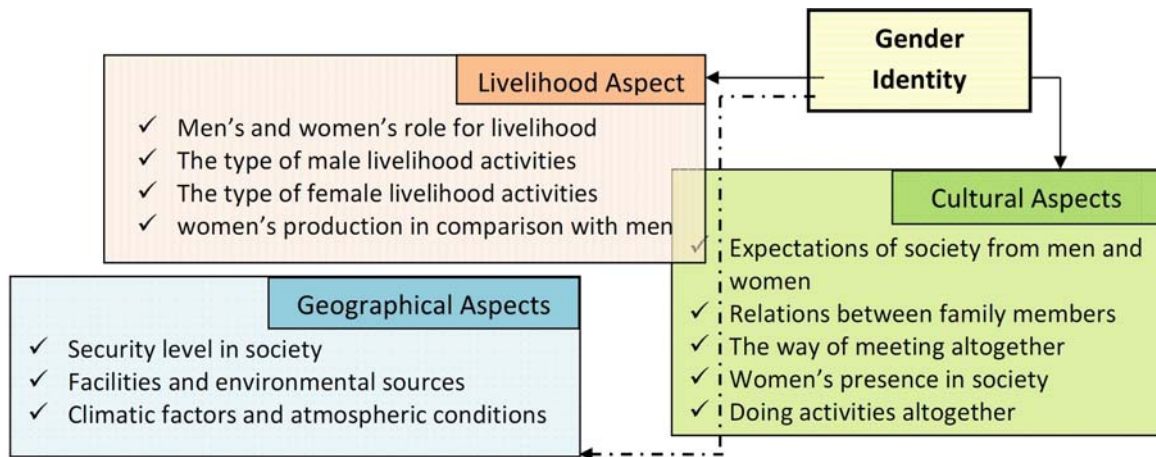


Fig. 1. Effective components on gender

Separation and acquisition of space and subsequently calming at this space is created by the confidentiality. Passing spaces and allowing access to any space is carried out according to a kind of hierarchy that provides tranquility for the inhabitants of the house. The house is a cultural domain that separates us from the others, while it makes our life and coexistence with others possible at the same time (Fazeli, 2007: 36-35). On the other hand, non-verbal behavior is a cultural consequence, and this routine behavior of a person that is results from his cultural background affects his housing.

#### 4. Research Methodology

This article first explores documents and works about social history by using historical-interpretive research

method; in order to explain the cultural differences in the two studied regions. This method causes providing the correct interpretation of any issue in relation to the past era and deducing the facts of each phenomenon. Travel magazines, memoirs and local history books are resources that are used at this stage. Then, in the stage of comparing the houses, the relationship between the components of culture and gender identity with the spatial identity of the houses is studied and compared by using the comparative analysis method. At this stage, the formal and spatial elements of the houses, including entrance, yard, porch, guestroom and kitchen, are studied in terms of positioning and the degree of connection, separation or interconnection of spaces.

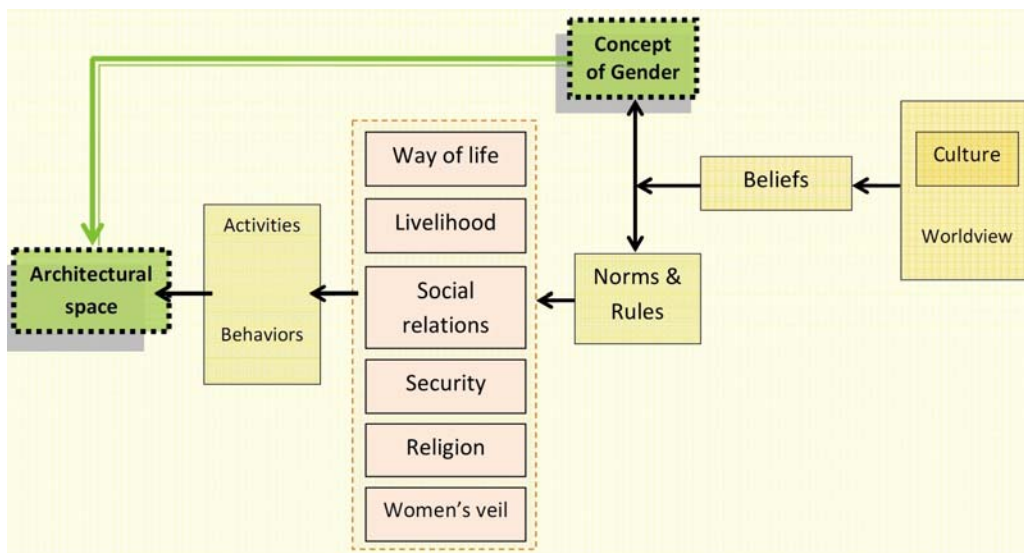


Fig. 2. Cultural Elements Affecting Gender Definition in Architectural Space

#### 4.1 Theoretical aspects of the research

##### 4.1.1 Cultural components affecting the definition of gender

###### 4.1.1.1 Way of life

From the perspective of anthropology, lifestyle is a set of values and meanings that could determine the concept of home in a nation. The way of building a house, inhabitants' feeling about it, the way of doing activities at

the home, and the kind of relationship between home and other dimensions of social life, are some questions that are answered by the lifestyle that is a subset of the totality of the community's culture (Fazeli, 2006). Therefore, seemingly simple day-to-day behaviors generate rules and architectural forms and the details of the home's body bring out the ways to respond to simple needs and daily behaviors. Of course, every space with different furniture

has different meanings. "Curtains, furniture, and organizations that define the territory and privacy of male / female spaces, positive / negative ones and place of reception / place of eating are suggesting that where to eat, where to seat after entrance, and so on" (Rappaport, 2005: 103). Consequently, if architecture is created to respond to similar day-to-day ways of life, it will lead to similar patterns in popular architecture and it also will establish the moral norms of society.

#### **4.1.1.2 Livelihood**

The ways of life affecting public architecture are influenced by factors which one of the most important is livelihoods. According to Jamieson, diverse forms of culture are associated with different types of social life based on economic order (quoted in Giddens, 2008: 141). This statement confirms that economic developments are the basis of change in the way of life as a result of the transformation of social life. The impact of these two factors on each other results in emergence of new patterns in architecture. The way of livelihood affects the relationship between family members and society and the social interaction of women and men. Where all members are continuously involved in collecting income, there is little differentiation between the domestic space (female domains) and the public space (male domains). Studies have shown that gender roles affect livelihoods in terms of gender identity; Gender status is raised when one of the sexes, for example a woman, is trying more or less to earn a living. In this discussion, it is clear that the concept of gender does not have a stable aspect, and humans change their behavior according to the culture in which they live.

