

Physical Pattern of Life of Afghan Immigrants in Iran; Case Study: Brick Kiln in Shams Abad Area of Tehran City*

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ABSTRACT

After insecurities and long wars in Afghanistan, Afghans had to immigrate to Iran. Regarding to long history of Afghans' immigration to Iran and their high numbers, it is necessary to investigate their situations and conditions. Iran and Afghanistan are highly close nations due to their cultural, religious, social, and other ties. Hence, Iran is one of the most important countries that accept Afghan immigrants. Afghan immigrants who accept Iranian culture and society also face an identity crisis when entering the new community. This issue leads to cultural amalgamation in the Iranian community. This study aims to present the physical pattern of Afghan immigrants in Iran based on the qualitative method through in-depth interviews. To do this, Afghans' housing is analyzed then 40 semi-structured interviews are conducted with immigrant Afghans living in the brick kiln of Shams Abad in Tehran. Data are analyzed through MAXQDA software in the coding process data, which led to 148 codes. The connection between codes and the main problem of the study is that the "physical pattern" has been presented in the form of a diagram. The proposed diagram is classified into three scopes physical-functional-meaning needs and demands, social-cultural paradoxical, and social-cultural mixing, which are factors affecting physical patterns. Ultimately, the physical pattern of Afghan immigrants is proposed within the three mentioned scopes, as well as spatial and physical strategies.

Keywords: Afghan Immigrants, Afghans in Iran, Physical Pattern of Afghans, Qualitative Research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Afghans make up the majority of immigrants in Iran who immigrate due to the war and improper conditions in Afghanistan to this neighboring country which have more in common. These immigrants who are mainly illegal have bad social, economic, and other positions causing many difficulties for the host country. These immigrants have entered Iran adding to the low class of society without having useful capital and knowledge. Immigrants deal with some conflicts and disagreements in the social and cultural issues compared to the destination community, so they are not welcomed by the destination community. Afghan immigrants living in the Iranian community have not been well admitted since they are deprived of suitable jobs and do not have proper skill levels (Abbasi-Shavazi et al. 2009). Although the international community admires Iran due to hosting millions of Afghans without receiving any aid, most of these immigrants have few rights in this country (Human Rights Watch 2013). Housing architecture can provide better basic amenities for immigrants' lives creating a better cultural-social position for these immigrants, which leads to cultural cohabitation and agreement between them and the host community. This study is conducted on Afghan immigrants who have numerous cultural commonalities with the Iranian community due to historical reasons. These commonalities in the identity of these immigrants and the destination community would facilitate the interactions. A type of negative prejudice has been created in the Iranian community due to the history of Afghans' presence and their social, cultural, and economic position over the years. The issue is whether it is possible to solve the housing problem of immigrants and reach cultural, social, cohabitation, and solidarity between Iranians and Afghans. It also helps to improve the social position of the unwelcome Afghans for many reasons by finding a model for the physical and living patterns of immigrants. This study has been conducted to improve the current status of Afghans living in the brick kiln area of Shams Abad in Tehran. The author has analyzed data and proposed a model for the physical pattern of Afghan immigrants in Iran regarding the qualitative research method.

1.1. Immigrants in the Destination Community

Immigration in the modern world is one of the main factors in the study on population changes playing a vital role in population and labor growth (Foroutan 2011). Immigration is defined as a process of voluntary and compulsory movement of a person or a group of individuals from one place to another place for a temporary or permanent settlement. Immigration creates some changes in individuals' attitudes and their social-economic activities and behaviors. The major classification of immigration is divided into two categories: 1. Inside the borders of a country or

internal migration (within four forms: from village to village, from village to city, from city to city, and from city to village), and 2. Across the borders or international immigration (Jamshidiha and Alibabaei 2002). In international immigration, especially illegal immigrants, the security and political problems have various reflections, such as disturbed ethnical-religious mixture in the host country, anti-security activities, more conflicts between immigrants and the host community, etc. (Zarghani and Mousavi 2013). An increase in international immigration in the world leads to more violence and discrimination, as well as violation of the human rights of immigrants and refugees (Taherpoor, Zamani, and Mohseni 2006). Some groups appear in the immigration and asylum process whose face, body, and cultural habits differ from the dominant society group treating them differently and unfairly (Abdizade et al. 2010). Three main specifications in how host society treats immigrants include: 1. Hating immigrants and blaming them as the reason for all social, economic, cultural, and political disturbances; 2. Not knowing the immigrant community and its culture; 3. Conflict in treating immigrants: using them financially and expressing dissatisfaction with their presence in society (Sadeghi 2007). According to studies conducted by (Yahyaie and Kia 2009). The steps an immigrant spends in the destination community are divided into two categories ethnocentric, which comprises the following steps: 1. denial, 2. defending differences, 3. mitigating differentiation, and ethno-relative viewpoint, which comprises the following steps: 1. admission, 2. adaptation with differences, cultural mixing and amalgamation.

