Women Communal Life within Iranian Traditional Bazaar from the aspect of Safety (Case study: Traditional Bazaar of Isfahan)

1,4Akram Khalili, 1,4Siyamak Nayyeri Fallah, 2Mohamad Tajuddin bin Mohd Rasdi and 3Ahmad Ali Farzin

1PhD Candidate, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment, University Technology Malaysia
2Professor, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment, University Technology Malaysia
3Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran
4Academic Member, Department of Architecture, Nour Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mazandaran, Iran

A B S T R A C T

Safety has a lot directly effects on social justice and women’s welfare. The aim of this study is investigating the indicators of women’s safety within the communal spaces of traditional Iranian bazaar of Isfahan with the approach of social justice. As the main hypothesis of this study, the women’s safety level in the mix-function areas in terms of the rate of commuting and users is higher than single function spaces. In this regard, through qualitative approach and embedded case study strategy women’s daily activities and their safety in the selected case study were analyzed. Criterion and homogeneous sampling are the used sampling strategies for this study. As triangulation, data collection methods of this research include direct site observation and taking photo, and semi-structured single face to face interview and focus group interviewing which performed by 3 research assistants. The collected data categorized for analyzing. Then the findings of each part of the case were discussed to verify the assumed relation. The results of the study indicate that by increasing of legibility, familiarity, natural surveillance, accessibility to succor and enhancing livability, the women’s commuting will grow and through this growth women’s safety would be increased.

INTRODUCTION

According to Crow (2009) some of spaces modify to secure spaces and in fact they are the spaces in which people feel more safety and they do more operations and as a result less permitted to do unlawful actions. In this regard, some scholars believe that some modern urbanism criteria cause more social, economic, and sexual and age discriminations. For instance, dividing cities into different regions as commercial, residential and etc. cause men reach various active and public parts of cities, but because of lacking of cultural sensitivity in designing these new spaces, women cannot use these new generation of spaces as much as males (Papeli Yazdi, 2011).

Many scholars divided the spaces into two categories involving open and closed spaces generally(Elyas zadeh Moghadam, 2011). Closed spaces because of their subjective characterististics are usually more private and secure. On the other hand, open spaces because of their potential to create and support community life are much risky from the aspect of privacy and safety by lenses of social justice(Khalili et al., 2013). These spaces must be equal for everybody to have a healthy life. As home and its spaces that make a private and secure places for families and guests(Nayyeri Fallah et al., 2013), the city and its spaces should make everybody safety as the same for all habitants(Viswanath et al., 2013).

As the main purpose of this study, the parameters related to safety for women have been investigated because as mentioned by Zanjanizadeh Azazi (2012) because of some physical, mental and cultural limitations, lack of safety for women causes social injustice. Further it is tried to recommend formula to betterment design pattern of women communal spaces in terms of sexual justice.

1. Theoretical Framework:
2.1. Women’s Safety and Sexual Justice:

Generally, men have a more positive sense about their safety on account of women, but both men and women feel in safety in some positions like abundant areas, interrupting motor vehicle, and so on, but this...
insecure feeling is not with same rate between men and women. These scares are more efficient on women and other vulnerable social groups (Viswanath et al., 2013). Additionally, people’s individual, social, economic, gender, age positions are vital to understand the concept of safety (Wekerle and Whitzman, 2011). These subjects are efficient in recognizing personal safety and the users’ perception from their communal spaces. Generally there are lots of reactions which people show to scare. In between, the gender is the most important personal factor in recognition of safety (Elyas zadeh Moghadam, 2011).

2.2. Safety in Public Spaces form Sexual Justice Lenses:

The sexual justice view to safety cannot be discrimination for making secure laces for women; as a result men and children can have a secure space too (Zanjanizadeh, 2012). Regarding to the social justice, women should have safety for living and their attendance should not limited for the failure of urbanization. Through complementary idea that many Researchers introduce the safety in the frame of political and martial expressions and generally it is known mostly supporting the values and defeating dangers and enemies (Bourdieu, 2011), safety can be known as fundamental need for people welfare. According to Maslow’s needs’ hierarchy in 1986, safety is one of fundamental and necessary needs for human, exactly as same as physiological needs for human life continuation.

