

THE MODERN WOMAN VIS-À-VIS THE MODERN HOUSE: THE HALLMARKS OF MODERN NATIONHOOD THROUGH THE 1920s-1940s IRAN (1)

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1. This paper has been written based on an unpublished Ph. D. dissertation entitled as 'Woman and Home in Iran; the Impact of Ideological Tides through Modernization and Islamization', by Sima Nabizadeh under the supervision of Türkan Ulusu Uraz in Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus.

The Orientalist point of view emphasizes the duality between modern countries and pre-modern ones, where modernity was desired and the West was perceived as a complete model to imitate. Obviously, the Middle East did not experience the western way of achieving modernity, often referred to as the "carnival of changes" (Shageyan, 1989 cited in Göle, 1996, 28). Instead, as explained by many scholars, the construction of Western modernity in the Middle Eastern Muslim context mainly dealt with integrating the oppositional notions of the East and the West; Islam and Modernity, tradition and civilization.

The interwoven relationship between the woman, as one of the main preservers of tradition, and the home, as the container of backward customs, renders the woman's position and the domestic sphere significant in the process of modernization. Scholars such as Duben and Cem (1991), Campo (1991), Chatterjee (1993) and Ghannam (2002) have tried to map the ties between gender, domestic space, and religion in addition to the socio-cultural and political issues in the Middle Eastern way of dealing with modernity. In Turkey, scholars such as Z. F. Arat (1998, 1999), Durakpaşa (1998), Y. Arat (1998) and Baydar (2002) have investigated the prominent role and the special position of women in the family and homes designed by the Nation-Building program. Likewise, in Egypt, Badran (1996), Pollard (2005) and Baron (2005) explored the same subject area under the reign of Muhammad Ali. They discussed the significant efforts of middle class women within and beyond domestic arena in gaining national independence.

The active agency of middle class women in the Middle East was discussed by Abu-Lughad (1998) and Keddie (2007), who criticized the orientalist viewpoint towards Eastern women, which viewed them as victims of traditions and inactive citizens through the modernization process. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary attitude towards the modern home (as opposed to traditional ones housing the extended families) and

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2. The period from the 1920s up to the 1940s in Iran's history has been labeled as the Nation-Building era, when the first Pahlavi state (1925-1941) initiated by Reza Pahlavi became the ruling house.

3. The constitutional era emerged after constitutional revolution (1905-07) during the Qajar dynasty (1785-1925), when Iranian intellectuals started to fight for emancipating the nation from backward traditions and raised their voices for having an independent country.

its importance in representing the western way of life of its habitants (nuclear families) has been explored at a national level by specialists such as Kandiyoti (1992), Bozdoğan (2001), Pollard (2005) and Bertram (2008). These studies have claimed that through the Nation-Building program in Turkey and Egypt, the modern home has been viewed as a sign of the modern nation and a model for professional architects to imitate.

In Iran, similar to Egypt and Turkey, with the emergence of the Nation-Building program, the home was considered as a locus in which the state could define a new relationship with its nation (2). In this regard, women were responsible for building this relationship in accordance with the state ideologies.

The constitutional period (1905-07) paved the path for emergence of the Nation-Building program in Iran. This program has been widely studied by scholars such as Yilmaz (2013), Zubaida (2011) and Schayegh (2010), who have tried to clarify the fundamental changes applied by the state with the aim of improving civic life and modernizing the country. Mentioned changes included the modification of civil administration, the judiciary, the national economy, the educational system, the army, public health, and also transitions in religious atmosphere and intellectual climate (Banani, 1961). The early concept of modern woman appeared during the constitutional period (3). The socio-cultural view towards women was harshly criticized by intellectuals who saw women as the nation's first teachers and producers rather than being trapped in ignorance and unawareness (Amin, 2002). Moreover, issues such as misogyny and polygamy were criticized as barbaric and symbols of the backwardness of Iranian society. As Moghadam (2003) explains, through the constitutional period and the first Pahlavi era, women's emancipation was primarily emphasized as a pre-requisite factor for achieving a modern nation. Women's new roles and position within the society and the provision of jobs and demands of public life broke the taboos that restricted women's duties within the domestic arena. The establishment of the Women's Awakening Project (from 1936 until 1941) and modifications to the marriage law (in 1931) were actually parts of the government propaganda campaign through which the modern secular nation showed its modern tendency towards the Woman Question. The concept of modern woman in Iran has been clarified by historians and sociologists such as Najmabadi (2005), Amin (2002), Hoodfar (1993) and Moallem (2005). The efforts of these scholars can be categorized in explicating the transition of the Woman Question in terms of unveiling, women's job opportunities and their public lives along with family law and women's status within the domestic realm. Moreover, they have tried to criticize the position of Iranian women as passive citizens in the public realm.

As mentioned earlier, the home, within and beyond its physical boundaries, had a prominent position in national discourse. Architecture and urbanism can be considered as one of the main tools through which modernist states can manifest their new attitudes and national progress (Bozdoğan, 2001). As addressed by other scholars, architecture and urban planning were transformed into state-controlled stages for social, political, and economic expression of nationalist movements, "providing the tools of modernization across the nation" (Modarres, 2006; Grigor, 2009 cited in Bagheri, 2013, 46). The same approach was adopted by the first Pahlavi state. Reza Shah, the founder of Pahlavi dynasty, began by modernizing Tehran, the capital city of Iran, which best represented the

rapid modernization of the country (4). He employed many Iranian and foreign architects and established the State Developing Program to initiate the construction of public buildings and consequently a new way of life for citizens. Modern architecture was commissioned as a tool to express, signify and convert the national identity of Iranians based on their glorious ancient empire period before the arrival of Islam into the country (5). The initial forms of modern architecture paved the path for breaking with the existing Islamic and Qajar traditions (6). Affected by the new tendencies in the architecture of public buildings, the modern house was also perceived as an arena through which the secular state was able to transfer its new ideologies to the nation, based on European patterns.