1.2. Immigrant Afghans in Iran

Conspiracies of the UK and actions done by Aqa Khan Nuri led to the official separation of Afghanistan from Iran during the Naser al-Din Shah Qajar era (Houshang Mahdavi 1970). Afghanistan's history has experienced many domestic and foreign wars and conflicts, which have directly affected the immigration of Afghan citizens. War and insecurity, political instability, poverty and economic pressure, and ethnical conflicts in neighboring countries of Iran have led to the formation of immigration and asylum to this country (Pour Ahmad, Zayyari, and Zahedi 2014). Immigration of Afghans due to war and emergency conditions does not just relate to a certain age or class group but includes numerous families and citizens of the community (Jamshidiha and Anbari 2004). The phenomenon of Afghan people's immigration to neighboring countries particularly Iran over recent decades has been an international immigration form with ascending trend (Pour Ahmad, Zayyari, and Zahedi 2014). The first displacement of Afghans to Iran began in the 1850s over which 500 Hazaras households immigrated to Iran and lived there. In addition, around 15000 Afghan households

(almost 168000 people), covering around 90% of a local place, immigrated to Torbat-e-Jam in Khorasan province during 1880-1903 (Mousavi 1997). More than 12 million Afghans have been displaced from inside or outside Afghanistan over the past 40 years. This is one of the largest and longest displacement crises (Crawley and Kaytaz 2022). Afghanistan has been dealing with war and displacement for more than 40 years, and this displacement began after the attack of the Soviet Union in 1979. The Afghan immigrant population exceeded six million people in 2002, 2.6 million refugees were officially recorded while three million refugees were recorded without any document at that time. According to a review in 2016, 85% of them had immigrated to their neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran (UNHCR 2016). Iran and Afghanistan have had many similarities in human structure and cultural, social, religious, and economic ties in the Iran plateau (natural single cradles), so many close emotional similarities have existed between residents living on two sides of the border more than any other nation (Yahyaie and Kia 2009). Hence, Afghans select Iran as the first destination for immigration. The higher the sense of patriotism, traditions rituals, and ethical techniques among immigrants, the more willing they are to return to their home countries. The more similarity between factors mentioned in Iran's community with cultural and social traits of immigrants, the more their dependence on Iran's community (Jamshidiha and Anbari 2004). Language, history, myth, religion, and so forth are significant identity-social elements,

which are important cultural commonalities between Iran and Afghanistan (Abdollahi 2009). Most Afghans are Muslim and are generally divided into two age (around 84%) and Shia (15% most of them are Hazaras) groups (Sarat Translation Group 2012). Afghanistan is made of various ethnicities, and studies conducted by L.D. Merrill (2006) indicates that 52% of Afghanistan's population comprises Pashtuns, 25% are Tajiks, 12% are Hazaras, 6% are Ozbeks, and 5% are other ethnics (Turkman, Baluch, Kyrgyz, Hindu, Sikh, Kashmiri, Aimaq, Persian, Herati, Brahui, Nuristani, Kazakh). According to statistics, the Hazara ethnic makes up the majority of Afghans living in Iran because they have religious, language, and historical similarities with Iranian people (Chor 1949). The numerous cultural ties and similarities between Afghans and Iranians indicate that the immigration of Afghans to Iran would not create cultural and identity problems (Yahyaie and Kia 2009). Afghans' dependence on Iran is divided into two main categories: 1. Financial dependence (having a job, land and personal properties, residential house, sufficient income, etc.), and 2. non-financial dependences (dependence on values, norms, religion, relativeness, and ethnicity system, tradition and rituals, ethical customs, ethnical procedures, language, patriotism, etc.) (Jamshidiha and Anbari 2004). According to Evert. S. Lee's theory about the deterrent and attractive actors of immigration origin and destination and intervening factors, these factors can be named for Afghan immigrants as shown below (Jamshidiha and Alibabaie 2002):

