



## Woman in Culture and Arts

### The Effect of the Transformation of Gender Authority of the Qajar Period on the Activities and Urban Spaces of Iran (Centered on Dar Al-Khilafah in Tehran)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article type:</b></p> <p>Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p>Received: 5 July 2024</p> <p>Received in revised form 8 January 2025</p> <p>Accepted 5 May 2025</p> <p>Published online: 1 July 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p><i>Gender Authority, Qajar Period, Urban Activity, Urban Space.</i></p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Those cultural transformations that changed the urban Qajar community also influenced the gender bordering of that period. Before the Naseri period, when cities were primarily “neighborhood-centered,” women would spend time and engage in activities in the “indoor space” of the house, while males would do so in the “outdoor space.” In the region where men and women were segregated, there was no distinction between individuals of the same gender. However, the transition to modernity that required a woman's presence next to the man was the transition from the famine space to a different gendered environment. These circumstances recognized the existence of “another person” in society, and the mediating function of this “another” resulted in the establishment of new boundaries for urban spaces and gender-specific activities. The border of agency and authority between women and males in urban society was displaced as a result of cultural changes that occurred during the middle Qajar period. After this transformation, urban activities and spaces were also changed.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <p>The research method is descriptive-analytical, interpretive-historical, and document analysis by using documentary and library assessments, so the historical part of the study requires using historical research methods to investigate and interpret the reasons and effects of events on the gender authority. This research method aids in the accurate interpretation of each issue in the right case. Also, attention to some behavioral and physical patterns in cities of the past can be followed with interpretive-historical research methods. The “descriptive-analytical” method was employed in the subsequent phase to descriptively analyze the activities and spaces of cities in order to clarify the impact of gender authority transformation during the Qajar period on the urban activities and spaces of Iran. In this case, some historical documents required using the “document analysis” due to the lack of direct accessibility to events and fields for the transformation of gender authority during the Qajar era, as well as certain urban activities and spaces that were a result of this. This technique consisted of reviewing available documents either for the actual perception of content or to clarify deeper meanings.</p> <p><b>Results</b></p> <p>With gradual social and cultural developments, the scope of women's urban activities and spaces expanded. In this new context, cities witnessed some unprecedented activities and spaces, as follows: 1. Inside the houses, the arena of public activities; 2. Public gatherings and mourning; 3. Girls' schools; 4. Economic transactions and women's jobs; 5. Participation in political and social struggles; 6. Publications (treatises and newspapers); 7. Women's organizations and associations; 8. Charity; 9. Walking in parks; 10. Watching and shopping in the bazaar and houses; 11. Watching from the roof; 12. Being in the city to take pictures; 13. Attending celebrations and watching plays, cinemas and theaters; 14. Participating in hunting and camping; 15. Meeting the king when he was walking on the street and participating in the welcoming ceremony; 16. Going to the doctor; 17. Bathhouse; 18. Travel; 19. Touring and viewing some parts of the palace; 20. Attending some public ceremonies; 21. Tailoring; 22. Using a carriage and a rickshaw and attending new public transportation stations and vehicles; 23. Visiting religious shrines and other graves; 24. Spending leisure time and women's home gatherings; 25. Women's mosque. 26.</p>

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Construction of new streets with city lights and shops; 27. Construction of new squares with new uses.

### Conclusion

The study's findings affirm that women, who previously did not require any additional space beyond their homes to complete their tasks, now required a specific urban space due to the emergence of new activities and the changing social and cultural conditions. The necessary platform was either unavailable or required heavy costs. In other words, social activities were modified and prepared prior to urban spaces, necessitating that women utilize their homes to execute certain emergent activities. Under these circumstances, the indoor space of the house transitioned from the private to the public sphere to accommodate the activities of women. The new activities paved the way for women to not only be at home but also influence the outdoor space, and this was a significant horizon that appeared in society, which necessitated the need for new urban and architectural spaces. Nevertheless, the same private spaces of households were transformed into public spaces, or multiple-used urban spaces were utilized as public spaces due to the absence of a predetermined plan for their presence. This transformation was a significant step in the movement of women from indoors to the walls.

The middle Qajar period's cultural and social transformation facilitated the communal presence of women in society, and they were able to demonstrate their citizenship in the same way as men. Presence and being of another gender led to the appearance of their agency and authority to achieve their desired demand. The gradual emergence of certain activities and spaces that were novel at the time was a result of the gender authority of women in the city. Nevertheless, the development process was not halted at this point, and the newly emerging female urban activities and spaces led to a greater presence of women and their authority in the city. It is possible to assert that gender authority and female urban activities and spaces were in a reciprocal process of synergy. Additionally, Changes in gender authority resulted in the emergence of certain activities and spaces in the city that were unexampled. This platform abolished the rigid gender boundaries that rendered the home and city the private and public domains, respectively. Consequently, the inherited definitions of public and private areas were altered. Courtyards were utilized for social activities by both men and women, and women were permitted to reside in urban areas. In light of these circumstances, certain urban spaces such as government headquarters, were constructed and designed with the presence of both sexes in mind. In cinema and theater salons and other performance spaces, women and men could recline next to each other and observe performances. They could also engage in activities such as walking through gardens and urban green spaces, allowing both sexes to be present. Before the gender authority transformation, women in the middle class of society had more mobility than those in other social classes. For example, they could shop at a mall or use public restrooms. However, after the gender authority transformation, women in the elite class began to move around the society and started to construct schools, establish charity and writing associations in the journals at home or other areas of the city.

The unprecedented activities such as women's writing, charities, organizations, and new spaces such as the establishment of female schools in houses and journal offices, and women entities, suggest that women were willing to meet their demands and needs from the middle Qajar era then due to urban activities and spaces. Their agency and capacity for autonomous action and free choice in the city entered a new phase as they tended to do so through a means other than governmental measures and independent from government support or interference.

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