As mentioned above, the concept of the Nation-Building program, the modern woman and the modern house have been individually reported by many studies. However, the relationship between the modern woman and the modern house through the Nation-Building process in Iran has been largely ignored. This research mainly focuses on the ways in which the first Pahlavi state worked for to modernizing both Iranian women and houses, and introducing them as the hallmarks of its success during the emergence of the Nation-Building program. The paper also contributes the existing literature by comparing the substance and the output of two decrees by Reza shah: to modernize women and to modernize houses.

In this research, evolution of women's position within public and private arena in Iran has been investigated mostly through works of historians and also the periodical press of the time. The main limitation in studying the changes of Iranian domestic realm is the lack of an architectural archive. Since architectural documents were not required until decades after the first Pahlavi era, there are limited architectural sources for relevant research interests. Most of the houses from the first Pahlavi period have been demolished. Hence, key sources for investigating the early Pahlavi housing typologies has been provided through: analyzing the architecture of houses designed by famous architects along with architectural manifestos by Iranian architects published in magazines of the time, the fieldwork studies of several scholars in the 1980s and the observation of a few maintained residential buildings by authors. It is worth mentioning that analyzing the Iranian modern house -which is itself an expanded research- is not the focus of this article; but the list of changes in the physical and non-physical aspects of the Iranian house, which led to secularization and westernization of the domestic realm are within the scope of this research.

Moreover, discovering the impacts of the state's orders over woman and house and the way through which people responded to the brand of modernity -imposed by the First Pahlavi - has been investigated through published press during the Second Pahlavi era. The challenge between Islam and modernism in Iranian society is still ongoing; likewise, both the Woman Question and domestic space are still of major concern to the Islamic state and the secular intelligentsia. Therefore, although this research focuses on the first Pahlavi era, it may also pave the path for understanding the present situation of the Woman Question and the domestic realm in Iran.

The present study includes three interrelated sections. First the interwoven relationship between the woman and the home through the pre-modernist era and then within the Nation Building program will be explicated. The effort of the first Pahlavi state in modernizing women and the impacts of modifying orders in women's lives will be discussed in second section. In

4. Towards the end of the century, Reza Shah Pahlavi has been introduced as one of the high-modernist figures in the history of Nation-Building programs, striving for fundamental reforms and rational engineering in all dimensions of the social medium (Scott, 1998 cited in Schayegh, 2010).

5. Archaemenid empire period (330-550 Before Common Era), is the most powerful and glorious monarchy in Iranian history. Through the Reza Shah's reign, state's architects tried to revive and resemble some of the architectural motifs of this era in public buildings.

6. Here Islamic and Qajar traditions refer to gender segregation and the public-private dichotomy within the Iranian house.

third, the alternation of Iranian new homes and the ways through which people negotiated the imposed modernizing tendencies in the architectural features of houses will be explained.

THE WOMAN VIS-À-VIS THE HOUSE IN NATIONAL DISCOURSE

There is a strong body of feminist writing emphasizing the close relationship between woman and house, wherein woman as a mother, wife, daughter and servant acts as a nurturer and caretaker. She is the one who forms the sense of security and comfort within boundaries of the nest, which in turn, confine her (Mallet, 2004, 62-89; Blunt, 2005, 505-15; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). The house, isolated from the dangerous, risky, brutal and masculine life of the outside, is an apolitical, safe and static arena. Similarly, the woman running this territory is also detached from the public sphere, stuck with devalued housework and unaware of what is going on outside the house (Rosaldo, 1974, 17-42; Gillian, 1993).

Meanwhile, many writers have addressed the resemblance between woman and house, and have drawn an analogy between her body and the concept of domestic space. Best (1995, 181-194) refers to theories in which questions of symbolic meanings of space and woman go hand in hand, referring to space as a container of human habitation. Likewise, woman's body is able to contain life within itself. Jolas (1958, 14) explicitly refers to the "maternal features of the house" and states, in his own words, that "the house is a woman, a warm, cozy, sheltering, uterine home".

In line with this connection between the concepts of woman and home, an example can be cited from pop culture in Iran, which corroborates this claim in a more materialist way. A prevalent word in Qajar literature, *Manzel*, was a common nomenclature referring to both the home and the woman in Iranian society. Aside from the metaphoric similarity between the two meanings, the use of this term truly reveals the woman's attachment to the home. Calling a woman not by her own name, but by a word related to property reveals her status as one of man's possessions unrecognized outside the boundary of the home. Relegating the woman to a possession bound to the domestic arena and branding her as one of man's belongings reveals the patriarchal system of masculine power in Iran.

Rosaldo (1974 cited in Kılıçkiran, 2013) argues that assigning women to the domestic arena was not related to their reproduction and service-providing roles, rather it was culturally constructed. Furthermore, Harvey (1990, 418-34) states "the assignment of place within a socio-spatial structure indicates distinctive roles, capacities for action, and access to power within the social order". The Woman's marginal role within the family and the society at large is a socio-culturally constructed concept reflected in the spatial configuration of the home (Ardener, 1981; Uraz and Gülmez, 2005). This is apparent from the assignment of separate spaces to men and women in traditional Iranian homes. As anthropologist Khatib-Chahidi (1981 cited in Ardener, 1981) notes, the spatial configuration of the traditional Iranian home and its gendered space has been determined based on kinship between men and women. Men and women who according to their affinity (as defined by Islamic jurists) are not allowed to marry each other, are called mahram. Mahrams are not permitted to share the same space. On the other hand, those who are *namahram* (not *mahram*) to each other are not allowed to be alone together in any place, since there is always the danger of committing a sin. The separation of the domestic and public spheres and

also the division between *andaruni* (the private zone) and *biruni* (the public zone) of Iranian homes had its roots in the aforementioned religious and cultural rules, proposing gender segregation within the domestic realm. This division may prove what Campo (1991) refers to as applying the religious rules in the architecture of housing.