Table 1. Deterrent and Attractive Factors of Immigration Destination

Intervening Factors	Border and geographical closeness of the two countries, low cost of travel to Iran, lack of specific immigration regulations in Iran for Afghan immigrants, living in a city or village (in origin country), gender of individuals (male or female), education level of individuals
Attractive Factors of Iran	Financial and job security for Afghan immigrants in Iran, religious commonality with Iranian people Cultural and language commonalities with Iranians, the Islamic revolution in Iran, and Iran's support for the Afghan people
Deterrent Factors of Iran	Strict property and ownership rules (estate, car, phone, bank account, etc.), strict rules of citizenship rights, and lack of governmental facilities
Attractive Factors of Afghanistan	Numerous barriers have led to the absence of any attractive factor that can persuade Afghan people to stay in their countries
Deterrent Factors of Afghanistan	Permanent wars and political conflict in Afghanistan, lack of economic and financial security caused by war and political evolutions, lack of security for Shia people, and domination of a specific ethnic (Pashtun) overall ethnics of Afghanistan

(Jamshidiha and Alibabaie 2002)

1.3. Afghans' Housing

Revelation of values and priorities and consideration of goals in meeting needs and potential design factors play a vital role in human perception of design issues (Dahl and Sykes 1988). Housing and residences are physical descriptions of common social factors

(Rapaport 1969). In the opinion of Rapoport, the house is a cultural phenomenon and institute. The influence of culture on the house' shape is rooted in activities (Rapoport 1998). This part of the study investigates the houses of Afghans in Afghanistan. Table 2 reports various categories of Afghan houses.

Table 2. Categorization of Afghan's Houses

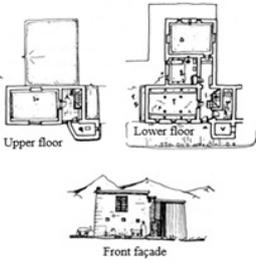
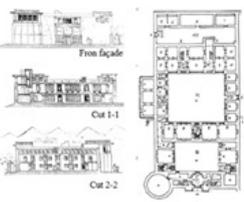
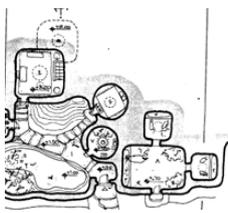
Area	Houses' Specifications
South and Center	Multistory rural houses with tall straw walls, located on farms, with a scattered pattern
North and West	dome-shaped houses, mainly made of clay bricks
East Heights	Rock and woods, joint construction materials, the indoor architecture of houses on the separation between public and private areas

(Sarat Translation Group 2012)

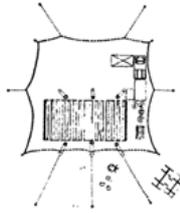
In another classification selected from the housing options available in central areas of Afghanistan (Hazarajat) among hundreds of examples, the

residential units have been divided into five types as reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Housing in Central Areas of Afghanistan- Hazarajat

Type of Residential Unit	Characteristics	Spaces
<p>Bare Residential Units (Caldival)</p> 	<p>The simplest type of shelter, shared with humans and livestock, with a closed rectangle shape, flat ceiling, thick walls, short and narrow doors used by both humans and livestock, small apertures in walls for lighting and ventilation, a small hole on the roof serving as chimney, while no fence of guard is used around this residential unit</p>	<p>A furnace is installed in the middle of the living room to be used as an oven Roof used for drying and gathering livestock waste to be used as fuel and firewood</p>
<p>Residential Units with a Courtyard (with Holi)</p> 	<p>An enclosed space with an introverted courtyard, less openness toward outside, human and livestock spaces have been considerably separated with a courtyard, flat ceiling covered with wooden beams on the shortest opening. Another type is a unit with a central courtyard in which several households live with each other.</p>	<p>Functional courtyards of the residential unit, Caldival on the roof Furnace room, stable, fodder and firewood warehouse on the ground floor, sitting room without heating system (BaharNeshin), dining room (guest room) on the first floor</p>
<p>Castle Residential Units</p> 	<p>Cubic volumes and cylindrical towers, mainly introverted, no specific external façade of opening exists except for the entrance gate.</p>	
<p>Cave Residential Units (Som or Somooch)</p> 	<p>External walls of mountains with mixed materials of mud and sand and soil hills, holes in the wall of suitable mountains or hills, having irregular circular and squared plans, dome-shaped and cylindrical (cradle) ceilings, short entrances, small holes do not have a large opening towards the outside, man-made, small size, and the dimension of indoor space</p>	<p>a human-livestock cohabitation exists inside the Somooch</p>

