

## Original Research Article

## A Representation of Afghan Women's Presence in Gender-Discriminatory Spaces (A Review of the Experience of Takht-E-Safar Park in Herat, Afghanistan)

Zeinab Hosseini<sup>1</sup>, Hooman Ghahremani<sup>2\*</sup>

1. Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran.

2. Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Razavi Khorasan Province, Iran.

Received: 21/12/2024

Accepted: 14/05/2025

Available online: 23/07/2025

### Abstract

**Problem statement:** The perpetuation of gender-based discrimination and the marginalization of women's roles in Afghan society has deeply deteriorated the social structure of urban spaces. In Herat, due to its unique socio-cultural and human geography, this issue becomes more acute, where women's presence in urban spaces is often accompanied by fear and disorientation.

**Research objective:** Focusing on Takht-e-Safar Park in Herat, this study investigates how spatial and non-spatial factors influence women's presence and use of gender-discriminatory urban spaces. The research aims to provide a deeper understanding of women's experiences, preferences, limitations, and individual strategies in navigating public spaces.

**Research method:** The study explores the lived realities affecting this issue by documenting and analyzing the spatial behaviors of women in Takht-e-Safar Park through visual data. These images were evaluated through expert analysis drawing on the perspectives of 10 urban specialists and sociologists from Herat. Their interpretations were subjected to content analysis. To validate these findings, responses from 40 female students in urban planning and related disciplines at Herat University were gathered through structured questionnaires and semantic differential tests.

**Conclusion:** Findings reveal that Afghan women's presence and use of Takht-e-Safar Park result from the interplay of spatial and non-spatial agents, each of which is explored through various dimensions. These agents—rooted in politics, ethnicity, religion, and cultural norms—significantly shape women's spatial behaviors and lead to distinct preferences regarding ideal public spaces. While some questionnaire results affirm earlier expert-based insights, others reflect a stronger influence of cultural-religious biases on women's spatial choices.

**Keywords:** *Gender; Behavior, Gender-discriminatory spaces, Herat.*

### Introduction

A comprehensive focus on gender or “gender mainstreaming” refers to integrating gender-marginalized groups into the core of societal structures and ensuring equal opportunities. This approach is considered an ambitious and bold strategy that, like other mainstreaming efforts, requires not only an appropriate regulatory

framework but also long-term political, social, and economic transformation. It is a process that must evolve through continuous learning, negotiation, and the exchange of experiences (Velázquez et al, 2006, 8–9). However, the realization of inclusive and publicly accessible urban spaces depends on the availability of in-depth and foundational data related to the legal, social, economic, and cultural dimensions of

\*Corresponding Author: [hghahremani@um.ac.ir](mailto:hghahremani@um.ac.ir), 05138805427.

women's issues (World Bank Group, 2020). In this regard, attention to women's behaviors within the study context can significantly contribute to defining practical objectives toward inclusive public spaces that recognize their citizenship rights and roles. Accordingly, this study focuses on analyzing the everyday spatial practices of women in Takht-e-Safar urban park, as Afghan urban spaces shaped by multiple intersecting factors, often acquire a gender-discriminatory character. Consequently, women's spatial behaviors are frequently structured by imposed social norms. Such conditions can have negative implications for women's mental well-being. Their interaction with urban space is influenced both by internalized perceptions shaped by dominant laws and biased social attitudes and by external spatial and environmental factors. These constraints shape women's behaviors within the framework of prevailing norms; a phenomenon that is particularly evident in the city of Herat.

Herat, known as the "City of Saints" and marked by a strong religious identity, imposes traditional and religious constraints that significantly affect women's access to public spaces. Despite its public designation<sup>1</sup>, Takht-e-Safar Park has effectively become a male-dominated environment. The prevalence of collective male behaviors in the park has created a sense of non-belonging among many women.

"A masculine society that flows into the space and takes a position of power renders women passive in their spatial choices and indirectly pushes them out of the space" (Hosseini, 2023, 2).

Therefore, this study is designed to respond to two key research questions:

1. How do spatial and non-spatial factors influence women's presence and use of Takht-e-Safar Park in Herat?
2. How are women's preferences, challenges, and behavioral patterns in Takht-e-Safar shaped by the interplay between space, gender, and cultural-social norms?

With a case study focus on Takht-e-Safar Park, this research aims to identify and analyze the influence of spatial and non-spatial factors on women's spatial presence and behavior in this urban space. Moreover, by taking into account the specific cultural and social context of Herat, it seeks to explain how women's preferences and challenges are formed in relation to spatial components and normative structures.