Through the Qajar period, gender segregation was also prevalent in the public sphere in Iran, and women's public presence was very limited. It was extremely rare to see unknown and unrelated men and women socialize with each other within the public arena. Instead, homo-social relations were very common in the society. By the late years of the Qajar dynasty, women's absence from the public realm was criticized by the intellectuals of the time as a motivation for preserving the society as a gender-segregated unit and consequently, on a larger scale, giving currency to homosexuality. Nevertheless, many Europeans misread some common behavior among Iranians, such as men kissing each other as a form of greeting or holding hands which may be regarded as suggestive gestures of homosexuality (Najmabadi, 2005). The bi-directional contact between Iran and Europe led many Iranian intellectuals to be influenced by the orientalist point of view and to perceive the gender-segregated society as one of the main obstacles on the path to modernity. Moreover, women's veiling and their hidden bodies from the men's gaze came into consideration as a symbol emphasizing the separation between the two sexes in the public realm.

Iranian modernity needed to be confirmed by the West, so it had to get rid of the social hallmarks emphasizing the backwardness of Qajar society. These backward hallmarks were summed up in the practice of veiling women and gender segregation within the public and private arena. Hetero-socialization seemed to be an appropriate way to pull women out of the domestic space and to pave the way for new ways of communication between men and women. Therefore, the unveiling decree by Reza Shah Pahlavi was supposed to break the taboo of having men and women mingled within the public realm.

Literature on both concepts of the new woman and the new house dates back to around 1925. By reviewing the press of the time, one could easily see the striking resemblance in the way both of these concepts have been introduced to society. Both were intimately engaged with the physical and mental growth of the nation. European patterns were applied to both in order to achieve a simple modern appearance (Karimi, 2013). The new Iranian woman was supposed to be educated, professional and finally modern. Her abilities and tastes would be evaluated by the simple and modern appearance of her home as well as her physical appearance; moreover, hygiene, simplicity and efficiency became the most important characteristics of the modern house. Traditional houses were criticized on grounds that they did not provide comfort, hygiene and a suitable atmosphere for modern families. Meanwhile, after almost 20 years, during the second Pahlavi regime, when professionals started to re-evaluate the arrival of modern architecture into the country, Vartan Avanesian (1960), a famous Iranian architect, published an article in *Memari-e Novin* magazine and drew an interesting analogy between traditional houses and Iranian women:

"Those who remember, know well that the buildings in this big city [Tehran], like female communities, were hidden under black veils. Their only connection to the outside was provided through very tall and boring



Figure 1. The caption reads: "Sister, look how lucky they are, they have windows!" The women look with envy to the prison (left), because it at least has windows, unlike their own home (right), labeled "Home of Muslim Women" C. KELLER, Ch (2011), *Slavs and Tatars: Molla Nasreddin: The Magazine That Would've, Could've, Should've*, JRP| Ringier, Zurich; 27.

Figure 2. The caption reads: The Azeri woman turns to another (in Azeri): "Sister, what a horror! Who are these people?" The European woman asks her husband (in Russian): "Damn it! What is it with these monsters?" KELLER, CH (2011), 2011, *Slavs and Tatars: Molla Nasreddin: The Magazine That Would've, Could've, Should've*, JRP| Ringier; Zurich; 9.

walls and ugly and iron knockers... no one could remove these black and upsetting barriers which surrounded a man's house, nor could anyone open a window or balcony from his living room towards the outside. In these days, just like the woman, who was imprisoned in her home and was used to living like a prisoner, buildings and gardens in the capital were also enclosed by tall walls. Moreover, as there were no smiles on the woman's face, the appearance of the buildings behind the walls also seemed sad and stern" (Avanessian, 1960, 4-9).

However, even earlier, during the late Qajar period, traditional houses had already been criticized by renewalists. In this regard, *Molla Nasreddin* a popular press of the time, published an illustration in which the exterior solid walls of traditional houses were compared to the walls of a prison (**Figure 1**).

During the first Pahlavi monarchy, with the spreading of modern trends in architecture, the modern house rid itself of the public and private dichotomy and became unveiled and free of heavy architectural features of the Qajar period; likewise, Iranian women were forced to unveil and dispose of the backward traditions of Qajar. Meanwhile, as it will be explained, both the Iranian house and woman remained under the power of the patriarchy as their new patron (the modernist state) imposed a new system of control over them.

Along with the Nation-State program, the socially constructed roles for women underwent considerable modification and change. The Pahlavi State believed that education would turn Iranian girls into better mothers and wives. While, at the same time, education would help them to become professional employees and gain more visibility in public. The concept of educated and working women soon became a very controversial issue among the clergy, intellectuals and feminists. The debate is apparent through *Iran-e Emruz*, a periodical press, which was printed during the period ranging from 1939 till 1940. In the second volume of *Iran-e Emruz*, readers shared their point of view about educated and working women. On the one hand, some readers believed that changes in motherhood chores and providing job opportunities for women would free them from only serving the role of the mother and wife. Instead, women could finally be recognized as individuals in the society rather than merely being good wives and responsible mothers. On the other hand, some readers of the magazine still believed that keeping women inside the home would strengthen the family's core and would also protect men's honor. They believed that the only contribution of women towards building the modern

society was to be educated enough to become a good teacher for their children, who were believed to be the future of the nation (Sayyah, 1940).

The adopted policy of the state towards women at the time was paradoxical in that women widely encouraged to participate in the public realm, play a role in the modernization process and unwound themselves from traditional beliefs and culture. Ironically, their main duty was also defined as the nurturer of their family, which metaphorically referred to the nation, and the initiator of modernization from the domestic realm, which was referred to the homeland on a larger scale.

MODERN WOMAN: UNVEILED BODY, VEILED FEMININITY

The private versus public dichotomy in Middle Eastern studies is often discussed in conjunction to other dualities, such as traditional versus modern and Islam versus the West. As Göle (1996, 30) mentions, “the position of women [in the Middle East] is the determining factor in these conflicts framing existing dualities, such as Islam/the West, traditional/modern, equality/difference and *mahram/namahram*, private/public”.