#### **4.1.1.3 Social relations**

The interaction between social structure and physical one in the residential unit illustrates the effect of these two factors on each other in the process of housing formation. The peripheral physical environment can cause social environment to be readable and restricted as well. "Organization of environments facilitates social interaction, and the physical environment is a criteria for characterizing individuals and groups" (Rappaport, 2005: 107). Namely, the environment provides the rules for social actions and organizes social groups. Living in a familiar region and among people of our own that we know our practices and habits gives us a sense of security and overcoming fear. This will reduce the need for confidentiality and the tight layers of hijab and privacy. In a society in which knowing individuals from one another cuts limitations for the movement of women due to strong social ties, security is provided, and the requirement to create borders is reduced. According to Newman, the volume of crimes is reduced in places where a high level of human interaction exists; because social commitments and people's attention to each other is high and there is no possibility of isolation (Newman, 1973). Therefore, a good place must be responsive to communication needs (Lang, 2002: 26-25). Ericsson knows social use of housing as a tool that makes it possible for people to deal with and create activities together. "the living space can

prevent or strengthen social encounters and collective activities" (Erikson, 1994: 311).

#### **4.1.1.4 Security**

The issue of security in residential buildings can be linked to the concept of privacy and confidentiality which interacts with socio-cultural variables such as religion, power and gender in different ways. One can admit that "confidentiality depends relatively on the position of women's situation" (Rappaport, 2009: 108). For this reason, women are one of the most important factors influencing the determination of the territory and its characteristics. In addition, other factors, such as social status, privacy, as well as the status and value of a person change and redefine the privacy. "When we look at the house and decide on it, the defensive parameter is certainly effective and has an important role. The use of obstacles, hedges and fences indicate the defensive and inhibition role of these factors. Occasionally, the cause of protection and security can, in contrast to the climatic pattern, lead to the emergence of a pattern that is unconventional. It should be added that the abovementioned factors have a religious significance and role as well" (Ibid: 57).

#### **4.1.1.5 Religion**

There are many examples about the importance of the religion factor and its relationship with the home. The concept of territory and the determination of privacy in Iran and different parts of the world have different effects. In parts of India, similar to those found in central Iran, introverted architecture is observed. In these areas, the buildings are located around the central courtyard, and the enclosure between dwelling and passageway is a simple wall, which is shaped solely due to privacy and visual isolation. Whereas, in the southern part of this country, according to some experts "The issue of curtain and veil is less prevalent, the construction of courtyards are less common, and houses are more open to outward or extroverted" (Rappaport, 2009: 109). The holiness of the house has been seen in different cultures; So that entry into the house is accompanied by some kind of rituals. The gaining of permission for entrance involves certain steps for strangers. The shape of the house and the direction of its placing is determined by religious beliefs.

#### **4.1.1.6 Women's veil**

The style of clothing is involved in relation between people and housing and determination of privacy; because an important part of confidentiality is defined by the type of clothing and the people's attitude to the cover. The individuals' privacy, especially women, that is protected by the concealment of their clothes influences concealment of architectural spaces. Dressing is itself influenced by climatic conditions and environmental facilities, religion and beliefs, social relations, tradition and many other social factors. It is an indication of the ethnic features and people's identity that is an important factor in representing social characteristics. "Coverage

(clothing) establishes communication and transfers clear messages about identity, position, and being membership of groups” (Rappaport, 2005: 73). In fact, the coating has a hidden function. According to Bastide, one of the reasons for the emergence of introverted architecture is how to cover women in hot areas which, along with other factors, has led to the appearance of this type of architecture. "The dry weather of these territories, the invasion of nomadic tribes into cities, the religious beliefs that protect women from the strangers’ look, all have contributed to the architecture of such settlements,

through enclosing the interior of the house with the long walls to provide an environment where family’s women can wear thin domestic clothes in the warm air and do daily work in the yard" (Bastide, 1995: 329). Therefore, if the daily routine clothing style is exposed to public look in conformity with the general custom of concealment, the requirement for covering the layers of the individuals’ daily activities will be eliminated. Table 1 describes the cultural characteristics of gender and the manner of effect on the architecture.

Table 1  
Cultural Indicators Focusing on Gender and the manner of effect on the Architecture

Cultural Indicators	Features	How to Impact Housing
<b>Way of life</b>	A set of values and meanings that determines what the concept of a home is in a nation or folk.	It influences the methods of space utilization and subsequently affects the choice of form and architectural space.
<b>Livelihood</b>	It affects the relationship of family members with the community and the social interaction of women and men.	It determines the social and economic status of individuals and establishes an appropriate architecture for this position in society.
<b>Social relations</b>	It provides opportunities for people to engage in activities together and provide strong social ties.	The location, qualities and type of meeting, its relationships and features are important in shaping the responsive body to this need.
<b>Security</b>	It determines social environment by the physical one and adapts these two spaces.	It indicates the degree of segregation or integration of private / public and feminine / masculine areas.
<b>Religion</b>	It determines the extent and manner of controlling spatial territories and the definitions of privacy and confidentiality.	It is an important factor in determining the exact boundary of house and defining the hierarchy of privatization of space.
<b>Women’s veil</b>	It is a symbol of ethnicity and identity of people and an important factor in representing social characteristics.	It conforms the norms and physical dimensions of the building and the architecture in appropriate with the unwritten rules and norms of society.

## 4.2 Findings of the research

### 4.2.1 Culture and gender in Guilan and Mazandaran in Qajar era

In Guilan, the type of livelihood activities have been more consistent with the pale of influence in collective life in comparison with Mazandaran. The traditional role of gender in livelihoods was reciprocally rely on each other in Guilan. There was no major difference in the private and public life, and these two domains were not so different. Even though, historical surveys show that in Mazandaran, the need for women's labor force in agriculture and horticulture was limited to half a year; So that in this region, in order to provide a living, they had to cultivate wheat and barley, as well as herding, in a part of a year, and these activities required manpower. Rabino refers to livelihoods in Mazandaran that is including fish, as well as planting wheat and barley, which were manly activities:

"Most of the people of Mazandaran are in the mountains during the summer. In Mazandaran, land produce

complete crops only once a year. Bean, wheat and barley are planted in mountainous areas. In the winter, many workers come from the mountains and work in the coastal land. All rivers have abundantly fish, which is the main source of food for the villagers” (Rabino, 1958: 36-34).