## Theoretical Framework

### • Conceptual components in the gendering of space in theoretical literature

The marginalization of women from public spaces and the systemic denial of their spatial rights cannot solely be ascribed to overt male dominance; rather, a significant part of this process arises from women's constrained capacity to exercise agency within these environments—often leading to forms of voluntary withdrawal. This voluntary self-exclusion frequently transpires in the absence of direct threats of violence, yet is commonly misinterpreted as an expression of individual consent or autonomous choice. In reality, it is shaped by latent and often unacknowledged power structures that regulate and delimit women's spatial behaviors. This normalized invisibility of structural deprivation constitutes a critical aspect of the phenomenon.

When women feel fear or uncertainty toward a specific space, they avoid being present in that space and unintentionally reproduce masculine dominance. Therefore, women's mental feelings in relation to structures of power influence the production of space (Koskela, 1999, 121). Negative mental images act as hidden messages that restrict presence in space (Farahani, 2018, 7). Such constraints render the presence of gender, age, and ethnic minorities silent and invisible in the public sphere (World Bank Group, 2020, 35). The significance of the present study lies in documenting and interpreting the behaviors of women, which may stem from environmental factors and spatial-

cultural threats. In truth, the emergence of such behaviors is a manifestation of the experience of presence in space.

#### • Safety

In the analysis of gender and public spaces, safety and security are considered fundamental components (Kiavar, 2011,72). According to the Women's Organization, a safe city is defined as one in which women can access public spaces at any time without fear, discrimination, or violence, and can participate in decision-making and social engagement as equal citizens (Ahmadi Niasar, 2021,75–76). If safety—as a basic need—is not ensured, fear emerges as a result of complex interactions among individuals, society, the physical environment, and cultural background (Tandogan & Ilhan, 2016, 2012–2013). A woman who does not feel secure and at ease in an environment will not trust it; in such contexts, gender-based stereotypes, prejudices, and concerns prevent her from reflecting on her role in the space (Farahani, 2018, 45). In this regard, Farahani defines safety in both objective and subjective dimensions: the objective aspect relates to tangible environmental factors and potential hazards, whereas the subjective aspect concerns the perception and emotional sense of security, shaped by fear and anxiety (ibid, 33). Although many studies have focused on environmental factors, this section emphasizes the subjective effects of the process of spatial gendering.

#### • Mentality

A masculine environment is not formed solely through visible interactions but is also shaped by internal psychological and emotional experiences. The emotional realities women encounter in space play a crucial role in this process (Rush, 2012, 7). In her research, Valentine found that women express fear spatially through mental maps that classify parts of the city as safe or unsafe, guiding their behaviors accordingly

(Mowl & Towner, 1995, 105; Bell, 1998, 2). These perceptions not only have negative psychological impacts but also restrict freedom of movement. Consequently, women may withdraw from social activities and avoid places perceived as dangerous, leading to a diminished and isolated urban life (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2021, 2).

#### • Female Identity

Roles such as wife, mother, and daughter foster a fluid mentality in women, influenced by cultural structures, dominant social practices, and prescribed gender roles that shape their spatial behavior (Baydar, 2012, 702; Farahani, 2018, 57). These complex and potent gendered relations often limit women's spatial choices or discourage them from actively participating in public spaces (Koskela, 1999, 111). However, engagement in these spaces should be grounded in free choice. Thus, exploring women's subjective perceptions and preferences based on their cultural-spatial experiences can contribute to improving the quality of public space.

#### • Maternal care roles and the transmission of norms to daughters

Many women, in their roles as mothers, are often accompanied by their children in urban public spaces (Gholami Hatkelooei, 2020, 141). This presence reflects a fusion of caregiving responsibilities and leisure activities (Fig. 5, Photo a & Fig. 6, Photo b) (Day, 1999, 146). However, this role is not limited to restricting their behaviors; in their capacity as caregivers, they also impose behavioral constraints on their children. Girls, in particular, face stricter limitations than boys during childhood — including control over physical activity, the suppression of curiosity, and the internalization of fear regarding potential dangers. These constraints often persist into adolescence, manifesting as conditional and temporary permissions for movement (Damyanovic et al., 2013, 20–21; Rezazadeh & Mohammadi, 2009, 109).

## Verbal-Communicative Patterns and Restricted Social Interactions

Women, with a natural inclination toward social interaction, typically base their activities on inclusivity, mobility, and verbal communication (Farahani, 2018, 18). In contrast, the masculine pattern tends to emphasize distinction and relational segregation. Nevertheless, women's social actions in Islamic societies are frequently confined by cultural values and prejudices. Within such a context, men often impose behavioral and communicative limitations to regulate and control women's presence according to their value systems (Mushkani & Ono, 2021, 1).