Type of Residential Unit	Characteristics	Spaces
Movable Residential Units	Movable residential unit, the apparent face of the tent with flexible poles and semi-fasten handles, portable structure, circular or a little stretched plan, curved ceiling, including circular Chapari, polygonal Chaparis, elongated rectangular and oval Chaparis,	



(Hesari 1997)

The structure of castle houses is then limited to three spatial scopes, which include settlement, livestock, and storage considering the dominant pattern of this category of houses based on the squared plan with tall walls, and finally presents the classification of cultural factors and its effect on the Qala architecture plan in Table 4. The author found that Pashtunwali in

ethnic communities of Afghanistan is the value names system and is manifested in their life and architecture through normative concepts. As classified in Table 4, “independence,” “Melmastia” (hospitality), “honor,” and “Seali” (power and ability) are some notions in the content of Pashtunwali, which have more tangible effect on the pattern of Qalas.

Table 4. Classifying Cultural Factors and their Effects on the Qala Architecture Pattern

Normative Concept	Activity (Behavioral Pattern)	Architectural Pattern
Independence	Self-reliance, unity and cohesion, pure collection life, living in the world of relatives	A complete complex, an independent complex, an extensive context, keeping distance between Qala and other complexes, large dimensions, development privacy, limited connection with the outside world, and formation of a small and secure world
Melmastia	Permanent readiness, complete and along with caution in hosting male guests, inclusiveness of guest definition, being responsible in financial and life support for guests, allocating the most desired and full facilities to guest	The dining room is the first element that is constructed in the settlement place, the dining room is a place with public accessibility, the priority of the dining room is allocation of spatial quantity and quality, largening the dining room for guests, separating the dining room and building it independently from other spaces
Honor	Considering all male strangers as a threat to the family's women, ability to protect and support women, family's properties and estates, preventing any physical, visual, and or emotional meeting between strangers and female members of the family, presenting a permanent show of the power and ability, permanent connection with property and full control over the capital and women of the family	A closed and impenetrable mixture, simple and authoritative mixture, a mixture of independent members, tall and large surrounding walls, watching towers, selecting a place for the deployment of Qala in close connection with family's properties, access hierarchy, distancing from private residence areas and storage from the entrance, deployment of two guest areas and familial residence within two opposite poles of land, predicting required distance between two private residence and guest areas
Seali	Competition in proving power and wealth equality and social position with the ability to stabilize equality, achieving the tools and factors confirming equality with the power	Selecting the Qala pattern as the housing based on the Seali, selecting a place for construction of Qala in terms of quality and advantages based on the Seali, determining general and partial qualities of Qala architecture pattern, size, area, height, etc. (based on the Seali, determining general and partial qualities of Qala architecture pattern), decorations, furniture, view and landscape, etc. (based on Seali)

(Tajik, Hojat, and Aeinifar 2017)

However, social culture and habits are the most substantial factors forming physical patterns of individuals' shelter. Afghanistan's housing pattern shown in Table 5 is obtained based on the investigation

and classification of housing among Hazara Afghans (because of numerous Hazara Afghan immigrants in Iran) considering the system of available values in Afghanistan.

Table 5. Afghanistan's Housing Pattern

Settlement	Livestock	Storage
Based on the value systems	A peaceful life next to livestock	Furnace
Collective and cohabitation life of families	Limited dimensions and space for indoor	Using the space behind the roof
Human creation, guest room, introversion		Using the space of the central courtyard
Separating guest room or dining room from private space		
Less opening towards the outside (the only opening in the entrance gate)		

2. METHOD

This is a qualitative study based on the type of data used in it. Regarding the exploratory nature of research, in-depth interviews and data coding have been used. In this qualitative study, the researcher has collected and analyzed data with an open mind without any prejudice or presumption. The research society comprises Afghans who live in Shams Abad Brick Kiln in Tehran. According to NGO statistics, 16 kilns exist in the area where 142 households live. The population living in this area includes permanent workers, seasonal workers, and tenants. A semi-structured interview was done with 40 Afghans living in the Shams Abad Brick Kiln area to collect data. The purposive sampling is used in this step of study. To reach theoretical saturation, the interview is done within several phases and sample individuals are selected from different groups, and then those are interviewed that are different from each other in terms of age, gender, marital status, education, and social class. The coding method is used for data analysis. Some experts have confirmed the interview's questions to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