Totally, safety has a lot directly effects on society’s health and human welfare (Hillier, 2005). Further, Jacobs (1961) believes that the urban safety relate to physical space and social interactions which pay attention mostly on insisting making a secure and healthy space. Jacobs introduced the creating mobility, applying active operations of streets and natural surveillance as the indicators of good city. Further, Newman (1972) mentioned people in a brutal space, all looking forward for having a secure city.

3. Improving Women’s Safety though Focusing on Function:

The main specifications of spaces in city can be studied by categorizing spaces into two categories as residential and public urban spaces like Bazaars, parks, streets, squares and like them.

3.1. Residential Areas and Safety:

Iranian traditional Bazaars are counted as the main pathways between city and residential districts (Biglari, 2011; Birashk, 2010; Kiyai, 2011). The residential districts surrounding Iranian traditional Bazaars are the place which server lots of women during day (Soltanzadeh, 2000). So in this study the safety in this type of spaces is searched specifically. Generally, through connection and creating suitable relations among houses a desirable safety for residents will enhance. Totally the isolated space within residential districts and abundant houses can increase the possibility of crime but the homogeneous texture of built spaces will decrease the in safety (McDonell, 2006).

Additionally to create a safe areas, it should be assured of women whom are mostly alone with increasing natural surveillance. This will decrease the opportunities of hdings and entering strangers and so on (Bell et al., 1996). On the other hand, one of the elements to create a safer neighborhood is youths’ easy access to the communal space (Houg, 2012). For instance, Tavassoli (1998) believes that if children can play in alleyes and streets like Iranian tradition, women and elders can participates in these territories more easily. Though it does not interrupt pedestrians and disrupt residents’ comfort (Matsuoka & Kaplan, 2008).

3.2. Safety in the Public Spaces like Bazaar:

According to recent researches in Australia leisure spaces, Bazaars and other communal centers are more critical about crimes (Bell et al., 1996). Generally the crimes which take place in public environments are like pick packet, vandalism and hurting, stealing cars, physical weak rushes and threatening and such likes. Surprisingly, the most threatening treatments which scare others of urban environments are the activities which basically are not crimes. But it makes public disordering. For example attending addicted people in public spaces causes making negative perception about the safety of that spaces (Jacobs, 1961). It should be mentioned according to the differences between two mentioned urban places, in the case study stage of this study, it was tried to investigate these two parts separately and the result was compared with urban environments.

4. Deriving Safety Indicators through Conceptualization:

According to Jacobs (1961), in the process of conceptualization which is the real process for understanding an objective concept, the concept divides to different dimensions. Firstly each dimension comprises different factors that shaped that. Then based on each indicator, its dependent parameters will derive. Some of these parameters to evaluate women’s safety in public areas are as follow:

4.1. Natural and Artificial Surveillance:

Natural surveillance is a design strategy that is directed at keeping intruders under observation. Designing for natural surveillance involves providing ample opportunity for legitimate users, engaged in their normal
activities to observe the space around them (Khalili et al., 2014). Natural surveillance is the placement of physical features and/or activities, and people that maximizes natural visibility or observation.

Glazing and proper placement, selection, and maintenance of plant materials should be considered to maximize natural surveillance opportunities. In the other word, adding street eyes to urban planning pattern makes a hidden supervision on abundant areas of public spaces which may take place crimes (Elyas zadeh Moghadam, 2011). It means that the safety in terms of decreasing crime (Rasdi, 2011) will improve when people are in seeing situations and their sound can be heard.

From this perspective, it can be said that increasing natural surveillance and encouraging creating active areas are the important principles which new designing policy that should apply to reach physical cooperation and safety within urban public places (Rasdi, 2011). Additionally, applying new modern devices such digital cameras (CCTV) in the spaces where natural surveillance is impossible, is one of the most popular techniques used in the world to support for reaching secure places. In fact this device by making the sense of surveillance promotes safety.

