

## **Cultural-Identity Policies of Architectural Projects with Emphasis on Ekbatan Town of Tehran**

### **Abstract**

Throughout history, architecture has been the embodiment of the cultural ideals of human societies, and based on these ideals, the living environments created by different individuals have become a whole with its own identity. It appears that with the advent of modernism and the globalization of architecture, the concepts of architectural cultural identity have developed a changing and complex concept which is constantly challenged. Therefore, the present article intends to analyze and interpret the relationship between cultural-identity policies and the quality of residential environments. For this purpose, by selecting Ekbatan town of Tehran, as a sample, the quality of residential houses in phases 1 and 2 of this town has been assessed. The research method is based on hierarchical multivariate regression analysis and the model used in the analysis process is also called the experimental model of measuring the quality of the living environment. The desired socio-cultural is rated (we are between 1 and 5). The results of the studies indicate that the quality of the external environment of the residential complexes of Phase 1 ( $1 > 62.62$ ) and Phase 2 ( $1 > 2.88 > 5$ ) of Ekbatan town is lower than average according to the socio-cultural identity. However, the quality of the indoor environment of residential units in accordance with the same principles is in good condition (Phase 1 ( $5 > 08/04$ ) and Phase 2 ( $5 > 18/4 > 1$ )). Also, both phases are similar and similar to each other in terms of observing the principles and criteria of socio-cultural identity.

**Keywords:** Environmental Quality, Identity-Cultural Policies, Regression Analysis, Hierarchical Multivariate, Ekbatan Town.

## Introduction

The issue of identity has long been one of the human concerns. The concept of who and what is human is one of the oldest philosophical topics and most philosophers and theorists have discussed it. Identity, which in the distant past was considered a fixed and predetermined phenomenon, has now become a changing, complex and contradictory concept and has caused a crisis of identity and unrest in modern man (Soleimani et al., 2013). As a result, debates about what identity is and the components that affect it, today as in the past or even more than in the past, is one of the most challenging topics in various fields of philosophy, psychology and sociology (Beheshti, 2014). The emergence of the concept of identity in the field of architecture, after the Second World War, was formed in the 50s and following the emergence of criticism of modern architecture (Javadi, 1394). Despite the extensive discussions that have taken place in this regard since then, this phenomenon is still a topic of interest, especially in developing countries (Feyzabadi and Rafi Ardakani, 2015). Discounting culture as an integral part of life in modern architecture, creates a large part of social problems and psychological problems in this area (Tavakoli and Kashmiri, 1396: 106).

Even now, identity is compatible with the category of culture and in fact, what makes a person, from building a house to a city, is the embodiment of cultural ideals and standards (Issazadeh, 2016). According to Rapaport, "culture refers to the set of values and beliefs of the people whose ideals and principles are formed in a worldview" (Rapaport, 1987). In fact, culture is the space of living and activity and expresses human relations with the outside world. Culture plays a role as a context, space and meaning of life by guiding and directing human activities (Bahraminejad and Kaboli, 2019: 30). As a result, considering the interrelationship between architecture, culture and the formation of patterns between them, through it, the ideal idea of a nation will be seen by all (Bahraminejad and Kaboli, 2019: 28). It is based on these principles and ideals that biological complexes in at the same time, they are made by different people as a whole with an identity and can be distinguished from other examples (Tavassoli, 2012). This distinction of social identity is not unreasonable either since social identity indicates the existence of a set of organized behaviors between groups that are performed socially in the same way (Behzadfar and Tahmasebi, 2013).

Detecting social identity is an attempt to analyze the reproducible patterns and sections and attitudes that exist in social groups (Meshkini et al., 2015) and in a longitudinal and rooted view, it is divided into two aspects: physical and spiritual or outward and inward (Noghrehkar et al., 2009). Its structural pattern is such that in all the constituent elements for a society that is in balance, factors such as religion and environment interact with each other as the first layer (Bagheri and Sangsfidi, 2016); In such a way that societies based on religions use the element of religion as a pillar of all other elements and non-religious societies use elements such as society, history or ethnicity and race as the basis. The next layer is dedicated to the current tradition of society, which has both overt and covert aspects (Noghrehkar, 2008) and behaviors, values, norms, customs, people's way of life, etc. are considered the tradition of that society (Rostampour et al., 1393). The hidden dimensions of tradition, such as values and beliefs, over time, shape the culture of that society in accordance with its social identity.

Numerous researches focusing on culture, identity and architecture have been conducted inside and outside Iran, some of which are mentioned below. In a study examining the impact of cultural change on housing and housing priorities, Klafs (2001) presents the results of a case study on housing and accommodation valuation indicators in an Ecuadorian settlement. This study shows how the inhabitants

of an area build their social and cultural identity. Nejad Ebrahimi and Farshchian (2014), in their research, point to the need to pay attention to the discussion of the specific background of people's living culture, as an important factor in designing public spaces to increase social interactions. Also, Moeini et al. (2014) in another study by studying the town of Ekbatan and considering the psychological aspects of housing and its impact on the occurrence of psychological disorders such as crime, to examine the evolution of the crime prevention approach by environmental design and creation Environmental security using design. In addition, Ghanbaran and Jafari (2014) in their study, in relation to Darka neighborhood in Tehran, indicate that the socio-political structure of the city, the physical-spatial structure and the mental-psychological states of space users in promoting social interactions among the residents of this neighborhood has been impressive.