Although rice cultivation was a major source of livelihood in Guilan and Mazandaran, but the geographic location of Guilan caused farming to be performed as a female activity all of year. The other livelihood source, such as silkworm keeping and weaving wrapper for bedclothes were female activities. Hence, in the Guilan community, women and men had more and more interconnected relationships and the need for expansion of private realms and protect them was decreased. In this area, since all members have contributed continuously to earn a living; consequently, the legal differences between men and women were very small in comparison with other environments. Men and women domains were not separated from one another in daily activities. There was a relative equality between the two sexes, and this equality

has been based on cooperation between them in northern regions of Iran. The traditional role of gender among the people of Guilan has reciprocated and relied on each other. Men and women were working practically equal out of home from the viewpoint of time period. Making money by women was promoting their social status in the family and was giving them a special position and a base. The remoteness of the residential nuclei of cities and villages from each other caused to form subcultures and, subsequently, sub-patterns in architecture. Nichitin writes about the diversity of houses in these areas:

" Rudbar village is a Gilakish sample, even though as we cross the river and go from the left bank to the right bank, the first community is the Manjil village, which is completely different from the Guilan's houses" (Nichitin, 1975: 138).

On the other hand, the absence of male relatives prevented the formation of multiple domains for them. Therefore, the nuclear family and housing that was corresponding to it, was an obvious feature for these zones. In Guilan, social behaviors and the division of social roles between men and women, and also their cooperation for livelihoods and the boom of local markets and the weekly bazaars, all caused to socialize and exchange services. There were opportunities during which social participation and connection emerged between them. These communal facts provided a sense of security for the presence of women due to the actual and potential presence of people.

Bronberger has written about the distinction of community and architecture of Guilan from other regions: "In Guilan, the facade of the houses can be seen from far away, and this is one of the most original features. This qualification represents a fundamental pattern of the Guilanian lifestyle and culture in which the open element has a preference over the closed element. This pattern shapes both the architecture and the residency manner, as well as the relationship between individuals and the style of women's dress" (Bronberger, 1992: 65).

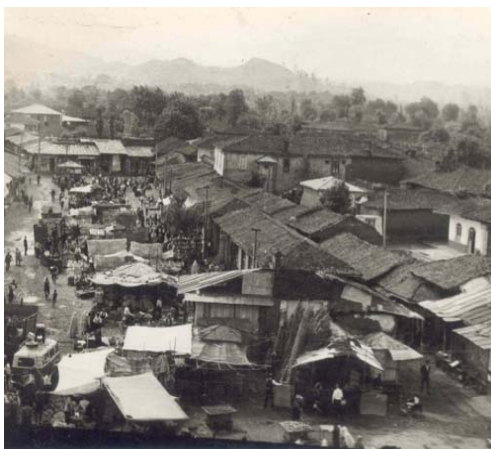


Fig. 3. Active participation and socio-economic interactions of men and women in the weekly market, Lahijan, Guilan (Source: Talebi, 2009)



Fig. 4. The scattered context of the houses of Siahkal city of Guilan province, the Qajar era (Source: Talebi, 2009)

Historical surveys show that the geographical location of the Guilan land is more secure than Mazandaran. Travelogue writers also expressed their opinion on the comparison of religions and prejudices among the people of Guilan and Mazandaran. Among the people of Mazandaran, the importance and attention to religious beliefs and ideas has been more than Guilan. Rabino writes in this regard:

"Although there is no many differences between inhabitants of Mazandaran and Guilan, the Mazandaran people's bias in religious affairs is high due to the large number of Sadat<sup>1</sup> in this region. This bias is often about religious ceremonies and practices" (Rabino, 1958: 36-35).

In contrast, Henry Binder spoke about the culture of the people of Guilan:

"Since the arrival of the Europeans through Rasht to Tehran, the intense prejudice of the people of Rasht has been relatively diminished. I'm excited about the similarity of this city with the cities of Japan" (Binder, 1992: 102).

Thomas Herbert describes the religious space of Amol city in Mazandaran as follows:

"It said that 444 prophets and monarchs are buried in the Friday mosque of the city, and the public show a lot of respect for these monasteries. When I stepped into this mosque, the believers were reading the Quran" (Herbert, 1928: 314).

Documents of social history and architecture show that the influence of religion on community and housings of Mazandaran has been more than Guilan. The analysis of houses in this regard reveals some distinctions in the structure and architectural space. These beliefs have led to a remarkable observation of the attempt to preserve introversion and being walled in the Mazandaran houses, which is different from the extroverted houses of Guilan. On the other hand, in Guilan, where reorganization of individuals from each other caused security to provide because of strong social ties, requirement for creation of borders was reduced. Therefore, in the cities of Guilan and Mazandaran, different degrees of privacy / publicity

were applied. Many tourists consider urban houses similar to rural ones in these zones:

"Rasht is the central city of Guilan province. It is wide and enwalled and like a large village as well. It is surrounded by many plants and gardens; thus one cannot see this city from far distance. The trees were planted around the houses, as they were found around the villagers' homes, greenswards and pastures" (Olearius, 1985: 349).



Fig. 5. Extroverted construction and landscape of cities in northern Iran like rural contexts  
(Source: Flandin, 1958: 315)

Another factor justifying the extroversion of Guilan's houses was the similar style of women's clothing outside and inside the home, which reduced the need for privacy layers. This clothing type, along with the climatic factors, had led to a single behavior in the internal space of the home and abroad of housing. Thus, the culture of Guilan dresses and outward spaces of its architecture in correspondence with each other have been a rethinking of the extroverted architecture. The clothing of the people of eastern Guilan, which is more in close proximity to Mazandaran, has been wider and taller with more dignified colors. The length of dress is a distinctive feature of Mazandarani's clothing. In this area, women's dress was very tall and in most parts of Guilan, the dress was very short (Piroozi and Mirzanejad Movahed, 2010: 24-25). Olearius writes about the northern women's clothes and its relationship with women's economic role and their presence in the public realms: "The task of the woman and the man was isolated and clear on the farm. At that time, women were wearing their best and most beautiful clothes and were exposed to the neighbors' eyes (Olearius, 1985: 348). Benjamin describes Guilani women as having a different dress with women in other regions: "Only women were working on rice paddy. Unlike urban women, they did not have full veil" (Benjamin, 2012: 61). The method of putting women's clothes in the Guilan and Mazandaran areas is directly related to the degree of housing enclosure and its spatial boundaries. Because women's clothes in Guilan, unlike Mazandaran, are the same inside and outside the house and farm; so there is not justification for the various layers of veil and privacy. Also, this is a way of putting clothes which is shorter and lighter due to the type of work and livelihoods of the inhabitants of these areas. So, this way has no contradiction with the privacy of spatial structure of housing. On this basis, there is a different manner for the enforcement of privacy in residential units of these areas.