### • Violence

Gender-based violence is a broad concept encompassing any harmful behavior rooted in social and cultural gender inequalities, leading to physical, psychological, or sexual harm (World Bank Group, 2020). In Afghan society, such violence often manifests in forms of deprivation of freedom in both public and private life. It frequently occurs against the backdrop of urban conditions such as anonymity, social polarization, and ethnic diversity — factors that render women the primary targets (Neaga, 2014, 32; World Bank Group, 2020, 18). The experience, or even the anticipation, of violence and sexual harassment forces women to withdraw from public spaces, fostering a persistent anxiety about re-experiencing such harm (Koskela, 1999, 116). According to Rush, men's perception of women's visibility in public is driven by a desire to judge; thus, women often adopt passive and modest roles in an attempt to avoid insult (Rush, 2012, 9–10; Riger et al., 1982, 370–371). Combining theories of the culture of violence and gender norms, men who commit acts of violence often see it as an affirmation of masculinity (Alderton et al., 2020, 13). Radical feminist perspectives further argue that women's fear of violence functions as a mechanism of social

control (Koskela, 1999, 120). These beliefs are deeply intertwined with Afghanistan's patriarchal cultural context.

## Factors Involved in Gender Discrimination in the Urban Spaces of Contemporary Afghan

### • Politics

The rights of Afghan women have always been profoundly shaped by political developments and the conflicts between state and society, with women persistently positioned at the heart of ideological struggles<sup>2</sup> (Kandiyoti, 2007, 171). The burqa (face veil) has consistently emerged across these disputes as a shared symbol of restrictive policies toward women (Moghadam, 2002, 25). Accordingly, Afghan women have remained at the forefront of the list of victims of war and militarization in the country (Kasa, 2014, 3). The Taliban's decrees—emphasizing a radical segregation of public and private realms—have led to the reproduction of traditional structures and the degradation of women's status<sup>3</sup> (Noury & Speciale, 2016, 825). The Taliban's reassertion of dominance over the political structure thus marks a historical continuity of systemic discrimination and subordination<sup>4</sup>. While various reformist and egalitarian movements have emerged, women have been compelled to assume imposed roles and internalize prevailing gender norms. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of women's issues is essential for accurately evaluating their presence in urban spaces.

### • Ethnicity, religion, and Islamic affairs

Religious, ethnic, and tribal ideologies exert a profound influence on how women and men access, perceive, and experience public space, as such spaces are deeply infused with ideological content (Peimani & Kamalipour, 2016, 20). Interaction among different social groups and minorities—even in the presence of conflict and antagonism—is essential, as such confrontations compel individuals to recognize differences and navigate

tensions together (Gałkowski & Antosz, 2022, 1–2). Religious, ethnic, and tribal ideologies exert a profound influence on how women and men access, perceive, and experience public space, as such spaces are deeply infused with ideological content (Peimani & Kamalipour, 2016, 20). Interaction among diverse social strata and minority groups—even in the presence of conflict—is essential, as such encounters necessitate the recognition of differences and the joint management of spatial tensions (Gałkowski & Antosz, 2022, 1–2).

In Afghanistan, the influx of various ethnic and religious powers has led to the emergence of a heterogeneous society. As a geopolitical construct, the country was initially founded by Pashtun tribes and has remained under their political, military, and economic dominance<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, non-Pashtun groups have been systematically marginalized, and this monopoly has historically legitimized a process of “Pashtunization”—a process that has spatially excluded minorities from the urban fabric (Karimi, 2011, 10).

Within this structure, public space has become a domain in which women must remain out of sight of non-mahram men as much as possible. Streets—constituting a significant part of this realm—are perceived as unsafe, necessitating strict veiling for women (Sadeghi, 2005, 164–168). Women’s veiling has consistently functioned as a political tool in power struggles, with each competing faction deploying paternalistic ideologies to present itself as the legitimate representative of “oppressed” women—without genuinely addressing women’s concerns or demands. The Taliban movement, through an extreme interpretation of Sharia grounded in Deobandi teachings, has insisted on the seclusion of women—a perspective that has shaped spatial behavior under its rule (Noury & Speciale, 2016, 822–824). This view has been widely criticized in international discourses.

#### • Patriarchal social structure

Some demographers characterize the

contemporary social structure of Afghanistan as “classical patriarchy,” where men have consistently held the apex of institutional power (Moghadam, 2002, 20; Day, 1999, 174). These norms—imposing restrictions such as mandatory veiling, regulations on movement and travel, and household and familial surveillance—limit women’s access to public space and reinforce their sense of marginalization and symbolic exclusion (Moghadam, 2002, 20; Pourhossein Roshan & Pourjafar, 2019, 116–117). These historical and cultural norms, which are regarded as resistant to change, have been reflected in the complex socio-spatial structure of Afghan cities, transforming the city into a site for exclusion/inclusion policies (Karimi, 2011, 29). Such cultural enclosures, particularly within urban spaces, afford men greater license to encroach upon women’s spatial autonomy—a phenomenon observable in behavioral patterns and addressed analytically in this research.