The Eastern woman’s veiled body was perceived by intellectuals and modernists as a declaration that Islamic ideology opposed Western modernity. Meanwhile, veiling has been a constant symbol of backwardness and has had a long history in strengthening the dichotomy between the East and the West. Historians with a modernist approach such as Najmabadi (2005), Paidar (1997) and Amin (2002), refer to the woman’s veil as an obvious symbol of cultural distinction between Iran and Europe. Moreover, they perceive veiling as the most evident sign of gender segregation and a hallmark of the homo-society. No other symbol could more clearly reveal the otherness of Islam for Westerners. Therefore, the female body is interpreted by the West as a political site of dissimilarities and a battlefield in which it normalizes its standards and exports them to other nations through westernization and modernization (Amin, 2002, Najmabadi, 2005) (**Figure 2**).

The concept of the civic body and its transformation could itself be the layout for studying the process of modernization, capitalization, Islamization and globalization within Iranian society and also transformation from one to another. The body, as Foucault (1977) pointed out, could be considered as a ground in which culture turns individuals into subjects. Evidently, negotiating the boundary of the body and its given civic code, which has the potential to bestow gender and at the same time to strip it away, will be taken in this study as a result of modernization in Iran. During the Pahlavi era, the civic body turned into a unifying object in the service of the Nation-State Program, helping it through the westernization and modernization process (Moallem, 2005).

Through the first Pahlavi era, as Reza Shah aimed to unify all communities within the country, he stopped all independent feminist movements, which had mostly been established during the constitutional period. He established a unified women’s organization and assigned her daughter, Ashraf Pahlavi, as its head. The organization defended a wide and very intelligent project between 1936 and 1941 which was entitled the Women’s Awakening. The organization was designed to follow the State’s policy to provide educational programs for women, offer them new job opportunities and reform the family law in favor of women (7). In return for these chances, women were required to apply the modern agenda

7. According to the family law, men could still wed an unlimited number of temporary wives. Divorce remained to be the husband’s right, and even the woman’s presence was not necessary when the man wanted to divorce her. After divorce, the custody of the children was handed to men, although daughters could stay with their mothers until the age of 7 and sons till the age of 2. However, several reforms were imposed on family law by the secular state in 1931. According to the new law, the issuance of marriage and divorce became compulsory, marriage and divorce had to be registered at the time in civil bureaus, and no longer in clerical courts. The minimum age for marriage also increased. According to religious laws, the age of puberty for girls was recognized as 9 and for boys as 15. Those ages were later modified for girls to 15 and for boys to 18.

to their own daily life and were also asked to appear unveiled in public (Amin, 2002). However, in the modernization process, as narrated by history, the program was much more committed to the women's public face rather than their situation behind the closed doors of their homes.

Reza Shah (1936) himself referred to the state demands from women in one of his speeches:

"... You ladies should take advantage of the opportunity to work . . . and to educate . . . you have now entered the society, have moved ahead to guarantee your own happiness and to contribute to the welfare of your country. Remember, your duty: work.... Be good educators of the future generation and train good students.... Serve your country. Save, avoid luxuries and be useful to your nation" (Reza Shah, 1936 cited in Sedghi, 2007, 86).

Through the Nation-Building program, secularization of the law did not penetrate into the depths of the Iranian family structure. Although all other areas of the law were strictly controlled by the secular court, the family courts remained under clerics' control. Instead, women gained the right to continue their education after marriage by order of Reza Shah, who believed that women's education was necessary for national growth and the future generation (Sadeghipour, 1968 cited in Paidar, 1997). Social reformers had accepted the patriarchal boundaries which were interwoven with the structure of the family and society. Even feminist communities could not push those boundaries aside. The major effort, which had been made by feminist groups, was to create awareness among women regarding their status in the public arena as ordinary citizens, but their individuality and personality did not come into account since it belonged to the family structure, which had mostly been trapped and controlled by the clergy. Moreover, although women were widely encouraged to work outside of their houses, they were required by law to obtain permission from their husbands. Therefore, new secular laws supported the patrilineal notion of the Iranian society, although it was somehow different from Islamic discourse in several aspects (Sedghi, 2007). As mentioned by Paidar (1997, 112), the reforms inside the family threshold "[shaped a] secularized patriarchal family system, which was considered essential for the upholding of national honor".

The unveiling order (the reformation of family laws and calls for women's presence in public life) was supposed to weaken the domestic patriarchal system within the family threshold and pull women out of their homes; but, on the contrary, these reformist orders caused an even stronger dichotomy between the public and the private life of families that did not have basic civic culture. In this regard, the invasion of the private arena and its traditional structure by the state was unsuccessful in overcoming religious masculinity (8). It also caused women from religious and low-income families to be further isolated from the public because they were avoiding to be seen unveiled outside their home (Hoodfar, 1993, 5-18).

Evidently, the unveiling order seemed to be against the will of many women (Zubadia, 2011). Although it was assumed at the time that unveiling might weaken the masculine patriarchy, since men would no longer have control over their women's bodies, women actually entered another circle of control by the state and its national soldiers. Reza Shah used to regard himself as being primarily a soldier and secondarily a king. He invited all men to serve their nation on the path to achieving modernity. After a while, the state certified male citizen warriors to civilize

8. The state policy toward women did not manage to remove the patriarchal forces; but rather, it seemed that aside from their revised subordinate position in the private arena, women in their public life also encountered a paternalistic system of their great father-the King. His paradoxical policies, such as shutting all independent female movements and the female press and forcing women to unveil, all while claiming the emancipation of women as being at the core of his state policy, was an obvious paradox. As it was written in first grade schoolbooks through the first Pahlavi era:

"...each of us lives at home. At home, we love and respect our father. We also have a bigger house. This big house of ours is our country Iran. In this big house, we are like one family. The Shah is like the father of this large family and we are like his children. The Shah loves all of us. We love our kind Shah like our own father. We respect our Shah" (Chelkowski and Dabashi, 1999, 128-9).

women; those men had actually left their traditional role behind and were willing to gain power by taking on the role of citizen soldiers. Therefore, national soldiers who were assigned to unveil women policed the presence of women in the public locus (9). Along with the appearance of unveiled women in public as professionals, their public manner was also taken into account; For instance, the acceptable way of shaking hands among men and women was even discussed in one of the daily press (*Ettela'at*):

“An older woman must first extend her hand to younger men and women, and young ladies. Married men may extend their hand to young ladies, but a single man has no right. If a single man extends his hand to a young lady, she should not refrain from giving her hand, but she must treat [the matter] with the utmost coolness so as to make it [almost] reproachful” (Amin, 2002, 207).