3. RESULTS

In this research, the in-depth interviews done through long conversations and recorded voices were transcribed and classified after coding through MAXQDA software. Coding means shredding textural data, word by word in separate semantic units (Keshavarz Haghighi 2013). In the open coding based on the analysis of interviews, 148 conceptual codes were extracted from 835 codes. In the next step, a meeting was arranged with experts for the validation process, and the validity of the codes was discussed then some changes were made to the codes. This process was done as a round trip within several phases and terminated after reaching the theoretical saturation of interviews. Finally, a model was proposed as a diagram, and the diagram of the relationship between components extracted from codes based on the researcher analysis was illustrated in MAX Maps of MAXQDA software (Fig. 1). This diagram indicates the relationship between various factors and their effect on each other. The direct and indirect of these

concepts have been shown in the physical pattern, which is the main phenomenon of this research. The most important concepts are as follows: regarding the cultural and identity differences between Afghans and Iranians, the most significant is the different lifestyles and lack of required uses that have led to living space change by using Afghanistan's housing pattern. The culture of Afghans is the most important factor influencing the housing in their lives. Hospitality and privacy are the main components of Afghans' culture making them assign the best space for guests and try to separate the semi-private space from the public space. Moreover, their tendency to have open space is due to the green environment around their housing in Afghanistan. Lack of sympathy and admission of Afghans by Iranians lead to racial discrimination, which may be intensified due to the illegality or legality of Afghans and considering them as a threat to occupation and jobs in Iran. There is also a direct relationship between security and physical patterns. Occupants living in the brick kiln were all satisfied with the security of the women and children in this area. All of them talked about the high security of the area in the interviews, contrary to what others think. It was found in the interviews that no criminal or addicted person was there. Commonalities between Iranian and Afghan people (e.g., common Persian language, common Islam religion, and common traditions and rituals) have led to the admission of Iranian culture by Afghans and their dependence on Iran, which has a direct relationship with cultural mixing between these two nationalities. Hence, a direct relationship exists between physical patterns, cultural mixing, and amalgamation, with emphasis on the common traditions and culture of Iran and Afghanistan, and willingness for social mixing. Although the subcultural differentiation from Iran, having pride in being Afghan, and keeping the Afghan identity are some components leading to cultural distinctions between Iran and Afghanistan, it is mixed into the rich Iranian culture. Cultural mixing and amalgamation would lead to social solidarity, friendship with Iranians, and participation among them. Friendship and participation among Iranians and Afghans and satisfied marriage with Iranians would lead to social mixing between the two nationalities. Moreover, most of the interviewees had an emphasis on the common traditions and culture of

Iran and Afghanistan which is the factor associated with commonalities between these two nationalities, which also leads to social coexistence. Figure 1 depicts the relationship between codes and the direct and indirect connection of each affecting the main topic of study, which is the housing pattern of Afghan immigrants in Iran. Before immigrating to Iran, Afghans had their housing pattern. After immigration and facing a new culture, some changes have been created in their lifestyles, so they need housing with

new conditions. This study presents a model based on the housing pattern of Afghan immigrants in Iran. After the relationship between code derived from interviews with individuals was determined in Figure 1, this communication model was classified into three fields physical-functional-meaning need and demand, social-cultural paradoxical, and cultural-social mixing (Fig. 2). The physical pattern of Afghan immigrants in Iran is obtained (Fig. 3) based on the mentioned classification.