### Research Background

Gendering in Takht-e Safar Park is the result of the reciprocal influence of spatial and non-spatial components that, within a specific geographical context, operate as dominant norms. While most previous studies have been limited to general theoretical frameworks concerning the security of urban spaces in Afghanistan—primarily grounded in reviews of predominantly Western theorists and lacking the participation of space users—this study attempts to derive a localized understanding of gendered spatial interactions through local narratives. Acknowledging potential limitations, this research has employed diverse methodologies to address and control for such constraints.

The documentation of prevailing narratives within the urban space of Takht-e Safar Park in Herat provides a context for analyzing women’s behaviors and interactions within dominant normative frameworks, facilitating a

deeper understanding of the city’s complex and multilayered spatial realities. The findings may be meaningful within the scope of the studied case and, naturally, by defining additional case studies across Afghanistan’s geographical expanse, may attain broader generalizability—an aim considered for future research.

### Research Methodology

The present study is of an applied and developmental nature, conducted within an interpretive paradigm and employing a qualitative approach to examine how women are present in the gendered space of Takht-e Safar Park in Herat. Various methods such as image analysis, interviews, integrated questionnaires, and direct participation of experts have been employed. To enhance field richness and improve accuracy in the analysis of spatial preferences, the direct involvement of women has been incorporated to provide a comprehensive perspective on the issue.

In the first phase, following a review of the theoretical literature, women’s actual behaviors in the park environment were recorded through field photography<sup>6</sup>. The images were captured between March \_ and July 2022, at different times of the day and on various days of the week—although each day during this period coincided with the issuance of new restrictive regulations by the then-Taliban government.

Out of 840 recorded images, 50 were initially selected based on recurring actions and behaviors. Ultimately, to mitigate the risk of unconscious bias in the selection and interpretation of the images, interviewees were asked to make the final selection. 17 images were purposefully chosen with consideration for situational diversity and cultural agency for the final analysis. The image capture area spanned from the park’s main entrance to its secondary entrance near the amusement park, with a focus on women’s selected routes and relatively safe spaces (Fig. 1).

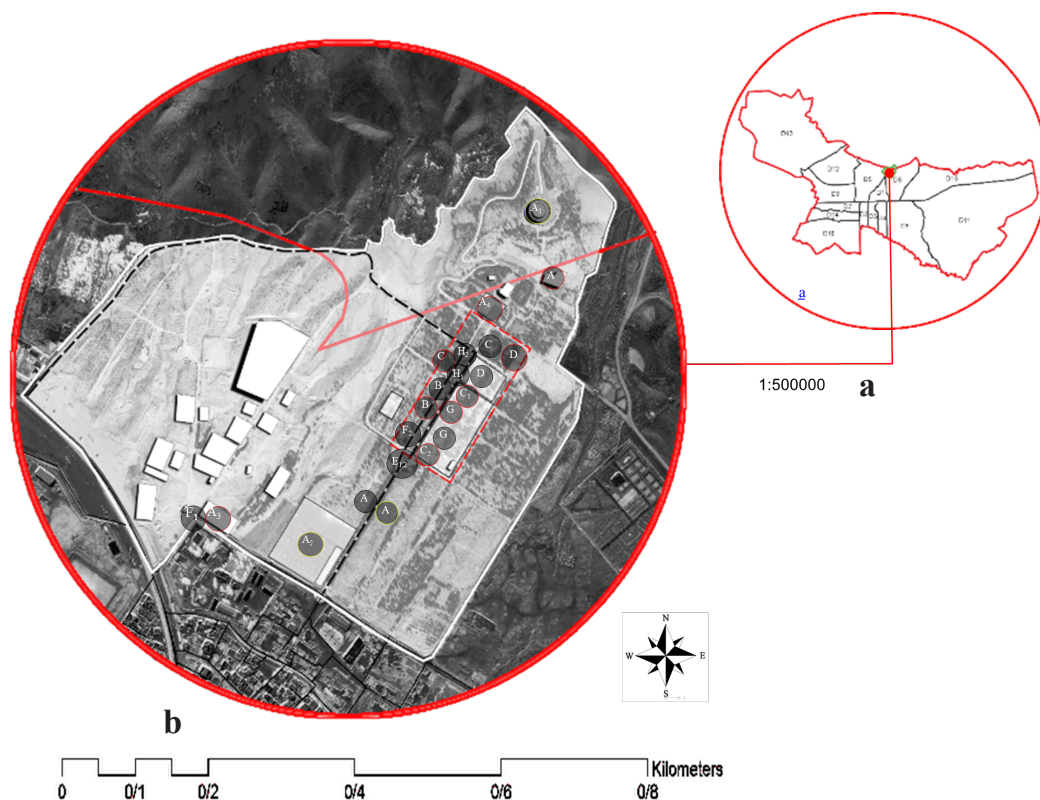


Fig.1. a) Harat urban districts, b) Takht-e-Safar site and image capture locations. Source: Authors.

