

A Study on the Effective Components and Indicators of Modernism in the Aristocratic Houses of Mashhad in the Late Qajar Period

Abstract

The emergence of innovation and the gradual entry of modernization in Iran during the Qajar period was influential on various aspects of the Iranian society. One of such influential areas was architecture. During this period, the achievements of Western modernity entered the body and soul of the architecture of the city, including its buildings and mansions. The issue raised here is the scope and dimensions of the impact of modernism on the architecture of residential houses of the Qajar epoch. The present study seeks to prioritize such features in addition to identifying the aspects affecting the architecture of late Qajar residential buildings in the city of Mashhad. The present study is an applied research study in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of method. The method of data collection is library and documentary purpose accomplished via a questionnaire distributed among experts; furthermore, Delphi method was also used to regulate the importance of the components and indicators. Findings of the research indicate that based on the analysis obtained from available sources and surveys, a model with 5 components and 20 indicators is compiled and the value of each category and the order of importance of the index were determined. Thus, the components of "plan", "construction elements" and "decorations" as well as the three indicators of "staircase axis", "balcony" and "sloping roof and santouri" gained the first to third ranks. The effects of modernism are seen in various forms in the plan, facade, entrances, interiors and, as an indicator, to the elements and components of architecture.

Research aims:

1. Study and analysis of the impact of modernism on architecture of the Qajar period.
2. Investigation on the effect of modernism on the houses of the late Qajar period in Mashhad.

Research questions:

1. What changes did modernism bring to the architecture of the Qajar period?
2. What effect did modernism have on the houses of the aristocracy in the late Qajar period in the city of Mashhad?

Keywords: Modernism, Qajar Architecture, Residential Houses, Aristocracy

Introduction

During the Qajar period, Iranian art developed significantly due to its connection with the West, and many artists voyaged to Europe and Western countries during this period. In effect, following the innovations and changes resulting from modernity, local architects also embraced new tastes and incorporated them into their work. During this period, the architecture of residential buildings reached a certain level of design and execution. The houses were designed according to the principles and standards that governed the society at that time, and in the construction of spaces, privacy, which was one of the most important principles in Iranian culture was observed. During this period, the design of the house became a friendly space that met the inherent and natural needs of the family and the communication and layout of the plan was designed in accordance with the culture of the Iranian family. In other words, in the Qajar period, the construction of residential buildings was variant according to the class status of the people. For this reason, the zero point of modernity in Iran is considered to coincide with the Qajar rule. Conditions such as the tragic defeats of Iran by the Russians, the signing of the infamous Golestan and Turkmenchay agreements, close relations with the West, the spread of new ideas, the travel of students to France and the transfer of observations to compatriots and the emergence of technical and cultural phenomena the doors of Iran were gradually opened the path of Iran towards modernity. In the meantime, the actions of modernists to harmonize Western and Iranian culture caused the buildings of the Qajar period to be designed with Iranian traditions and imported elements of the West. Thus, the frequent travels of kings to Europe and the West, in the field of architecture, had several results and left significant effects. The kings and princes called for the implementation of Western architectural design in their land and called on the architects to establish such buildings. This process continues until the architectural design of the palace spread out to urban houses and became public.

Regarding the background of the present study, it should be said that an independent work with this title has not been written so far, nonetheless, research works have studied the architecture of houses in the Qajar period. Momeni et al. (2015), in their research entitled: "Study of Qajar house decorations in Qom (Shakeri house)" attempt to find the components and features of Qajar house decorations in one of the landmarks of the city of Qom; the results of the study showed that the main ornamentations include decorative brickwork, columns and stone plinths are one-piece and

prominent, however, fragments of Iranian art of previous periods can still be seen in some of the decorations and motifs such as flowers and vases, angels, humans and artichoke leaves are observed in a realistic manner. Maryam Ghasemi Sichani and Gholamhossein Memarian (2010), in a study entitled "Typology of Qajar houses in Isfahan" state that the largest number of historical houses in Isfahan are related to the Qajar era that are built with semi-warm and dry climate architectural characteristics, mainly introverted. Also, in another study entitled "Typology of historical houses of the old texture of Mashhad, from the early Qajar to the late Pahlavi I" written by Morteza Farahbakhsh et al. (2017) study the typology of the buildings with the use of combined research method and refer to the introduction of the houses in this period. In the article Nazarboland (2017), entitled "Modernity in the decoration of Qajar houses in Shiraz", he examines and compares the decorative aspects in Shiraz houses and separates the aspects of traditional Iranian architecture from the imported aspects of the West and concludes that all the buildings under study have a combined style of decoration, in which both Iranian and Western decorations are used. The architecture of any nation may resemble a picture book of the culture of that nation. Therefore, addressing the influential aspects of the Qajar period in the field of architecture and also prioritizing these aspects in this period, which is the era of innovation and developments in the field of housing art and architecture is one of the objectives of this study that has not been addressed so far.

This research is based on Creswell (2014) research plan in terms of practical purpose. Accordingly, the present study is of a strategy type with a series of explorations using a combined method (qualitative and quantitative). Sequential exploration strategy begins with the stage of collecting and analyzing qualitative data, followed by quantitative data, and finally the findings of these two stages are linked (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, in this study, brainstorming was used to collect the indicators based on the selected research approach. In order to achieve the indicators related to the research, the publications and published documents related to the subject were reviewed. The indicators obtained were examined through interviews with experts, and among the dozens of issues raised after combining overlaps, eliminating irrelevant items, and making necessary corrections, 20 indicators as effective aspects of modernism in late homes of the Qajar period of Mashhad was identified. Thus, in three stages, using the Delphi method, different items related to the field of study are summarized and approved. It is worth mentioning that all the identified variables of the research from the perspective of experts were classified into 5 categories. The

group of experts was also randomly selected. The experts were divided into 2 groups of 5 people: the first group is the professors of the architecture group who worked on related topics, the second group: includes managers, officials and those involved in organizations related to the field of study. Finally, the obtained answers were analyzed and the importance of each of the components and indicators of modernism on the aristocratic houses of Mashhad was extracted. Finally, according to the documentary studies, questionnaires and interviews, 5 components and 20 indicators were explained, checked and prioritized.

Conclusion

The study and analysis of the architecture of houses in the Qajar period indicates the effects of modernism on architecture in this period. The effects of modernism in the houses of the late Qajar period bestow many aspects. These features have various dimensions and shapes such as; "building elements", "materials", "decorations", "plans" and "facades" and were considered as the main components of houses and all houses, especially the houses of nobles and aristocrats. These influences have been of great importance to the architect as the Qajar period can be considered as the era of innovation and developments in the field of art and architecture. During this period, important and fundamental events took place that beheld an effective and special role on the content of Qajar period buildings. The aim of this study was to identify and prioritize the effects of modernism in the houses of aristocrats of the Qajar period in order to provide a local model and appropriate to the facts in combination with a successive exploration strategy and using the Delphi method in the metropolis of Mashhad. The concluded results show that among the five identified components, the "plan" and "building elements" components receive more serious attention than the other components. Also, among the 20 indicators examined, without considering the mechanisms of "staircase axis" and then "balcony" and then "sloping roof and santouri", "long porch" and "plaster works" have a more prominent role than other aspects and deserve more attention from experts. Thus, all the effective aspects of modernism in the noble houses of the Qajar period in Mashhad were prioritized based on 5 components and 20 indicators. Analysis of the data showed that aristocratic houses in Mashhad in the Qajar period in structure and materials are influenced by the criteria and patterns introduced to Iran due to the current of modernism.

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