

## **The phenomenon of lifestyle and the architecture of apartments in Iran Case study: the apartments in District 9, Tehran**

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### **Abstract**

The term lifestyle, which had first been set forth by Alfred Adler in 1929, quickly entered other areas of science. Different scholars have stated various definitions of this term in different scientific fields. The general definition of this term is the social and cultural changes in the everyday life of the people. The major changes in lifestyle in the contemporary times have been made by the increased efficiency of modernity and technology in people's lives. Modernity entered Iran in Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar era; but, its effects in construction are seen in the last 50 years after the adoption of comprehensive urban plans. These changes have changed the content and function of the traditional home and turned them into apartments. The subject of the study is District 9, Tehran, which is located in the central axis of Tehran and has been less invaded by the rapid development. Thus, the gradual changes in the texture and housing in that area can be studied. The purpose of the study was to examine the changes in apartments in the last 50 years in Tehran. The main question was how the spatial changes of the elements of residential apartments in Tehran was. The results showed that among the changes the ratio of spaces - bedroom, living room, and dining room and kitchen - in the 10 and 15-year intervals, the ratio of the average kitchen size in residential apartments has not changed during 50 years. However, the ratio of the average size of the bedroom and living room and dining room spaces during this period has changed greatly, but regression to the initial point was obtained at the end.

**Keywords:** lifestyle, Apartment life, Tehran

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## Introduction and problem statement

Alfred Adler, an Austrian psychologist, first raised the term life style in 1929. This term quickly entered sociology literature, and was first considered as the indicative of wealth, position and social base of individuals and an index for measuring their social class. After World War II and with the increase of European exports, the livelihood of the European people was enhanced and their consumption grew dramatically compared to their production. It was a global problem happening and the economy moved away from relying on the rule of production and relied on consumption, so consumption received more importance than production. The subject that had previously relied on hard work and the accumulation of wealth was the forerunner of consumption, pleasure and “self-expression.” Bocock believes that “Lifestyle and consumption” are no longer a sociocultural process but a process that can be realized through the effects of these in various communities in the emergence of modern times and times in the world (Bocock, 2008). The term lifestyle is the way people choose how to behave or how to work with a distinctive personality, generally speaking (Rapoport, 15, 1969). “Lifestyle is the operation system and classified and classifying tasks or distinctive signs manifested as a distinctive form of space” (Bourdieu, 1986). Nowadays, the term is used popularly to describe the type of house and furniture. However, the concept of life is more general and includes a wide range of objective and subjective issues. Overall, this concept includes all patterns of social relationships, entertainment, consumption, fashion and clothes, and even shows the attitudes, values, and worldviews of the people and the group the person is a member of (Bocock, 1992); but, the concept was re-examined and revised in the 1980s by Reimer. He states some reasons for reconsidering this concept, such as the growing and developing process of “individualization,” the growth of the middle class and educated people interested in leisure, entertain and consumerism, the emergence of values, new attitudes and lifestyles resulting from the development of science and university.” We se-

lect our lifestyle in relation to the lifestyles of others (Reimer, 1995: 124). Giddens argues that lifestyle is a coherent collection of all the behaviors and activities of a particular person during daily routine calling for a set of the habits and orientations so has a kind of unity. He believes that lifestyle has no place in traditional societies where people do not have much choice to choose (Giddens, 1991).

“Space and lifestyle have a mutual effect on each other, and the changes affect one another. The transformation in lifestyle transforms the space in one hand, and the spatial changes affect lifestyle on the other hand (Azad Armaki, 2013: 75).