## 5. Analysis

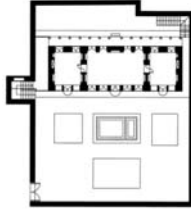
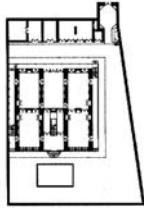
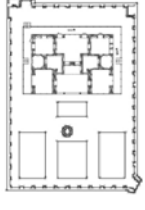
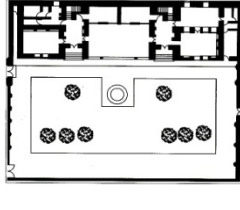


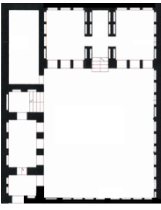
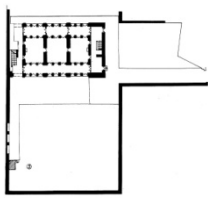
### 5.1 Introduction of studied houses

In this research, by selecting a number of historic houses in the old contexts in the cities of the two provinces of Guilan and Mazandaran, we analyze and compare the shape and spatial characteristics of the houses. For this purpose, 4 houses in Guilan and 4 ones in Mazandaran have been selected as case examples. Selection criteria is the representation of the most significant changes in the structure and form of houses. Furthermore, all cases belong to the Qajar era. The samples were equally selected in two provinces. This means the houses belonging to similar social classes are compared with each other to control the impact of social class variable on research results. "Gender identity" in the middle class of the Qajar community in northern cities of Iran is investigated in this paper; so, "space identity" should also be considered in the houses belonging to the same category. On the other hand, the number of houses remaining from the Qajar period in Guilan and Mazandaran is very limited. The special context of these regions has led to the formation of rural houses in a large number, but urban ones were in a very limited number. The greater part of these surviving houses had been belonging to aristocratic class families, which affects the gender issue differently in these homes. As a result, the size of research's society and its sample size (eight Qajar houses from the middle class families) are very close together. Table 2 presents Qajar houses in the study.

### 5.2 Gender and spatial structure of house, Qajar era

Since repetition of behaviors leads to the formation of norms, the repeated presence of northern women out of the home in the society and workplace due to special geographical conditions led to the formation of norms as well. Different viewpoints to women in different parts of the northern regions of the country had changed the relationship between men and women inside and outside the home. It led to the difference of social space, and consequently the change in the physical space of life and the transformation of the structure of housing and architecture as well. This means that the borders and boundaries of spaces, also the domains of gender and the fixed or variable ones, as well as the number and degree of limitation of gender spaces and the hierarchy from public to private space, had a direct relationship with views to gender in two studied regions. "The barrier can be divided into three categories according to the degree of limitation. The first state is completely rigid, for example a door. In the second type, it is non-solid (e.g., a half-wall, a hallway or a temporary separator); and the latter one can be created by applying the details in the flooring of the spaces that is often accompanied by a psychological state (for example, the difference in flooring, creating stairs, etc.). In general, the possibility of penetrating these spaces will increase from first type to the final one" (Chermayeff & Alexander, 1965: 12).

Table 2  
Plan and location of the studied houses (Source: Cultural Heritage Institutes of Guilan and Mazandaran)

City	Samples			
Guilan				
	Eshkevari House, Rasht	Shirazi house, Rasht	Sadeghi House, Rasht	Poorhemati House, Rasht
Date	1912	End of Qajar era	1875	1887
Mazandaran				
	Babapur House, Babol	Nima Yooshij, Baladeh	Salehian house, Babol	Jaliliyah House, Sari
Date	About 1920	1850	End of Qajar era	About 1870

Comparative study of houses shows that there were more privacy and gender segregation in Mazandaran samples. In the aristocratic houses of Mazandaran, the combination of detailed spaces for interior and exterior applications with rigid obstacles and high walls, all provide privacy. But in the middle class houses, the style of the guesthouse placement and its distance with the private rooms and the kitchen and also the manner of constructing the entrance emphasize the privatization and the division of the arenas. In the Guilan community, where the hours of using private spaces were very short time, the construction of multiple spaces with separate functions and the creation of distinct gender zones in homes was not justified. For this reason, in these regions, there was an attempt to use every room for multiple functions. Each residential space could be used simultaneously for several functions and also for various functions at different times. Therefore, the gender zones of the internal space (female realms) and the outer one (male realms) had been ruled out in this area. Bronberger counts the gender boundaries in the Guilan people's houses as invisible veils:

"There is no space exclusively dedicated to men or women. This non-differentiation of the house rooms in terms of gender is one of the prominent features of the life-style among inhabitants of Guilan area" (Bronberger, 1992: 127).

### 5.2.1 Entrance

The entrance of every house, as an external and internal communication link, expresses the cultural characteristics

of the inhabitants and indicates their beliefs to privacy and veil. It also describes the extent and manner of their social communication. The entrance to the Qajar houses of Mazandaran had lead the people to the various spaces of the house according to the gender (male or female) and their relationship with the family (individual or collective, personal or social, short or long time). The men's knocker (hammer) was usually located on the right side of the gate and the women's one (ring) was on the left side. Some of the alleys were protected by doors and only owned by several households, whether in Guilan or Mazandaran. This is interpreted as a semi-private domain. Households and guests arrived to the private area of the house after passing through the entrance, which was divided to the open space like a courtyard, a semi-open space such as a roofed porch, and also a semi-enclosed space, such as encircled terrace by glass, and finally closed spaces including rooms. This hierarchy of entry was used to prevent an abrupt arrival to private boundary of home and to make a distance between the living space and the outside area. Brugsch describes the entrance of the houses of Rasht city:

"The walls of the houses have no window on the street facades. The entry doors to the houses are small that are usually embedded in such a way that do not exposed the courtyards of the houses to the passersby "(Brugsch, 2010: 57).

"Entering to the courtyard was generally done from its corners, or a place close to them, so that full view of the courtyard space be not permitted at the moment of entry



from the entrance hallway. In this manner, at the beginning of entering the home, the privacy was more important than the ease or speed of movement "(Soltanzadeh, 2005: 12). The entrance of Salehian house is a sample of a controlled one that is a proportion of many Qajar houses in Mazandaran (Figure 6). The entrance of the house had a joint space, which was divided into two parts: one way was led to courtyard and

the other one led to a room located in front of the entrance. This room was separated from the kitchen in lower-level by another hall. Direct access to this space, used as a guestroom, was intended to prevent the guest from penetrating into the private sector of home. Such a pattern caused the guestroom to disconnect from the private space of home in the input section.