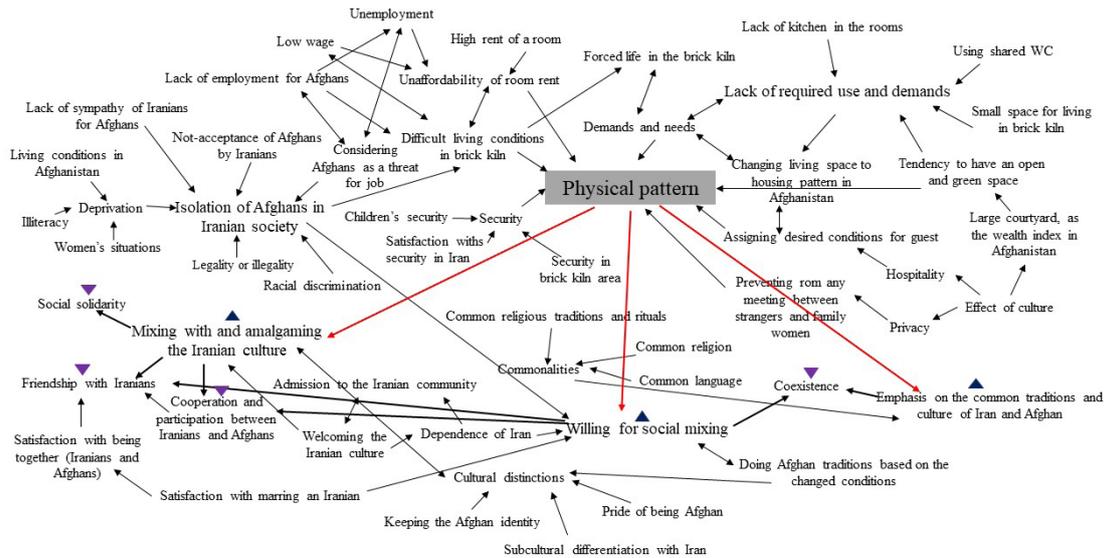


Fig. 1. Diagram of Connection between Codes

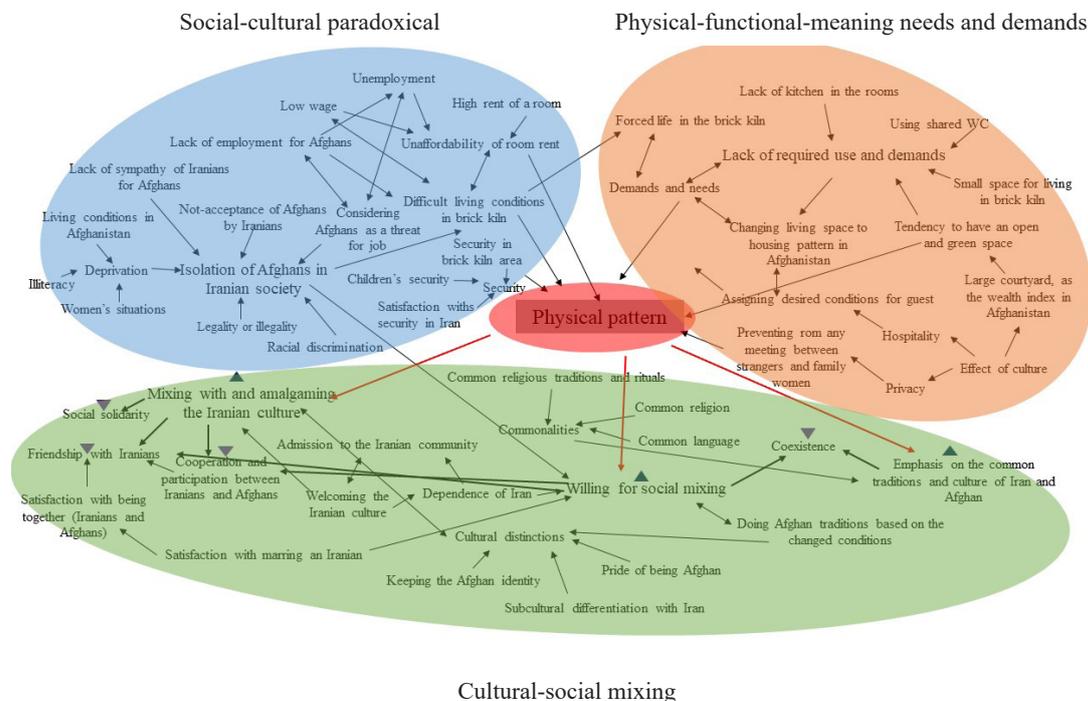


Fig. 2. Zoning the Diagram of the Connection between Components and Categories

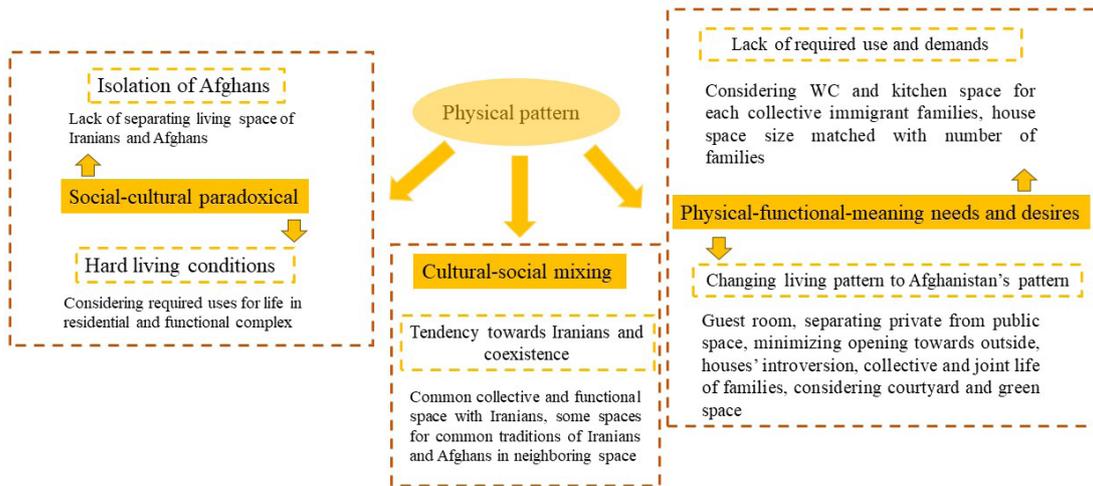


Fig. 3. Physical Pattern of Afghan Immigrants in Iran



Fig. 4. Privatization of Corridors between Families that Know each Other



Fig. 5. Lack of Privacy between Rooms



Fig. 6. Shared WC and Bath



Fig. 7. Rooms not Matched with the Number of Family Members



Fig. 8. Shared Kitchen

4. CONCLUSION

This qualitative research provides a model for the physical pattern of life of Afghan immigrants in Iran. After selecting the Shams Abad Brick Kiln area in Tehran which is a living place for Afghan immigrants, an in-depth and unstructured interview was done with 40 Afghans. After coding interviews and reviewing each of them, the relationship between codes and their connections with the main topic of reach (housing pattern of Afghan immigrants in Iran) has been proposed (Fig. 1). This model is classified into three fields physical-functional-meaning need and demand, social-cultural paradoxical, and cultural-social mixing. Lack of some required physical spaces, including a kitchen and others are the main problems that individuals face in this area (Figs 6, 7, 8). Regarding the culture and traditions, Afghans deal with some physical problems such as a lack of guest rooms and privacy (Fig. 5). As mentioned, the culture of hospitality is highly important among Afghans. On the other hand, privacy and preventing male guests from seeing women in the house are important issues for Afghans, so they necessarily choose a separate room for guests. In the case of privacy, many occupants have changed their living space converting it to the housing pattern of Afghanistan to