On the other hand, some researchers such as Alavi et al. (2014) and Sajjadzadeh et al. (2015) in their research have studied the sustainable development of the neighborhood and the dimensions of architectural sustainability in Ekbatan town. Safarnejad et al. (2016), in a study in Rasht, concluded that by creating permeability, sensory richness, attention to the appearance of buildings, symbols and indigenous signs, readability in physical form and attention to the context in the design, Promoted the identity of the environment and increased the sense of belonging of citizens. Goodarzi and Mofidi Shemirani (2017), in a study studying the town of Ekbatan, state: "In the minds of every Iranian from their home, these spaces only served as shelters, which has become one of the most important causes of increasing mental disorders such as depression, suicide, etc. in these areas." In the same year, Rahimzadeh and Nosrati (2017) in their research, by studying the town of Andisheh in Ardabil, emphasize and coordinate cultural commonalities as a factor in increasing social cohesion and internal dependencies in biological complexes. In this regard, Zarghami et al. (2017), the success of Iranian-Islamic housing requires the observance of the principle of social identity in the heart of design. Moser and Shamsa Wilber (2017) also studied the cultural policies of architectural projects in the Indonesian islands over the past fifteen years, with the aim of creating a sense of Malay cultural and religious identity. The results of this study show how government architectural policies are able to influence architectural projects according to their views to preserve the Malay heritage and the orientation of these policies is more on reviving and displaying elements of Malay culture in buildings. The public has been focused. Also, Yousefzadeh and Sabbaghpour (2017) in a study examined social interactions as the most important factor of social sustainability and emphasized the role of social spaces as a factor to encourage and participate in collective life and sense of belonging. Continuing the previous studies, the present study, with a new perspective influenced by identity-cultural policies, assesses the quality of residential units in phase 1 and 2 of Ekbatan town.

The research method in this paper is the hierarchical multivariate regression analysis method. Then, in order to measure the quality of the residential environment, the experimental model method called "value tree" is used, which has a hierarchical structure. In this model, criteria are part of the criteria and effective variables in the process of measuring the quality of the residential environment. In this regard, different sources and methods can be used, such as referring to Iranian culture and identity, reviewing relevant texts and interviewing residents or experts to determine and create variables related to the quality of the residential environment. It should be noted that in the present study, the organization of variables using the "analytical" approach and the experimental model at 4 levels: And spaces, spatial affiliation, type of access, physical-service facilities, security / safety and environmental variables), quality criteria of indoor environment according to the socio-cultural identity of phase 1 and 2 residential houses

in Ekbatan town (privacy, type of materials, area spaces, spatial hierarchy, type of door and window insulation, view and scenery, d) is the final level of the value tree. In this section, using socio-cultural identity index, questions about each of the criteria are asked and quantification of these indicators. A questionnaire is drawn up using the direct method. The questionnaire was designed in two parts: questions about the individual identity of residents (which of course also causes their social and cultural identity) and questions related to measuring the quality of the residential environment (outdoor and indoor environment). In this regard, the statistical population of the present study consists of a group of residents of the study area (Ekbatan town). Cochran's formula was used to determine the number of members of the statistical population, so that the sample size of 243 people was obtained. Considering the probabilities related to the unusability of a number of completed questionnaires, a total of 280 questionnaires were randomly distributed in the desired area at different times of the day, and finally 271 questionnaires were used as the basis for statistical analysis by SPSS software. Among these, the sample population was evaluated after screening the questionnaires consisting of 123 men and 148 women with a mean age of 32 years and higher education.

## **Conclusion**

Analyzing and evaluating the quality conditions of residential environments through quantitative methods and experimental models is an approach that is used today to identify the general level of the environment, undesirable, vulnerable environmental components, weight and relative importance of the environment at work. Using this method, socio-cultural identity factors were assessed in the outdoor and indoor residential units of Phase 1 and 2 of Ekbatan town. The results showed that the quality of the external environment of the residential complexes of Phase 1 ( $1 > 2.62 > 5$ ) and Phase 2 ( $1 > 2.88 > 5$ ) in Ekbatan town, according to the socio-cultural identity is lower than average. Meanwhile, the quality of the indoor environment of residential units, in accordance with the socio-cultural identity, is above average and in a good condition (Phase 1 ( $5 > 08/04$ ) and Phase 2 ( $5 > 4/18$ )).

Among the criteria studied in both phases of Ekbatan town, the lowest level of compliance with the principles in the outdoor environment is related to spatial affiliation and social interactions, and in the indoor environment of residential units is related to privacy. Also, according to the coefficients of importance, these two criteria have the lowest coefficient of importance. It should be noted that the criteria of safety and security (with a coefficient of  $\beta = 0.249$ ), in the external environmental quality and the criterion of door and window insulation ( $\beta = 0.439$ ), have the highest coefficients in the quality of the indoor environment. Therefore, in accordance with the factors of social and cultural identity, it is observed that in both phases, very little attention has been paid to socio-cultural identity factors in the external environment, while in the indoor environment of residential units, attention to this principle has increased.

In a general view, all the cases done in the present study are aimed at achieving the following:

Achieving a relationship between socio-cultural identity and the quality of residential environments.

- Development of simple and low-cost solutions to improve the quality of built environments.
- Recognizing the effect of architecture and urban planning components on the social identity of Ekbatan residents.

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