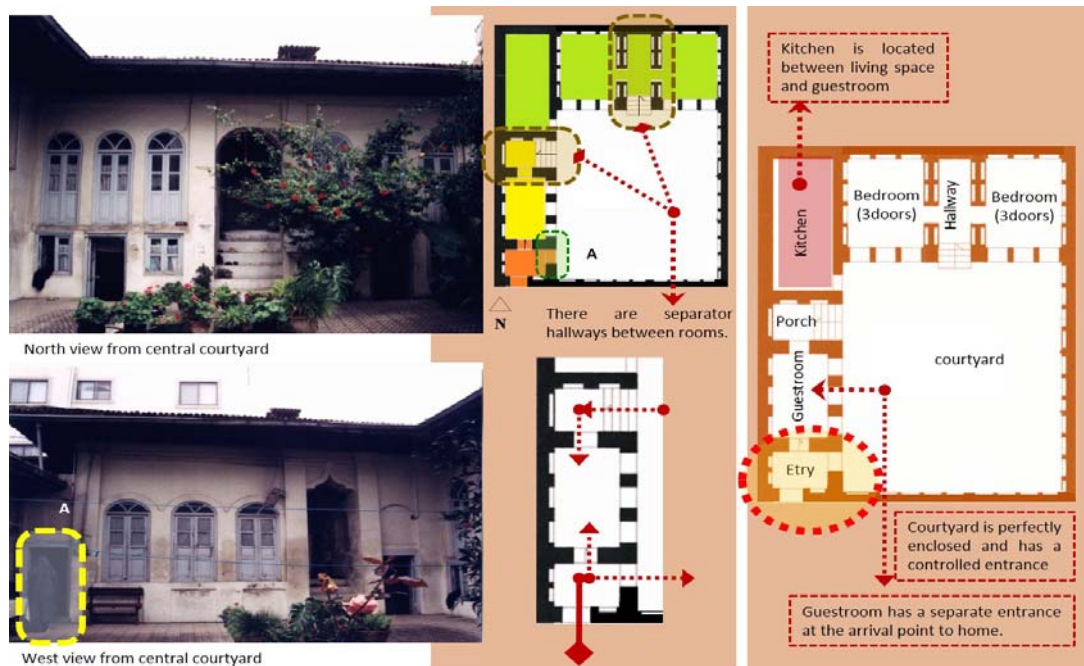


Fig. 6. Salehian House, Babol, Mazandaran: Controlled and indirect entrance is a feature of many homes in Mazandaran

In contrast, the general characteristics of culture in Guilan and the relative security of the region had reduced the need for enclosing of the houses and establishing of the protected entrances compared to the Qajar houses of Mazandaran. It appears to be necessary to determine the domain and maintain the privacy by non-porous walls. But the lack of a solid fence in the Guilan houses indicates a social unity and long-term security in these areas. Babapur house is another example of a house with central courtyard in the mild and humid climate of Mazandaran, which illustrates the impact of other factors in addition to climate on the shape of the house. Entering to the central courtyard has been accompanied by a hierarchy that has led the entrance space to several paths: one of the ways led to the south porch, which was the place of rest and summer reception; the second way to the back yard, the third way to the temporary reception room, and the last one indirectly led to the central courtyard. In addition to the spatial divisions that is seen in the entrance space, arrival into the rooms also took place after passing through multiple layers; so that, one could be directed from the central courtyard to the porch, from the porch to the middle room and ultimately to the main sitting room. Such a pattern was found in many Qajar houses of Mazandaran. The undirected entrance of this house is introduced in Figure 7 and compared with directed one of the Eshkevari house in Rasht, which was a common pattern in the houses of Guilan.

### 5.2.2 Courtyard

The Qajar houses of Mazandaran with its introverted structure had several courtyards with internal, external and services applications and were composed of separate sections. In fact, the courtyard has been the main organizer and regulator of its surroundings. The central courtyard, which was a major element in the homes of Central Iran, also played a major role in the Qajar houses of Mazandaran. The pattern of the central courtyard is even found in the villages of Mazandaran. One of these very different patterns of villagers' houses of Qajar era is the Nima Yooshij father's house in Mazandaran; which, with its introverted pattern, is an expression of the different effects of culture and religion on architecture (Figure 8). The central courtyard had three entrances around which were many rooms. Access hallways that had been designed between each two rooms, caused each space to function independently. The entrances to the central courtyard had an access hierarchy, and a perfect separation between the private and public realms was made by the porches and the indirect hallways. It seems that the difference of the way of life was made the distinction between the form of architecture and also the emergence of a sub-pattern in this rural home.