The initial analysis of the images was conducted by ten experts (including four urban planners, three urban designers, and three sociologists) (Figs. 2 to 7). In selecting the experts, deliberate inclusion of both genders (male and female) and an age range of 30 to 45 years was observed to ensure sufficient experience and awareness of women’s social contexts. Criteria such as Herati origin, experience of presence in Takht-e Safar Park, and academic education in related disciplines formed the basis for participant

selection to ensure gender bias-free and locally grounded analyses.

The analysis process was structured in two stages: in the first step, interviewees independently interpreted the images; in the second, perspectives were shared to allow for revision and refinement of interpretations. All data were recorded and processed using MAXQDA 2020 software, and both spatial and non-spatial factors influencing women’s behaviors were identified.

To assess the difference between expert




Selected examples of the representation of women's presence in Takht Safar Park, Herat			
Example of non-spatial factors involved in women’s presence in space		Example of spatial factors involved in women’s presence in space	
			
Photo a. women’s tendency to engage in masculine recreation and activities Location: A Date: May/6 time: 14:10		Photo b. masculine shooting game Location: A Date: April/1 time: 10:25	
		Photo c. men’s billiard club Location: A <sub>2</sub> Date: April/8 time: 11:15	
Thematic area	Theme	Sub-theme	Examples of experts’ conclusions regarding the factors involved in women’s presence in Takht-e-Safar Park
Men’s spatial dominance	Attention to men’s needs in space	Allocation of land use to strictly male functions	Afghanistan’s cities were designed for men as the spaces have formed conforming to men’s needs (interviewee No. 2). <b>Mainly, masculine activities and land uses dominate the site, which leads to gendered dominance</b> (interviewee No. 4) (Photo, c). <b>Male-exclusive spaces and land uses</b> and men’s use of public spaces are more prevalent (interviewee No.6) (Photo, b and c). <b>Gender equality</b> has been overlooked in the design of spaces (interviewee No. 5)
		Masculine recreation of dominance of male presence in the space	The violence and use of guns in recreation would definitely decline if they were used equally with women (Interviewee No. 5) (Photo, b). The activities on the site are allocated in a manner that can only be used by young males (Interviewee No. 6 & 9) (Photo, b).
	Disregard for women’s needs in space	Lack of activities adapted to women’s characteristics	Some of the activities in the space are <b>exclusive to men</b> . In contrast, no activity is adapted to female characteristics (Interviewee No. 5). The images reveal that the female community demands recreation (Interviewee No. 5) (Photo, a). <b>The lack of facilities and amenities for women</b> and the inappropriateness of the space for female use considering feminine aesthetics do little to attract women to the spaces (interviewee No. 8).
		Women’s spatial exclusion	The dominance of men in all spaces and activities prevents women’s participation in spaces (Interviewee No. 1) (Photo, b). The activities are performed by women as long as men are absent. As soon as a man appears, women unconsciously retract from spaces, which indicates appropriate leisure activities without the risk of assault and ensuring mental peace would promote their presence (Interviewees No. 7 and 10) (Photo, a).

Fig.2. Operationalization and Qualitative Content Analysis of Expert Inferences. Source: Authors.



Example of non-spatial factors involved in women's presence in space		Example of spatial factors involved in women's presence in space	
 <p>Photo a. women sitting in the middle island of the park Location: <b>B</b> Date: March/31 time: 10:30</p>		 <p>Photo b. dense vegetation in the middle island of the park Location: <b>B</b> Date: March/31 time: 10:3</p>	
Thematic area	Theme	Sub-theme	Examples of experts' conclusions regarding the factors involved in women's presence in Takht-e-Safar Park
Women's inclination toward territoriality	Visual intrusion and the absence of psychological comfort for women	Women's avoidance of mixed-Gender-discriminatory spaces	Families using open spaces take camping tents with them or put curtains up in the middle of the space. Creating areas particular for families in line with the cultural standards could be an effective measure in the Afghan community (Interviewees No. 5, 6, and 10). The design of space for families should initially be in line with their culture, as this is accepted by the current community and there is no inclination towards presence in mixed-gender-discriminatory spaces. However, minds can be gradually steered toward accepting gender-mixed spaces (Interviewees No. 2, 6, and 9).
		Avoidance of male gaze	The scarcity of women's presence in Takht-e-Safar could be attributed to the dominance of males, resulting in disturbance or the male gaze that makes women uncomfortable. These behaviors stem from public opinion generalizing prying, which has become a prevalent habit (Interviewee No. 4). Due to the culture, the Afghan woman feels uneasy when exposed to prying eyes (Interviewee No. 2).
	Women's preference for spatial exclusiveness	Refuge in dense vegetation and enclosed spaces	Afghan women's culture entails that they feel more comfortable in enclosed spaces and the spaces veiled from the outside draw women toward them (interviewees No. 1 and 2) (Photo, a). Spaces veiled from men such as dense vegetation are considered suitable spaces to sit and linger (Interviewee No. 10) (Photo, b).
		Lack of the expected spatial privacy	<b>The issue of the privacy of spaces</b> must be taken into consideration in line with the culture of Islamic countries and, especially, the restricted culture of Herat (Interviewee No. 10). Families use curtains and tents to shelter themselves from the male gaze in mixed-gender-discriminatory spaces. <b>Spatial designs appropriated to the needs of women and adhering to the criteria required to meet the privacy culture are among the spatial necessities to encourage women's presence in spaces</b> (Interviewees No. 2 and 6).