To gain public face, women were asked to enter the public arena without a veil; However, while the female body was about to become physically unveiled, it was metaphorically supposed to be veiled by chastity. Chastity was the shield protecting women from negative masculine attitudes toward women's presence within the public space. In order to have a disciplined body as well as a modern disciplined language, women were asked to turn their sexual body into a neutral and de-sexualized one (10). It seems that women were not trusted to shape their new status of citizenship themselves. The same debate has been claimed by Turkish scholars such as Ilkkaracan (2016) and Durakpaşa (1998). They believe that through the modernization period in Turkey, Turkish women were also responsible for shaping the pious relationship with men in the public realm via their invisible veiling and what was referred to as honor.

Women were not supposed to use the same language they were using in their homo-social gatherings. Najmabadi (1993) states that through school and the press, old female superstitions and other forms of nonsense were eliminated from the female argot. When women found the opportunity to be heard in the public and to have a male audience, their voice and language became veiled. In other words, modern female language rid itself of the vocabulary with a sexual connotation (especially the discourse that were formerly used in the presence of other females) and were forced to replace it with more scientific words (Hekmat, 1936). Through the modernization process and while granting women access to the public arena, it was believed that the woman's desexualized body and de-eroticized language would pave the path for her presence beside her male counterpart in the public arena (Najmabadi, 1993).

MODERN HOUSE: UNVEILED COZINESS, VEILED TRADITIONS

The notion of the house as a private, cozy and safe arena has been negotiated in modernist discourse. The coziness of the home has been criticized by the modernist approach as “the holes of human illusion from which the intellect has to break out in order to travel toward an extra-human world, to travel toward exteriority” (Herk, 2005, 121-144). Herk (2005) believes that the self-realization of modern citizens would be shaped within the public arena, not within the domestic realm and family thresholds. Moreover, Taut (1924, cited in Herk, 2005) also rejects the definition of the modern house as a motherly, nurturing and warm space. Instead, he refers to a cold and naked interior space, which could provide rationality, purity and hygiene. Meyer (1928 cited in Herk, 2005, 124) also

9. Criticizing the unveiling order, one of the periodical presses of the second Pahlavi era, *Bidari-e ma* (1946) (our awakening) magazine with feminist approach published the following report:

“Before talking about how Reza Shah unveiled women...we have to note that movements can succeed only if their foundation is firmly based on people's tendencies and thoughts... the illiterate dictator of Iran hoped to leave his name in history and after coming back from Turkey, he saw women's black Chador as the most significant social deficiency... Chador was one of the sign of our backwardness and it was necessary that we Iranian women get rid of this adversity, but the way that chosen by hero of the twenty years dictatorship was very incorrect...especially in Tehran, one could witness the tragedy created by the police over miserable women...” (Bidari-e ma, 1946, 37-8).

10. In 1949, *Bidari-e ma* published an article entitled “If You Want to be Beautiful, the Simpler is Better”. The author criticized the short female dresses and calls them cheap; instead she introduced two simple and modest models with long sleeves and long skirts (*Bidari-e ma*, 1949, 39).

believes that coziness is something that should be placed in “the heart of the individual” not on “the wall of his home”.

As advertised by the first Pahlavi reign, the new lifestyle of the modern nation was supposed to be provided and practiced within the modern home. Through the Nation-Building Program, breaking the coziness of the traditional domestic realm and displaying it towards the outer spaces of the house became one of the main agendas for the new housing design. As a consequence, the modern house became a kind of showcase, presenting its noble habitants to the outside world. While its residents were inside the house, they found themselves in a kind of public sphere, easily watching the outdoors through glassy surfaces and even being seen by the public at the same time. As will be discussed, not only do the façade characteristics support the public side of the dwelling, but the new space organization also gave greater importance to the public use of the house as well. While individuals were supposed to show up in the public realm with a neutral appearance (with de-erotized and disciplined bodies), the modern house was also supposed to rid itself of the culture of coziness and mysterious spaces. Relevantly, the new design agenda, which was applied by modern architects, met the simplicity, neutrality and outward-ness.

Modern architecture found its way into Iran during the first Pahlavi era, mostly through public and governmental buildings. At this time, the state was the main employer and subscriber in the field of architecture. The first generation of professional architects, both Iranian and foreign, became involved in urban reconstruction projects, which had been defined by the state. Meanwhile, the transformation of housing was as fast and every bit as dramatic as the alteration of the urban spaces and public buildings. Affected by the Western style and Reza Shah’s tendency to apply Western patterns, the state’s architects quickly found their way into the private sector and for the first time, housing was considered as a significant market in Iran (Bani- Masoud, 2009). The clients of housing were mostly from the elite and also middle-class families whose population was growing



Figure 3. Pasdaran St. House in Mashhad, a facing out house’ with large opening (from authors archive, 2016).



Figure 4. Khanmanesh House in Mashhad, the exterior façade of the living room with circular form (from authors archive, 2005).

dramatically at the time. Gradually, new and different spatial layouts took the place of the very old and primitive principals of housing design.

The shift from an organic to an orthogonal pattern in Tehran's urban grid was one of the parameters paving the path for the transformation of housing architecture (Shabani and Kamyab, 2012). The new urban grid structure which was applied through the 1930's gradually gained prominence in residential neighborhoods and affected the architecture of traditional courtyard houses. The new pattern defined the new relationship between buildings and streets with the removal of the *hashti* (the octagonal vestibule). The result was the elimination of hierarchical access into the interior spaces of the house. Hence, direct access was functionally and visually defined from the street to the house. Consequently, the dichotomy between the public and private sections, which was a significant feature of traditional houses, fell apart and, as will be discussed, gradually disappeared. The dwellers in new settlements, which Marefat (1988, 189) refers to as "facing out houses" could see the outside while they themselves were in turn visible from the exterior of the house (Figure 3). As Cauter (2002, cited in Herck 2002) mentions, by eliminating specific borders between the different sections, the home turned into a displaying locus.