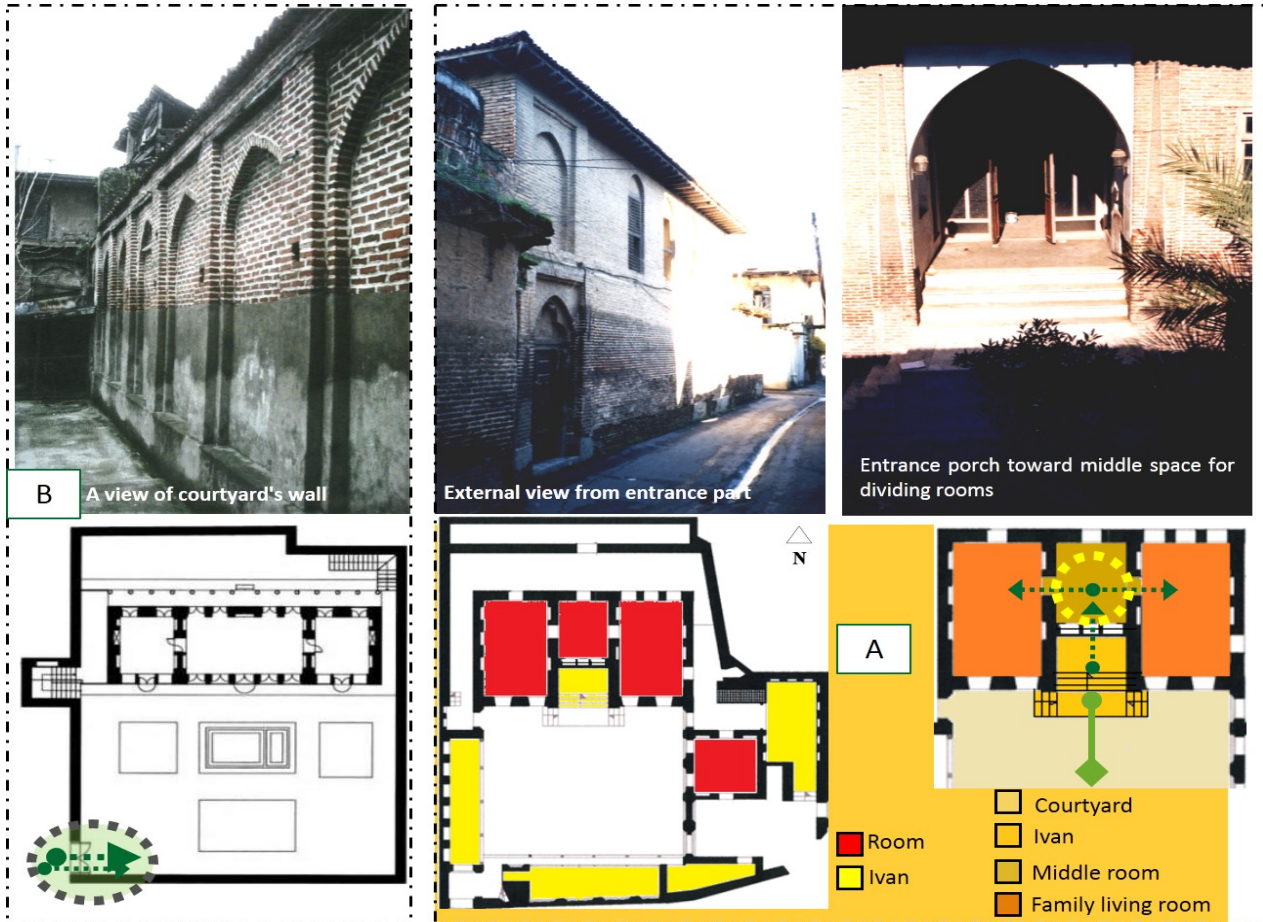


Fig. 7. Comparison of inputs of two middle class houses in Guilan and Mazandaran. A: Indirect Entrance in the House of Babapur, Babol, Mazandaran (a sample of the introverted house) B: direct Entrance of Eshkevari House in Rasht

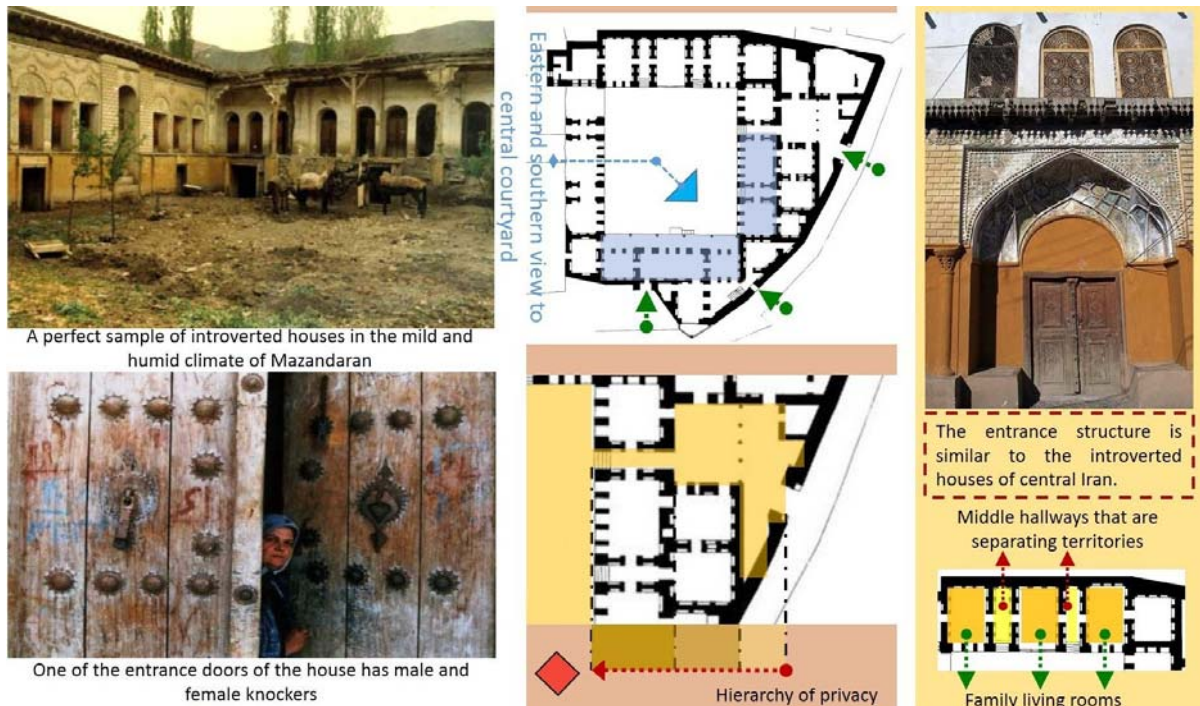


Fig. 8. The Nima Yooshij house in Mazandaran with a central courtyard and introverted structure

Despite, the courtyard in the Qajar houses of Guilan was an integrated and spacious space with universal fencing and multiple direct entrances, around which the interior, exterior, service, and the privacy mansions were positioned. Therefore, the functional realms were not isolated from one another, but they form the whole integrated one. Each of the mansions was an extroverted building with the two usual spaces of Tellar<sup>2</sup> and a universal Ivan.

### 5.2.3 Family living room

Ivan in the homes of Guilan was one of the indications of family life and the gathering space for family members. It was responsive for many functions such as night sleeping, doing homework, entertaining the guest, eating dinner and breakfast, and connection line between rooms. Because the Ivan was the largest room in the house, it was a kind of living space. "Ivan was a space where family members spread dinner cloth and eating together and also relaxed. There, women were busy working and the guests was being entertained until late time at night" (Bronberger, 1992: 110). This space was spread throughout the house facade in all four directions. In addition, there was a large and elevated veranda on the main front side of the house facing the main courtyard garden, which covered the main area and indicated the importance of its function for family members (Figure 9). But in Mazandran, the Ivan

was in more limited facades of the house. If it was in all four directions, it so enclosed as to be part of the interior space (Figure 10). This place was a gendered space at the evening party and dinner one with the use of semi-fixed elements. So that it was applied as a guestroom in the afternoon, by defining the separate domains for men and women in two portions of the Ivan and hanging the curtain between the two territories; while in the morning, the same place was used for daily activities of women, taking care of the children and even cooking.