4.2. Commuting:
To reach social justice applying public transportation is vital. This is the right of citizens to be able to commute safely intra city (Mitchell, 2003). The terms of commuting is indicated to any kind of traveling on foot or in vehicles. In the movement by vehicles, it can point to two forms of personal own cars or public transportation facilities; in situation of on foot it comprised of pedestrian or bicycling.

The experiences of commuting safety show differences between men and women’s perceptions (Valentine, 1989). It means that women can imagine a sedative map of the city in their mind about the places where they can have safety or where it is insecure. This created mental framework will be the bases of analysis and judgment of the women’s movement pattern design in the public urban environments (Elyas zadeh Moghadam, 2011).

4.3. Spatial Functions and Related Activities:
The safety of each space depends on the functions of its sub-spaces (Newman, 1996). In this regard to control the safety of each space the isolated and abundant sub-spaces must be controlled. The Mixed-Functions theory which was given by Jacobs (1961) could not inspire the knowledge of planning yet. In this theory supervising women was discussed. Generally some dimensions of this concern are 1) the first floor of each function must be active (Aziz, 2012), 2) Natural surveillance, 3) Well maintenance, 4) Combination of small jobs, homes and offices constructed on the second floor (Elyas zadeh Moghadam, 2011).

4.4. Legibility:
Generally legibility depends on the degree of spatial understanding (Najafi & Mohd Shariff, 2011). Legibility can be measured through evaluating sight barriers, direction signs, lightening, and so on. It means that legible space must have an interactive design pattern. In this regard, a legible space can help the safety. In contrast, when there are not enough guiding indexes and signs, the place will be mixing up and it causes in safety (Ujang, 2012).

4.5. Livability:
Livability covers the many features that make a place where people want to go on living (Sharifi & Murayama, 2012). These characteristics cover the necessities of living as well as the pleasure of preferences. Some indicators which can be evaluated from the aspect of livability are easy access, varied permanent and temporary functions and activities, suitability for occasional events, existing suitable furniture, cleanliness, and so on.

5. Aim, Hypothesis and Methodology of the Study:
The aim of this study is investigating the indicators of women’s safety within the communal spaces of traditional Isfahan bazaar with the approach of sexual justice. In this regard, based on the main hypothesis of this study, there is a direct relation between women’s safety and the crowding of the mix-function areas. To reach the aim of the study through qualitative approach and intrinsic case study strategy women’s daily activities and their safety in the selected case study were analyzed. To enhance the validity of results, the data collection method is multiple tactics which is combination of site observation, semi-structured single face to face Interview, semi-structured focus group interviewing, and taking photo.

In this regard, through criterion sampling strategy, 6 spaces around traditional Isfahan Bazaar were selected. This phase of study was done by main researcher and two research assistants during 2 weeks. The used technique for this phase of study was covert observation. After the preliminary investigation, in the phase of final investigation, the researcher and 3 research assistants did semi-structured interview with 17 Iranian middle-aged women and 5 group of middle-aged women who were active in the selected spaces during 11 days. The
time of each single face to face interview which was with Farsi language was around 30-35 minutes and for focus group interviewing, this time became around 50-65 minutes.

6. Case Study and Finding:

The selected case study to this research is the specified area (Figure 1) within the texture of traditional Bazaar of Isfahan and surrounding of Hafez Avenue.

Fig. 1: The research case study, Isfahan Traditional Bazaar, Iran.

This selected district includes residential, commercial, mix-functions, manufacturing and storage, and green area. As the figure 2, the different zones of the case study have been specified.

Fig. 2: Functional zoning in the case study, traditional Isfahan Bazaar Isfahan, Iran.

The finding of study shows the meaningful relations between the investigated factors. Generally about the part of safety for women it can be said that the traditional Bazaar of Isfahan (Figure 3, a), mix function areas (Both the surrounding of Hafez Avenue and edge of Naghsh e Jahan square) (Figure 3, b), the green area of the Naghsh e Jahan square (Figure 3, c), and the residential area can provide better safety for both local and stranger women because of their familiarity, place attachment, legibility, and their active community life. In addition their natural surveillance by sellers, shop keepers, residents and neighbors are stronger than other areas.