“It is clear that everyday life happens in space. People live in space; i.e., they have a continuous relationship with their countermeasures: they are fed by it on feed it, change by it and change it, they move in that space and with this movement in space make sense, they make space components meaningful for themselves or add signs from outside to space” (Fakouhi, 2004: 236). Overall, the term lifestyle during its formation has been used in different fields, such as marketing, sales of modern products, leisure studies and identity-based studies. Nevertheless, lifestyle concept is abundantly seen in Iranians lives, especially young people, a place where the young people do not consider traditions and customs to live in a modern world and sometimes consider them superstitions and reasons for lack of development. One of the main reasons for changing lifestyle in Iran seems to be the significance of individualization. The concept of privacy and individuality are cultural concepts differing from one culture to another. In societies where individualism has grown, the houses architecture is such that each member can have his own privacy within the home. On the contrary, in the societies and cultures where socialist values dominate, the notion of privacy is different, and the cultural work of the house than anything else is to preserve and protect collective values. In traditional Iranian culture, the house should have interior and exterior parts, but in this culture, there is no boundary between the confidants living in the home. The status

quo of Iranian homes, where children and parents have special rooms, is affected by modern developments and has no traditional roots (Fazeli, 2007: 36). This can be seen in the emergence and importance of the “bedroom” space as one of the main spaces of the house. In the past architecture of Iran, there was no room as bedroom in ordinary Iranian homes, and the rooms were multi-functional flexible spaces with sleeping in them as a function of them. Nevertheless, with the changes in the lifestyle of this bedroom, one of the main spatial components at home is based on urban definitions. With more changes in lifestyle, the significance of these spaces in the home has increased significantly, and especially in Tehran, we see houses in less than 65 square meters with two bedrooms, and the existence of more bedrooms is an advantage of a house. Observations show that the youth prefer to spend most of their time in their own bedroom rather than in the living room with the family. This is a very important issue, as it reduces the family relationships and parental supervision over children. On the other hand, as the architects do not allocate more light to the bedrooms of the building, the event of being in darker spaces and without sunlight can lead to mental problems or reduce vitamin D in them. Maybe in the new lifestyle and based on the different functions of these rooms, the name of the bedroom should change as well (“personal room” for instance).

Another effect of changing lifestyle on urban architecture is changing the ratio of the main home spaces: the bedrooms, the kitchen, and the living and dining spaces. This phenomenon can be due to reduced visibility, visits, and guests. In a very near past, so many guests and cooking food for many people needed big kitchens and a large living and dining room. In addition, the new lifestyle and the significance of individuality have caused every child to have one bedroom. This has affected the proportion of the components of the house spaces. It seems necessary to state that individual lifestyle, contrary to tradition and custom, may change rapidly, and that person decides to change his lifestyle fully from tomorrow. There-

fore, flexibility in designing and building houses and designing multi-functional spaces can be a good solution to meet the many and different needs of individuals throughout their lives.

### **Research question**

How have the proportions of spatial elements of residential apartments in Tehran changed over the past five decades?

### **Research background**

In a research entitled “Modernity and housing,” Fazeli studied the effects of modernity on the changes of the home culture (home as one of the main components of lifestyle) and, using the ethnographic method, examined these developments in an Iranian rural home. The study shows that the characteristics of a rural home that were not being an economic commodity, an irreversible link with the village, birthplace and nursery, a blend with myths and historical family narratives, coexistence with nature, and the lack of privacy, and a kind of modernity of Iranian village is formed in villages of Iran (Fazeli, 2007: 36).

In a study entitled “Apartment and kitchen in Iran,” Azad Armaki explored the experience of Iranian women in the open space of open-air kitchens in new homes and apartments in Tehran, using qualitative interview methods. The results show that Tehrani women’s interpretation of this phenomenon has been twofold: women who opposed the kitchen design have been open for reasons such as the loss of exclusive privacy and the inappropriateness of this style of architecture with the Iranian lifestyle in terms of cooking and clothing. On the contrary, the beauty and modernity of the family, as well as the possibility of more communication with other spaces and the family by women are considered as the reasons for this style. The result shows that more diverse architectural models should be designed for Iranian homes with aesthetic values to meet the diverse lifestyles of Iranian women (Azad Armaki, 2013: 75).

Asefi and Imani conducted a study entitled “Redefin-

ing the design patterns of contemporary Iranian-Islamic housing design with quality assessment of traditional houses". With deep-seated quality of housing in traditional Iranian homes, the study has been looking at criteria for developing effective solutions to enhance the quality of contemporary housing. The results of the study show a significant relationship between the quality of traditional homes, human beings, architecture and lifestyle, derived from original traditions and values. In addition, the indices of human needs, environmental, physical, functional and structural qualities have contributed to the significant relationship that should be considered in designing contemporary housing (Asefi & Imani, 2016).