There was a large Ivan in the vast majority part of middle class houses of Guilan. It was used, sometimes as a family living room and other times a guestroom by transforming semi-permanent elements. But Ivan was narrower in the aristocratic houses of Guilan, and was merely converted into service corridors and the way of connection between the rooms. In these houses, where privacy layers and restriction was more intensively applied, family living space was transferred to the room of sash window and the guestroom was located in the enclosed space of mirrors saloon and China hall that were much decorated. It could be seen that the number of rooms with separate functions was increased in proportion to the importance of privacy and gender segregation. Confidentiality was applied by fixed elements in aristocratic houses (such as walls) and with non-solid elements (curtains) in middle class houses

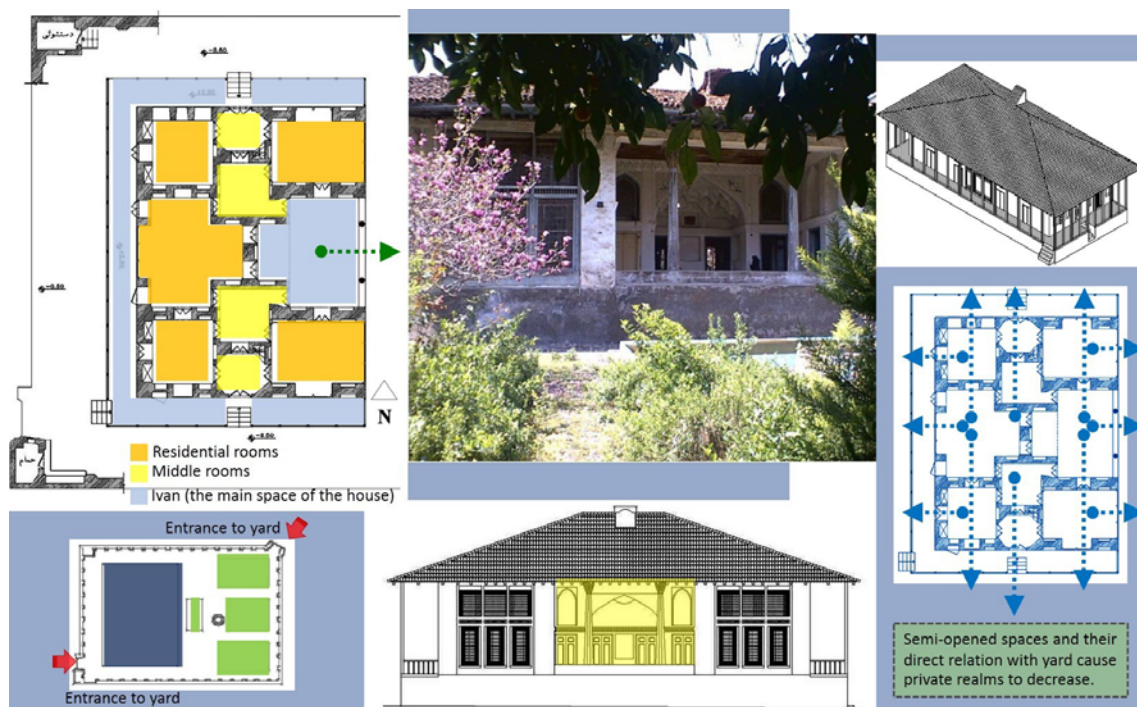


Fig. 9. Mohammad Sadeghi's House, Rasht; most of the space of this house is a large Ivan that has been sometimes used as a family home and in the other times as a guestroom by transforming the semi-solid elements

There was a large Ivan in the vast majority part of middle class houses of Guilan. It was used, sometimes as a family living room and other times a guestroom by transforming semi-permanent elements. But Ivan was narrower in the aristocratic houses of Guilan, and was merely converted into service corridors and the way of connection between

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was increased in proportion to the importance of privacy and gender segregation. Confidentiality was applied by fixed elements in aristocratic houses (such as walls) and with non-solid elements (curtains) in middle class houses. Although Ivan was used both as a family living space and a guestroom in the houses of Mazandaran, but these two functions were carried out on separate porches, with the privacy of each section. Jaliliya house in Sari (Figure 10) had both Ivan and Tellar across all three floors. But on the ground floor and the first one, these elements were enclosed in the facade and were only recognizable by the plan of the building. The Tellar of the second floor, a semi-open and no surrounded space, was a place reserved for guests and did not require privacy. There, the home space, somehow, respected to the domains of women and men. Since women were generally coming and going in Ivan on the ground floor, men spent their time in Tellar on the second one. In fact, the extroverted sections of the house were applied as exterior parts and guest rooms.

#### 5.2.4 Guesthouse

As mentioned in headline 8-3, the porch in the houses of Guilan was a place with multiple functions. A part of the Ivan, which was stately, high and broad, was placed in the main view and was dedicated to the reception of guest during the summer. The same space in the homes of Mazandaran had a greater disconnection from the private zones and the realms of women. Indoor and outer spaces

of Mazandaran's aristocratic houses were separated from each other by the independent courtyards at the entrance section. But in Guilan, the two mansions were located inside a courtyard and linked to one another.

#### 5.2.5 Kitchen

Kitchen, as a female gendered space, was more sensitive than the other spaces in relation to the issue of confidentiality; because the distance or separation of this space from other areas of the house, especially the guest area, indicates the viewpoint to gender in the culture of various societies. The kitchen was a separate room between the living one and the guestroom in the middle class houses of Mazandaran. This place was converted into a separate area between the interior and the outer complex in the house of the aristocratic families and in the small houses of poor families, it was a part of the living room, which was a women's realm at the time of party. But in the houses of Guilan, it could not be expressed a certain zone for the kitchen. A part of the cooking activity was done inside the porch or in the closed room at the latter space of the house. In some cases the storage and kitchen were merged on the first floor. The cooking activity was performed in different sections of the house in the various seasons of the year. Therefore, the kitchen in the homes of Guilan was not isolated and reserved space, but was in relation to other areas of the house.