Fig. 3. Operationalization and Qualitative Content Analysis of Expert Inferences. Source: Authors.



Selected example of representations of women's presence in the space		Example of spatial factors involved in women's presence in space	
 <p>Photo a. men sitting in elevated positions to supervise the family Location: <b>C</b> Date: March/31 time: 12:10</p>		 <p>Photo b. proximity of family spaces with no distance Location: <b>C</b> Date: March/31 time: 17:30</p>	
Thematic area	Theme	Sub-theme	Examples of experts' conclusions regarding the factors involved in women's presence in Takht-e-Safar Park
Low level of perceived environmental security	Security rooted in traditional conservative cultural norms	Women's need for male protection and companionship	The behavior manifests in all women where they consider the companionship of a man equivalent to their safety. The space must be designed in a manner that does not necessitate women to rely on men (Interviewee No. 5) (Photo, a). The mentality of needing men's companionship causes fear even if the space is safe (interviewee No. 2).
		The necessity of men's visual supervision over the family	The patriarchal behavior in Afghan urban spaces is quite natural (interviewee No. 5) (Photo, a). Given the current dominant situation, men act as stewards of the family, accompanying them in recreational activities for protective purposes only (Interviewee No. 5) (Photo, a). The behavior indicates that Afghan men consider controlling the space around them their duty. For instance, if two families find each other in proximity of one another, the man will definitely place himself in a position to oversee the family and make sure no looks are directed at it (Interviewee No. 2) (Photo, a).
		Lack of social control in the space	<b>If safety is an issue -which it should be, the solution is not to separate the spaces; instead, social control and appropriate management would relatively reduce social abnormalities since many families are inclined to spend time together as a unit</b> (Interviewee No. 4).
	Disruption of spatial mechanisms responsible for the production of security	The site's uncontrollable vastness	A woman's lonely presence in a park such as Takht-e-Safar could result in any kind of incident happening to her, which has rendered the presence of unaccompanied women in this park essentially impossible. In fact, this space does not possess the required safety regarding gender (Interviewee No. 4). <b>The vastness of the park and its lack of enclosure</b> allowing anyone to enter discourages women's presence (Interviewees No. 1, 2, and 8).
		Disregard for privacy and distance between family spaces	<b>In fact, the visual connectivity of spaces and the placement without consideration of distance for each family's privacy could be among the spatial factors contributing to this behavior</b> (Interviewees No. 8 and 10) (Photo, b).

Fig. 4. Operationalization and Qualitative Content Analysis of Expert Inferences. Source: Authors.