create privacy in their spaces, by using the simplest tool, including putting door between semi-private and public spaces or installing curtains between these spaces (Fig. 4). Afghans emphasize the green space around the living area and many of them consider open and green space around the Shams Abad Brick Kiln area as a place remaining their houses in Afghanistan. These factors are the outcomes of unmet physical needs in the living space and are in the category of physical-functional-meaning needs and demands. Many commonalities exist between Iranian and Afghan culture and the immigration of Afghans to Iran and living in this country led to the mixing and amalgamation of Iranian culture. Interviewees emphasized the common traditions and culture of Iran and Afghanistan and were willing to have social mixing, friendship, and empathy with the people of the country where they live. Compared to the early years of Afghan immigration to Iran, now many Iranians and Afghans have put prejudices aside and have chosen coexistence and social solidarity. The morality of finding communalities among Afghans would help them to accept the Iranian culture more and more. These factors are under the category of cultural-social mixing and affect the physical pattern.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

MORAL APPROVAL

The authors commit to observe all the ethical principles of the publication of the scientific work based on the ethical principles of COPE. In case of any violation of the ethical principles, even after the publication of the article, they give the journal the right to delete the article and follow up on the matter.

PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE

The authors state that they have directly participated in the stages of conducting research and writing the article.

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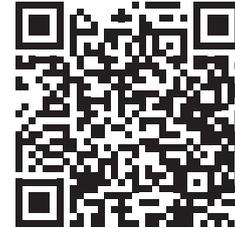
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