Using the concepts of Iranian individuality and everyday life in the community, Shaṣṭi and Falamaki, explained the relationship between the characteristics of lifestyle in Iran and the form of residence. The results showed that in the significant number of cases lack of coordination, non-homogeneity and disturbances in individuality and lifestyle, rooted in the historical and social origin, is evident in form and place of residence (Shaṣṭi & Falamaki, 2014).

In another study entitled "Spatial volume patterns of housing from a cultural perspective," Pourfakari tried to answer the question of whom with what family aspects, types of livelihoods, beliefs, and so on and to what extent in terms of spatial volume, should have access to minimal housing? The results show that the volume of space in time context has received a smaller pattern, and some spaces have lost their original use in the home, such as the integration of living and living rooms. Finally, the area of people's life space has been decreased in statistical and economic calculations, but the cultural calculations do not confirm them (Pourfakari, 1996).

In a study entitled "The reflection of Western culture in the lifestyle and architecture of the people of Hamedan in the late Qajar era," Sultanzadeh has examined the effectiveness of Western culture in the lifestyle of the people of Hamedan in the late Qajar era and subsequently the architecture. The results show that changes in lifestyle resulting from the ar-

rival of modernity are visible in houses of lords and merchants of Hamedan (Sultanzadeh, 2017).

### **Research Methodology**

As the lifestyle phenomenon has been introduced in Iran after the arrival of modernity and change in construction in Iran, we examined residential apartments. The main spaces of the apartment: 1- dining and living space, 2-sleeping spaces, and 3- kitchen space. Hence, in this paper, we examine the relative changes of the three spaces mentioned to find the relationship between lifestyle changes and quantitative changes in the main spaces of the house in Iran. The method of doing a quantitative study is based on the selection of samples of apartments in District 9 of Tehran. The reasons for selecting District 9 of Tehran: access to information and building plans over the past 50 years, as well as the location of the area in the middle of the city and the significant and gradual trend of the arrival of modernity. The samples were randomly evaluated in two areas - Oṣṭad Moein and Oṣṭad Houshyar, near Enghelab axis (middle axis). These neighborhoods lack the small size in the size of the apartments and the beginning of the apartment in the neighborhood has shared space features.

We measured the average of each of the spaces as a percentage of total space to examine the small changes in the main spaces (dining, living, sleeping and kitchen) of the apartments in these neighborhoods. Then we compared the obtained numbers in two ways, 10 years and 15 years. The average sample of randomly selected cases was about 11 cases in the 10-year period and about 15 in the 15-year period.

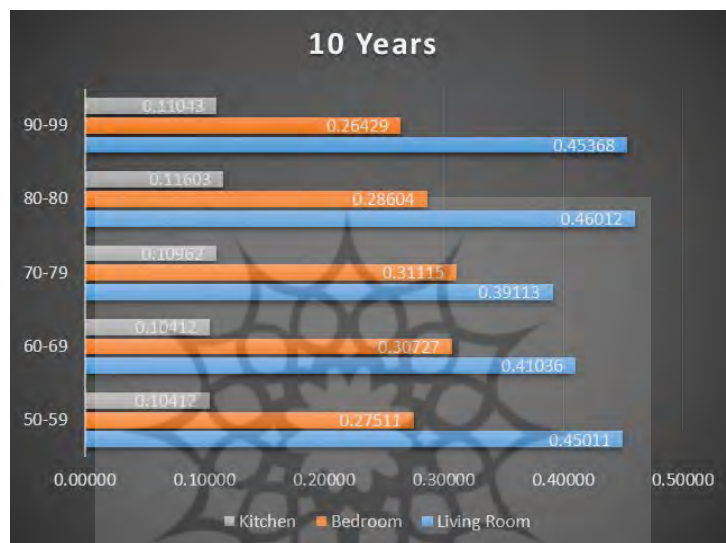
### **Results**

The results of the study were obtained from the changes in the spatial mean ratio of bedroom, living room, dining room and kitchen in 10 and 15-year intervals.