The transformation of housing was also fueled by the importing of new building materials such as steel, cement, concrete and the introduction of new techniques such as plumbing and wiring (Kiani, 2004). New materials and techniques led to the possibility of creating new forms and spatial qualities. Through the wide usage of concrete, metal and glass, which make curvy forms more applicable, bow-windows, circular shaped balconies and cylindrical stairwells became the characteristic features of the modern home (Marefat, 1988). This new technique was mostly used in structuring terraces and specific spaces of the home, such as the living room, which with its special furniture had the potential to function as a displaying area. The most important internal quality, which was the result of semi-circular beams, allowed the integration of the interior space with the exterior area. In this regard, the curved walls of the living rooms -usually covered by multiple windows- provided a view towards the outside and vice versa. The prolific use of glass in new houses overshadowed the existence of mysterious and cozy private spaces (Figure 4).

Professional architects of the time, most of whom had graduated from Europe and were aware of international trends in architecture along with the emergence of the architectural press in Iran, paved the path for the transformation of traditional patterns into modern ones on both an urban scale and in the housing sector. *Architecte* was the first architectural journal, which was published in only 6 issues during its short lifetime from August 1946 till July 1948. This magazine introduced the modernist approach of Iranian architects through the first Pahlavi monarchy to interested parties (Figure 5). In August 1946, Avanessian (1947) published an article in which he referred to the preservation and restoration of traditional houses as a purposeless task and likened it to turning an old lady into a young one by applying much make up to her face. Instead, he encouraged his colleagues to use new materials and techniques in the architecture of new housing. Moreover, in December 1947, *Architecte* published an article by Goharian (1948, 174-5), in which he criticized the deterioration of old houses and addressed new and reliable techniques and materials for building new ones.

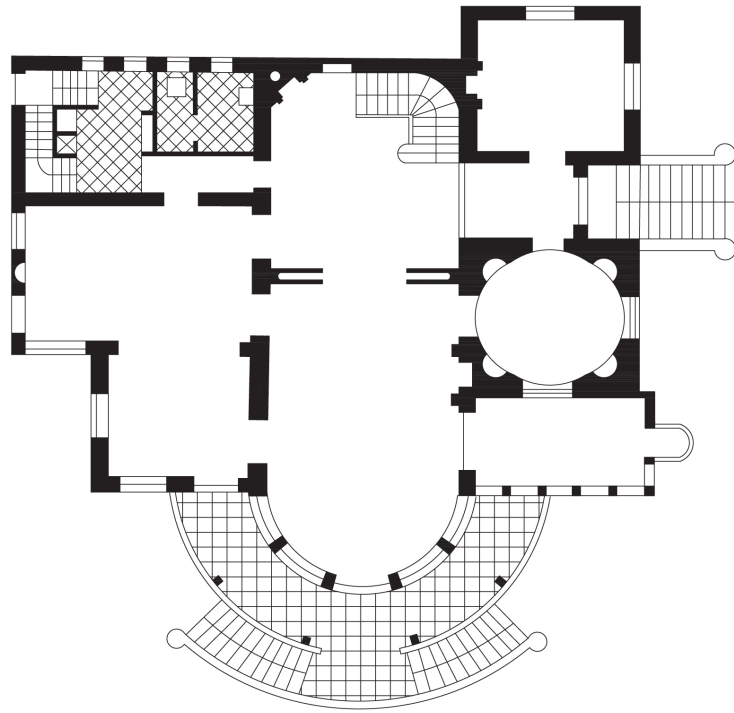


Figure 5. Plan of Froughi's villa in Tehran, (Architecte Magazine 1(6) 219).

Comparing the spatial organization of modern and traditional houses, one could easily refer to the multi-functionality and flexibility of traditional spaces. Within traditional houses, spaces had scarcely been named according to their function; these spaces were entitled based on their morphology (*talar*, a prestigious and large quarter), the location (*balakhaneh*, the space which is located on the second floor), the number of openings (*sedari*, the room with three doors) and the period of use (*tabestan-neshin*, summer room) (Rafieisereshki et al., 2003 cited in Mirmoghtadaee, 2009, 69-80). On the contrary, on the contrary to flexible and multifunctional traditional spaces, modern houses included spaces, which were not only as flexible and multifunctional as traditional ones, but were also named according to their specific function, such as the bedroom, the dining room and the living room.

New extroverted houses gradually replaced introverted courtyard houses, which contained two main parts, *andaruni* and *biruni* (Kiani, 2004). The *andaruni* was the core and private zone of the house with complete visual privacy from the public gaze. This zone which belonged to the female members of families and *mahrams*, was only accessible from the street through passing the buffer zone or what was called the *biruni* section. The *biruni*, mostly occupied by men, was the interlinear space between the *andaruni* and the main entrance; it included the *hashti* (the octagonal vestibule), as the main entrance into the yard and also spaces for hosting unknown visitors and *namahrams*, who were not welcomed in the private zone. Hence, entering a courtyard house was possible through an intricate form of access from the public to the private zone (Figure 6). The certain boundary between the mentioned zones along with the other spatial organization of traditional houses went through alternations with the advent of modernist trend in architecture.

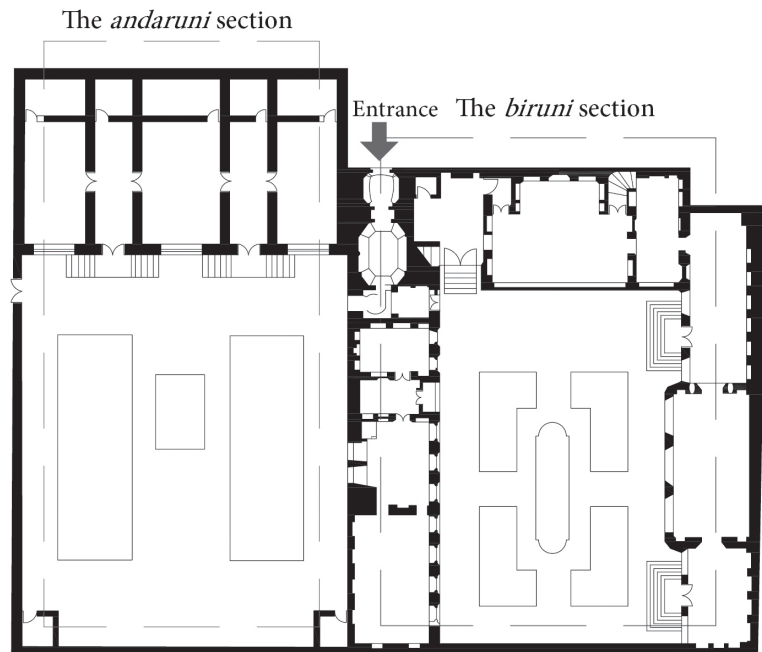


Figure 6. Salmasi House in Tabriz, the *Andaruni* and the *Biruni* sections (Cultural Heritage Organization, Eastern Azarbayjan, Redrawn by authors.)