Selected example of representations of women's presence in the space		Example of spatial factors involved in women's presence in space	
 <p>Photo a. mother's use of the children's park Location: <b>D</b> Date: May/26 time: 16:10</p>		 <p>Photo b. children's playground Location: <b>D</b> Date: June/2 time: 15:30</p>	
Selected examples of representations of women's presence in the space			
 <p>Photo c. women waiting at the entrance Location: <b>E</b> Date: June/19 time: 10:45</p>		 <p>Photo d. women sitting to respire at the entrance Location: <b>E<sub>2</sub></b> Date: June/9 time: 11:05</p>	
Thematic area	Theme	Sub-theme	Examples of experts' conclusions regarding the factors involved in women's presence in Takht-e-Safar Park
Available facilities failing women's expectations	Differences between micro-cultures in their expectations of space	Non-prioritization of recreation in public spaces for rural women	Villagers do not hold the same concerns as urban people who feel the necessity of using public open spaces (Interviewees No. 1, 2, and 5). The rural community is more in touch with open space, forests, and nature, but the facilities on the playground are more attractive to them (Interviewee No. 2). In the rural community, the only reason to go to the park might be to meet the needs of children as women in the rural culture consider recreation as a need for their children exclusively, disregarding it as a prioritized need of their own (Interviewees No. 4 and 9). Recreation for rural women is only possible as long as they are caring for children at the same time (Interviewees No. 1, 5, and 6) (Photo, a). Overall, Afghan women use urban spaces less frequently because of the community's cultural traditions and patriarchal spaces (Interviewee No. 4).
		No spatial demands from rural women	The rural community has grown in such a space that normalizes these types of behaviors (Photo, d). women consider no rights for themselves and do not imagine they may even have rights to begin with (Interviewees No. 1 and 2). Herat's culture is a culture of many restrictions for women, resulting in which women do not consider themselves a part of the environment (Interviewees No. 1 and 2).
The conditions of facilities and amenities adapted to women's needs		Non-implementation of the required standards in recreational facilities	<b>Children's playing facilities and the facilities in theme parks are not sufficiently safe for women and cannot be considered safe means of recreation for them</b> (Interviewee No. 6) (Photo, b).
		Lack of the services, facilities, and activities demanded and preferred by women	Despite women's presence in urban environments, the <b>facilities and amenities adapted to women's needs</b> are nowhere to be found. The spaces should thus be equipped accordingly. We would not witness such behaviors if the space provided suitable furniture for women to linger in groups (Interviewees No. 1, 6, and 8) (Photos, c and d). The main problem is the <b>lack of a suitable space for women</b> . The culture of women's presence and their enjoying their rights in the space will keep diminishing as long as the spaces are unsuitable for their presence and in line with their needs (Interviewee No. 10). There are no <b>activities and recreations tailored to mother's expectations</b> in children's parks, which causes them to use the same facilities as their children (Interviewees No. 6 and 10) (Photo, a).

Fig.5. Operationalization and Qualitative Content Analysis of Expert Inferences. Source: Authors.

Selected examples of representations of women’s presence in the space



Photo a. tending to children on the street  
Location: F<sub>1</sub> Date: May/26 time: 10:15



Photo b. mother’s absolute protective role  
Location: F<sub>2</sub> Date: June/9 time: 11:05

Thematic area	Theme	Sub-theme	Examples of experts’ conclusions regarding the factors involved in women’s presence in Takht-e-Safar Park
Mothers’ acceptance of a protective role for children and semi-recreational activities	Women’s rights in Afghan communities	The role of children’s sole caretaker in rural communities	Afghan communities consider women to be entirely in charge of caring for the children, and the father is not expected to be engaged at all (Interviewees No. 2 and 5). We are living in a community relying on the belief that a woman’s place is at home and her only task is to look after the children (Interviewees No. 1, 4, and 5). Looking after the children in spaces lacking the required facilities reduces mothers’ inclination to go to and linger in spaces (Interviewee No. 5)
		Urban communities’ contribution to caring for children in recreational activities	Modern Herati men and youth have fortunately accepted women’s rights and agree to participate in children’s affairs to some extent (Interviewee No. 7). The men in the Afghan rural community only work outside the house, but this has been alleviated in the urban community to some extent as fathers are responsible for looking after the children (Interviewees No. 2 and 6).
	Lack of facilities required to tend to children	Lack of spaces required to tend to children	<b>The lack of space for mothers to tend to their little children can reduce women’s presence in the space or lead to behaviors such as sitting in corners to tend to the children</b> (Interviewees No. 1 and 2) (Photo, a). <b>Allocating proper spaces for breastfeeding and restrooms equipped with spaces to change diapers at sensible intervals could increase women’s presence and linger in the space.</b> (Interviewees No. 8 and 10).
		Lack of proper respite spaces	<b>Women tend to tire faster than men, which is exacerbated in cases where they are burdened with more responsibility for the children, highlighting the attention to these issues in designing spaces for women</b> (Interviewees No. 8 and 10).

Fig.6. Operationalization and Qualitative Content Analysis of Expert Inferences. Source: Authors.

interpretations and user perceptions, the semantic differential technique was employed. In this section, purposeful and non-probabilistic sampling was conducted<sup>7</sup>, selecting female students from urban planning, architecture, and sociology—focused on graduate students and upper-level undergraduates—to contribute to the analysis of spatial preferences. The selection was intentionally limited to women to prevent patriarchal bias in the findings. Alongside completing exploratory questionnaires, participants articulated their spatial preferences by sketching layouts, marking locations

on the site map, and sharing contextual narratives<sup>8</sup>. This active engagement facilitated a comparative analysis between expert interpretations and the lived perceptions and preferences of the users. In total, 40 questionnaires were compiled using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from desirable to undesirable) and analyzed using SPSS 2020 software. A One-Sample T-test was employed to measure the significance level of the components, and the results were presented through descriptive statistics using line charts. All ethical research principles, including