### **Viewing the ratio of the area of dining room, bedrooms and kitchen to the area of the apartment in District 9 municipality of Tehran in 10 years intervals**

Years	The mean of the ratio of dining room to the whole building area	The mean of the ratio of bedroom to the whole building area	The mean of the ratio of kitchen to the whole building area
1971-1980	0.45011	0.27511	0.10412
1981-1990	0.41036	0.30727	0.10412
1991-2000	0.39113	0.31115	0.10962
2001-2010	0.46012	0.28604	0.11603
2011-2019	0.45368	0.26429	0.11043

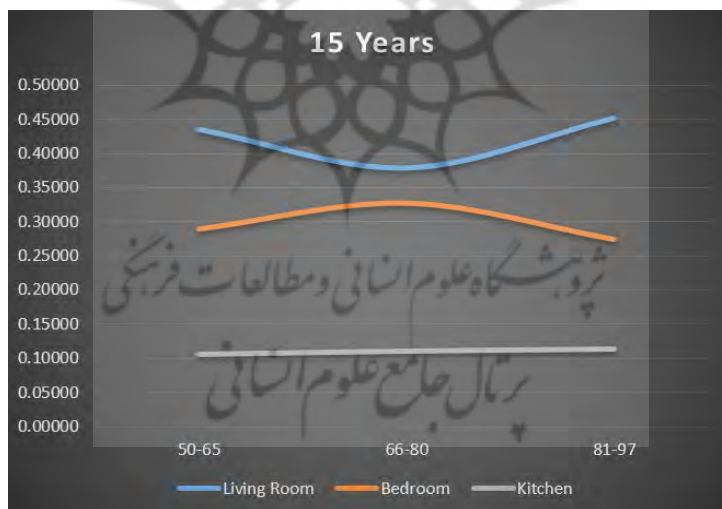
Table 1. The 10-year changes of the average of spaces, from the approval of the master plan until 2018



**Viewing the ratio of the area of dining room, bedrooms and kitchen to the area of the apartment in District 9 municipality of Tehran in 15 years intervals**

Years	The mean of the ratio of dining room to the whole building area	The mean of the ratio of bedroom to the whole building area	The mean of the ratio of kitchen to the whole building area
1971-1986	0.43540	0.28957	0.10537
1987-2001	0.37989	0.32724	0.11032
2002-2018	0.45176	0.27449	0.11361

The 15-year changes of the average of spaces, from the approval of the master plan until 2018



### Discussion and Conclusion

The majority of the previous studies in this regard have focused on the effects and necessity of considering changes in Iranian lifestyle and its relationship with space. Nevertheless, in this study, the objective and formal effects of apartments brought about by the advent of modernity and changes in lifestyle were discussed for the first time. The results showed that

among the changes the ratio of spaces - bedroom, living room, and dining room and kitchen - in the 10 and 15-year intervals, the ratio of the average kitchen size in residential apartments has not changed during 50 years. However, the ratio of the average size of the bedroom and living room and dining room spaces during this period has changed greatly, but regression to the initial point was obtained at the end.

While collecting samples, we see that the maps of the first years examined, especially the 1970s, have many similarities to the current plans of the apartments and the findings confirm this. According to the sociocultural changes defined in terms of lifestyle, one can state that the main sociocultural changes for Iranians have been the Islamic Revolution in 1979, causing major changes in their lifestyle. Pre-revolutionary graduate engineers had often learned the architecture with western thinking, and the mental atmosphere governing the modern Iranian classes living in apartments was a western one. Thus, the first apartments in Tehran emerged based on western lifestyle and patterns. However, after the Iranian revolution, significant social changes, and the construction of massive housing as an apartment (due to population growth) made various strata of the apartment live in apartments. Hence, changes in the size of the bedrooms and living and living spaces can be attributed to these changes. Another noteworthy result was the regression of the average ratio of the size of the apartments to the previous conditions. This can be justified as currently, the lifestyle of Tehran citizens is near the original models. This model can be called the “model of modern urban life” that can be extracted due to globalization phenomenon.

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