New housing typologies of the time could be categorized in villas, row houses/town houses and apartments. The latter two owe their prevalence not only to the new urban grid and new materials, but also to the widespread immigration of people to Tehran and to the growth of the middle social class as the new servants of the state (Marefat, 1988). The common spatial features of these new typologies, which step by step found their place in housing architecture, can be summarized as follows. Through the emergence of the new housing agenda, the courtyard in traditional houses gradually lost its centrality and dominance and, similar to the European backyard, was turned into a mere connection between the building and the street. Service areas like the kitchen, storage and toilet, were relocated from the yard to inside of the building and the space for garage was provided (Saremi, 2013). The *hashti* was eliminated from the entrance zone. The street façade gained importance, which sometimes led to the appearance of brick decorations on the main façade (Kiani, 2004) (**Figure 7**). This façade was also filled with large openings. It needs to be mentioned that although the new housing agenda was gradually adapted from the West, still many traditional concepts remained within the domestic realm. In this regard, the *biruni* section was transformed to *mehmankhane* (guest room), which was used only for hosting guests. A smaller living room, *hall*, was defined for the family and informal gatherings. This space acted like a connecting zone between other spaces of the house such as, the entrance, the stairways, the living area and the service zone. In this regard, the *hall* resembled the character of courtyards in traditional houses (Marefat, 1988).



Figure 7. Chamran St. House in Mashhad, brick decoration on the main façade (from authors archive, 2016).

The new characteristics of the elite and middle-income urban houses were applied in designing houses for the less wealthy social classes, without reasonable cultural considerations for whether or not the residents could adapt themselves with those architectural features. In this regard, locals from less wealthy families continued their traditional lifestyle within modern houses. For instance, they used the living room as a sleeping

11. In 1962, Al-i Ahmad published a controversial book: *A Plague from the West* in which he perceived occidentosis as an illness, a phenomenon, which had made Iranians strangers to their own culture. He described Iranians as occidentalists who had lost their authenticity:

“...His house, which once had a porch and a cellar, a pool, awnings, and a vestibule, now looks like something different every day. One day it resembles a seaside villa with picture windows all around, and full of fluorescent lamps. Another day it resembles a cabaret, full of gaudy junk and bar stools. The next day all the walls are painted one color and triangles of all colors cover every surface. In one corner there is a hi-fi, in another a television, in another a piano for the young lady, in others stereo loudspeakers. The kitchen and other nooks and crannies are packed with gas stoves, electric washers, and other odds and ends. Thus the Occidentotic is to most faithful consumer of the West’s industrial goods” (Ali-Ahmad, 1962, 96).

quarter through the night by placing mattresses and blankets on the floor. The dining quarter and dining table were only in use in the presence of guests. In other circumstances, the majority of families sat on the floor for eating or drinking tea (*Architecte*, 1948). This misuse of the new spaces, in the absence of guests, was criticized by architects with modernist approach. In one of its issues, *Architecte* (1948) published an article in which the author criticized Iranians who continued to live their traditional lives within modern houses. The author claimed that although Iranians now have dining rooms in their houses, they are not using it appropriately and families usually eat while sitting on the floor of a room, which might also happen to be someone’s bedroom (*Architecte*, 1948, 204-8). The prevalence of large-glass surfaces, which opened up to undesirable scenery in poor districts, was another questionable practice. Through the last decade of the Pahlavi dynasty, intellectuals, who were concerned with the issue of westernization and identity crisis in the society, appraised the European features of Pahlavi houses as a sign of alienation (11). Relevantly, some residents of new houses, based on their traditional and cultural backgrounds, were not willing to display their private lives through large windows. Hence, as a field study on residents’ behavior in Pahlavi houses shows in order to block the visual access, large openings were covered with poor material or, in the best condition, with thick curtains. Moreover, women from these families were most of the time veiled (Karimi, 2013).

Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, *mehman-khane*, which replaced the *biruni*, was the biggest room of the house. This room was usually equipped with Western furniture. The door leading to the *mehman-khane* was often locked and was only opened for the sole purpose of hosting guests. Although many families continued to use traditional equipment in interior spaces, using European furniture became very popular, especially among the middle class families. In this regard, *Khandaniha* magazine published an article entitled “Tehran from a Foreigner’s Point of View”. In this article, the author described the modern houses of the time and claimed that each of the families from the middle class has a guest room which is designed in the European style with furniture relating to the 19th century, the owner never uses this furniture unless he has guests, the door of this room is usually locked (Labourse, 1946, 13-4). To adapt themselves with the modern configuration of domestic spaces, residents left behind some traditions, while keeping some and trying to find new ways to express others. Another relevant example in this regard could be the Iranian Room in early Pahlavi houses. This room, which was prevalent in the houses of the elite and middle class families included traditional furniture such as Iranian carpets and cushions. It mostly hosted male guests and women’s access to this room was limited. In this regard, the Iranian room provoked a sense of male dominance within the modern house and it could be seen as a very small version of the *biruni* (Karimi, 2013). As Karimi (2012, 119-41) claims, “...although the overall plan and form of the interiors of many houses were borrowed from the West (including the furniture), an Iranian Room helped preserve the grand heritage of both pre-Islamic and Islamic Iran”. With the prevalence of European furniture in houses, the tradition of floor sitting was limited to Iranian rooms among families of the elite class. Later on, other spaces such as libraries and offices were added to modern houses, which again belonged to the male members of the family. Therefore, it could be concluded that the traditional notion of male dominance survived within the modern Iranian domestic sphere.