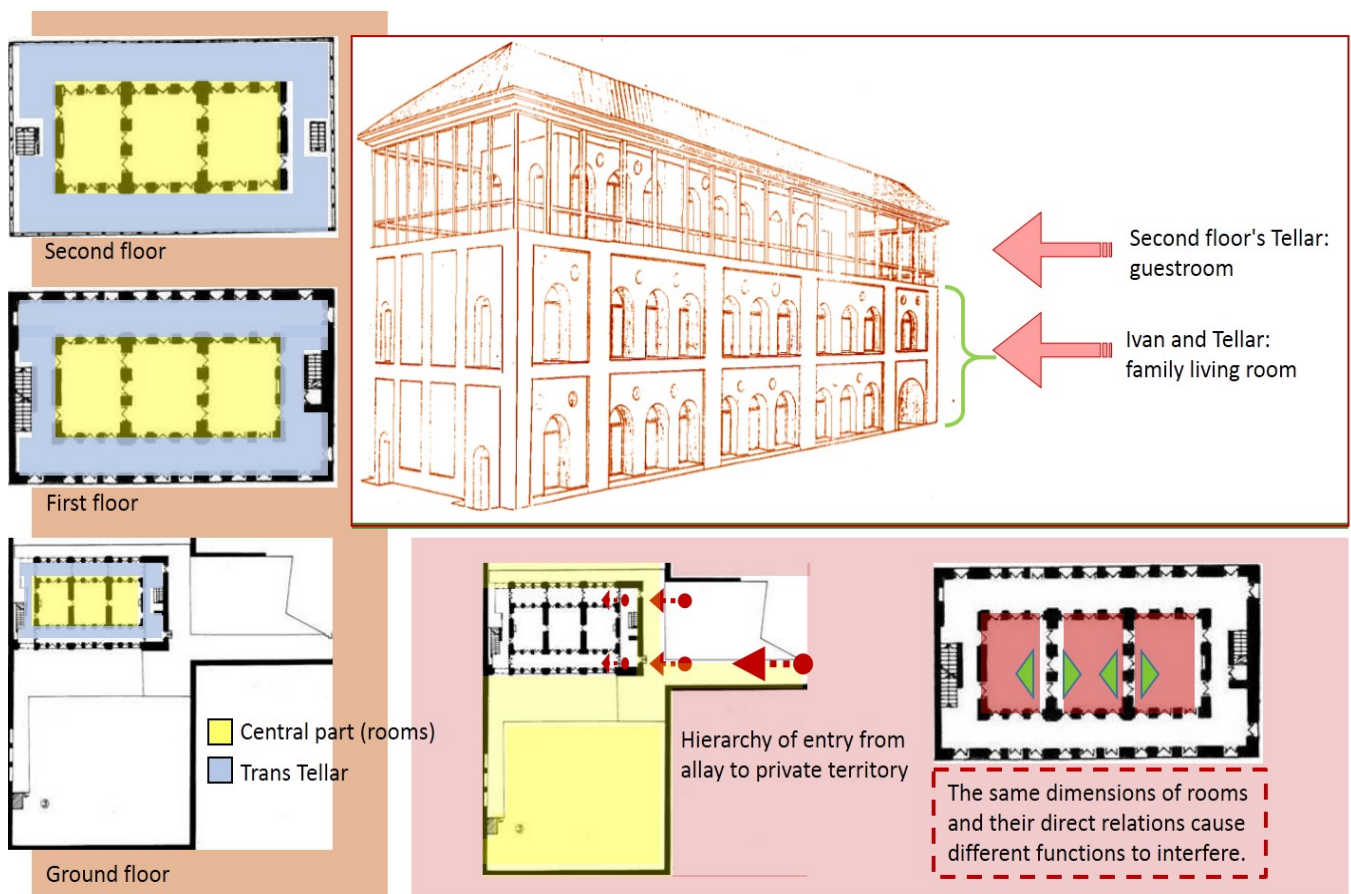


Fig. 10. The house of Jaliliyah, Sari; the porch in the houses of Mazandaran turns into enclosed space

Table 4  
Comparison of physical elements of houses

Space pattern	Mazandaran	Guilan
<b>Entrance</b>	It was controlled and has a vestibule and an indirect hallway.	It was lead to the main courtyard directly.
<b>Courtyard</b>	It had center-oriented structure that was surrounded by rooms from two, three or four directions.	The main courtyard was located in the entrance and a small courtyard, as a ventilator, was in the back of the house
<b>Family living room</b>	The verandah, enclosed with glasses or arches, had summer living space function. The winter living room was in the private sector and was separated from adjacent spaces by corridors.	Ivan was a multi-functional space, sometimes used as a family living space and sometimes for guest reception.
<b>Guestroom</b>	It was located in front of the entrance or the first room after entering the porch, which was separated from the family living room by the hallway.	Ivan was a multi-functional space, sometimes used as a family living space and sometimes for guest reception.
<b>Kitchen</b>	It was a separate room between the living room and the guesthouse.	There was no fixed space for the kitchen. Ivan, storage room or yard was used as a kitchen at different times of the year.

#### 5.2.4 Guesthouse

As mentioned in headline 8-3, the porch in the houses of Guilan was a place with multiple functions. A part of the Ivan, which was stately, high and broad, was placed in the main view and was dedicated to the reception of guest during the summer. The same space in the homes of Mazandaran had a greater disconnection from the private zones and the realms of women. Indoor and outer spaces of Mazandaran's aristocratic houses were separated from each other by the independent courtyards at the entrance section. But in Guilan, the two mansions were located inside a courtyard and linked to one another.

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in the various seasons of the year. Therefore, the kitchen in the homes of Guilan was not isolated and reserved space, but was in relation to other areas of the house.

#### 6. Conclusion

In the definitions of domain and realm, there are different degrees of protection and privacy with different levels. Boundary is defined by various concepts of confinement, and "in fact, confinement indicates its presence through the boundary" (Norberg-Schultz, 2016: 92). The study of Qajar homes in Mazandaran has made it clear that factors such as religion and the way of meeting with others have affected the spaciousness of the spaces. In Mazandaran, where bias and religion have a higher profile, privatization affects the shape and organization of the house more than extroversion; because the home structure should be respond to this need. The meeting with relatives and neighbors and visiting acquaintances, all should be done in the interior space of the home. The gender segregation in parties, the ceremonies of ta'zieh<sup>3</sup> and mourning, as well as the expansion of the initial family, each required some spaces appropriate to these interactions. In the urban homes of Mazandaran, the introversion and superiority of the interior effects of the house in comparison with its external effects was important. In these houses, due to its moderate and humid climate, it has always been trying to provide good living conditions by making air flow. On the other hand, cultural values had led to the creation and adherence of some principles such as privacy, introversion, and orientation of the home. In Guilan, more social connections of men and women in the form of trade, rice cultivation and

livelihoods, that was current among middle class families had influenced the general definition of culture and had reduced physical boundaries in architecture of the region. Thus, the need for multiple layers of veil, the separator corridors of the arenas and the visual barrier between the indoor and outdoor areas was somewhat undermined in the region, in accordance with cultural differences with other areas. But this issue was prevalent in central Iran and even was partly common in Mazandaran.

#### Notes

1. is an honorific title denoting people accepted as descendants of the Islamic prophet Muhammad through his grandsons, Hasan ibn Ali and Husayn ibn Ali (combined Hasnain), sons of Muhammad's daughter Fatimah and his son-in-law Ali (Ali ibn Abi Talib).
2. Ivan at the second floor in houses of Guilan and Mazandaran
3. In Persian cultural reference it is categorized as Condolence Theater or Passion play inspired by a historical and religious event, the tragic death of Hussein, symbolizing epic spirit and resistance.

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