Fig. 3: The areas with high level of safety for women community life.
On the other hand, in its controversial point the storage and manufacturing areas as the back layers of residential and commercial areas are not suitable for public specially women; because, not only they are not under natural and even artificial surveillance, but also they cause the of unfamiliarity and fear of crime among women.

The collected data shows that the average of commuting in the both mix functions, commercial, green, and residential areas are the most preferred regions for women. The average of safety also has the highest rate in these areas respectively. The lowest rate for women commuting and their safety is for back layer storage and manufacturing zone. This zone was the worst region for women from the points of respondents view.

By analyzing the rates of women commuting and their safety in the divided zones of case study, the relation between these two indicators will be meaningful. As it is indicating the rates of commuting and population in the five mentioned places are high, but the subject of high population and the safety is a complicated subject which does not follow the linear order. Disordering of situations are the elements of crime in the cities. In this meaning without an especial regulated relation in the physical fabric of environment, crowding can be a crime and in safety creator factor (Marans, 2012).

7. **Analyzing the Results of Investigated indicators:**

To analysis the collected data from semi-structured single and group interviewing, the respondents’ answer analyzed through content analysis. The codes which supported by literature analyzed as follow:

As mentioned before, being familiar with the situation and lack of strangeness (which cause fear and anxiety) has an important role in one's mental safety. In addition the memory of bad or good mentality of situation can affect the sense of situation. So here being the familiarity and the back ground memory of one was investigated. Additionally, as mentioned by interview respondents, the majority of spaces of traditional Bazaar of Isfahan and its surrounding areas are legible. Based on reached answer from respondents, exist enough signs and landmarks help the users to find the spaces legible.

From the respondents’ perspective and the gained results from observation analyzing, the mix functions, commercial, and green areas in traditional Bazaar of Isfahan have the highest level of natural surveillance. The next level of this indicator is for residential area. The lowest level of natural surveillance is for back layers of storage and manufacturing area. This zone has lowest rate among all parts of case study.

The result of case study shows the mix function areas in the edges of Hafez Street and the edge of Naghsh e Jahan square involve green and mix function areas have the highest ability to create women safety. It means that the commercial, manufacturing, and storage zones because of their social situation at the night create the sense of fear from crime. As a result almost all women indicated these areas are insecure at the night for them. They also mentioned because of exist many pathways for entering within the texture of the case study, women prefer to be not alone especially after evening. As another important indicator, the possibility to perform occasional events as religious, cultural and social activities in the Hafez Avenue and Naghsh e Jahan square zones, these areas are much livable as well as safe and secure for women during the occasions (Figure 4).

Regarding to mentioned issues, women much prefer to use public transportation than men. So application of public transportation for absorbing the population has a high attention. Women participant in the study generally mentioned the numbers of buses are very low. This weakness of transportation increases during the night. As the respondents’ idea, this is one of the elements of their anxiety.

![Livability](image)

**Fig. 4:** Livability. Performing religious rituals by women at night (in the Moharram).

8. **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Through analyzing collected data, the results confirm the main assumption of the study. In this regard the indicators which enhance the women’s safety based on the functions of the different zones of public spaces were concluded as figure 5:
Fig. 5: The investigated indicators and recommends in terms of women safety in the case study.

Regarding to the analyzed parameters some recommendations to enhance women safety in public spaces are:

a) Increasing the livability through enhancing the quality of accessibility, providing varied permanent and temporary functions and activities during days and nights, improving suitability of spaces for occasional events, designing suitable furniture, increasing the cleanliness of spaces; b) Maintaining the various functions in the situation by changing and reviving the abundant areas; c) Enhancing spaces legibility through improving direction signs and lightening and reducing sight barriers; d) doing the plans of improving people’s familiarity for decrease the sense of fear and anxiety; e) Enhancing natural surveillance.

REFERENCES


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