As the traditional woman took off her veil, but instead veiled her femininity to gain modern appearance in public, the traditional house also unveiled its coziness and private zone while residents hid or modified some of their domestic traditions and habits in order to match them with the new and modern atmosphere of the domestic arena. As Cronin (2007, 71) claims, through the first Pahlavi reign “reform from above” by the state found “resistance from below” among non-elite groups who neither received those reforms passively nor opposed them blindly.

CONCLUSION

The First Pahlavi era has mostly been known for the State-Building plans of the time and calls for modernizing the nation and the country, leading to outstanding changes in Iranian society. The concept of the modern woman was propagated by the state and intellectuals, as agents of the modern nation. Moreover, the modern house, where women could nurture and raise the modern family and, on a larger scale, a modern nation, also became a hallmark of national progress in the way of modernization. There is a resemblance between the ways through which the state tried to modernize women and houses. In both cases, reforms and modifications were defined around their public appearance and increased the level of sociability. It could be claimed that the emancipation of women by the state did not go further than reforming their position in the public arena. Women’s situation in the domestic realm and family structure which had been criticized before -through the constitutional period- as trapped in ignorance and dubbed the victim of a patriarchal system, mostly remained unchanged. The unveiling decree was against the will of many Iranian women. Besides, it did not weaken the masculine patriarchy in general. While women were given the opportunity to be heard and their body found another arena to perform outside the domestic realm, the new masculine system of power tried to police them in other ways. Although gaining public face forced women to take off their veils, they were largely expected to veil and keep their chastity inside.

With the presence of women in the civic ground, the boundary of gender-segregated spaces in the public arena broke. Women and men could freely socialize and work together shoulder to shoulder. On the other hand, the first assigned space to women -the domestic realm- also went through many transitions due to modernist trends in architecture. The secularization of the domestic realm and its transformation into a showcase, which could reflect its residents’ prestigious position and social class, became prevalent among the elite and middle-class families. The role of the press in propagating the modern house is undeniable; newspapers started to advertise modern houses in which the interior space had a maximum visual connection with outdoor spaces. Therefore, the introversion and coziness of the space configuration in traditional houses was questioned by modernist attitude and the public face of the house gained primary importance. The idea of unveiling the architecture of the Iranian houses was accomplished through the elimination of the thick and load bearing walls and replacing them with new and light material, such as steel and glass. Residents in modern houses were led to leave their traditional lifestyle and adopt a new and modern way of life. However, in less wealthy and more religious families, people kept some of their traditions and found a middle ground to get along with the new atmosphere.

It could be said that through the Nation-Building Program in Iran, both the Iranian woman and the house, as the main hallmarks of the modern nation, went through an imposed process of modernization. In this regard, the desirable pattern, which was introduced through the media and press, was European. In the same line, national effort for emancipating women through unveiling and providing education and work opportunities, did not touch the deeper layout of women's lives. Referring to the nature of state projects and the position of women in modern Nation-States of the Middle East, Kandiyoti (1992) argues that through plans for reforming women's lives, modernizing women was simply restricted to training better mothers and cultured partners, while most people did not defend breaking the patriarchal system within the family. Meanwhile, modernizing Iranian houses in less wealthy families also did not give way to an evolution in the Iranian and traditional lifestyle. In this regard, modernization mostly stayed at the architectural level of the domestic realm, which led to creative behavior among residents who wanted to continue their previous lifestyle and keep their traditions within the modern spatial threshold.

The differences between what had been asked by the first Pahlavi state and the actual responses from the people could be considered as one of the important critiques on state policy. While, at the same time, in Turkey, modernity and Nation-Building Program was introduced through a well-defined "ism" (*Kemalism*): in contrast, Iranian modernity without infrastructural layout seemed like a program rather than a doctrinal movement or a well-established "ism".

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Modern kadın; modern konut; Ulusal Yapılanma Programı; İran.

MODERN KADIN VE KONUT: İRAN'DA 1920-1940 ARASI MODERN ULUS OLMA GÖSTERGESİ

İran'da Modern Konut Mimarlığı, Ulusal Yapılanma Programı'nın I. Pahlavi yönetimi tarafından erken 20. yüzyılda kuruluşuyla birlikte, tartışmalı bir konu olarak ortaya çıktı ve modern konut, modern çekirdek ailenin yuvası olarak devlet tarafından modern ve ilerici bir millet olmanın göstergesi olarak benimsendi. Dahası, devletin, modern konuta benzeterek modern kadına biçtiği yeni sosyal konum ve rol, ulusal modernleşmenin bir sembolü olarak tanıtıldı. Dolayısıyla bu yazı, devletin, "kadın"ı ve "konut"u modernleştirme girişimlerine ve bunları Ulusal Yapılanma Programı'nın kuruluşuna bağlı bir başarı olarak takdim etmesine odaklanır; "kadın"ı ve "konut"u modernleştirme konusunda 1920-40 arası I. Pahlavi yönetimi tarafından ortaya konulan yasal düzenlemenin içerik ve sonuçlarını karşılaştırır.

THE MODERN WOMAN VIS-À-VIS THE MODERN HOUSE: THE HALLMARKS OF MODERN NATIONHOOD THROUGH THE 1920s-1940s IRAN

In the early twentieth century, with the establishment of the Nation Building program by the first Pahlavi state in Iran, the architecture of the modern house became a controversial issue. Modern house, being a nest for the modern nuclear family, was propagated by the state as the hallmark of the modern and progressive nationhood. Moreover, the state defined a new role and social position for the modern woman who -similar to the modern house- was introduced as the symbol of national modernization. This paper focuses on the ways in which the state tried to modernize both women and houses and introduced them as the hallmarks of its success through the establishment of the Nation Building program. In this regard, the substance and output of two decrees by the first Pahlavi state in the 1920s-40s will be compared: to modernize women and to modernize houses.

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