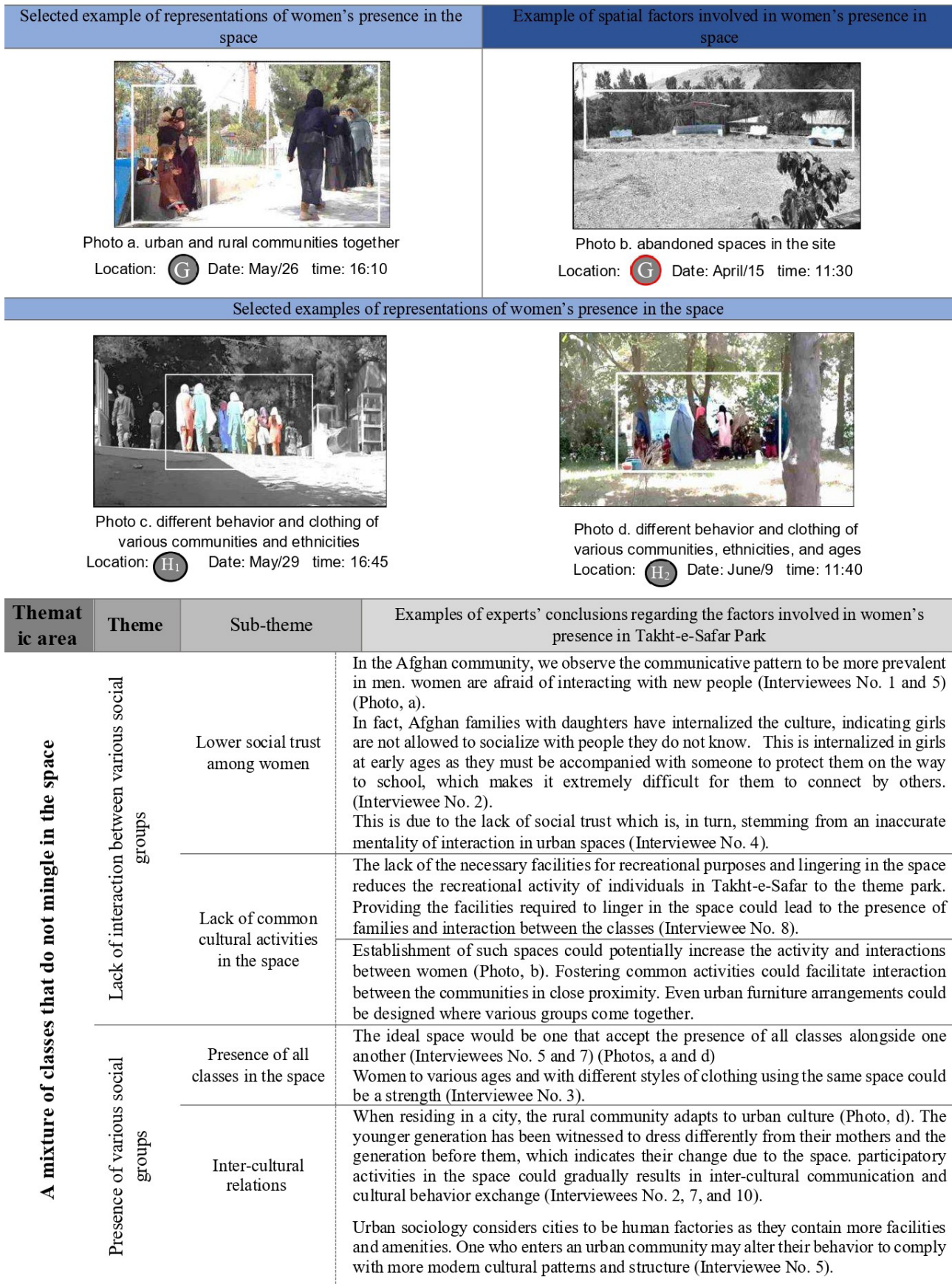


Fig.7. Operationalization and Qualitative Content Analysis of Expert Inferences. Source: Authors.

confidentiality and informed consent in photography, were fully observed. Efforts were made to localize analytical components and align the methodology with the socio-cultural context of Takht-e Safar Park to maximize the study's validity and authenticity.

## Findings

### • Analysis of women's spatial preferences based on recorded images in takht-e safar, herat

Takht-e Safar Park, the largest urban open space in Herat, is located in a historically and strategically significant position along the northern hillsides (E"34.374368, N"62.223353). It is among the gardens established in the first half of the 10th century AH by order of Sultan Hussein Bayqara. Situated in proximity to land uses such as the women's dormitory of Herat University, a school, and open communal spaces for public gatherings—and with easy access via public transportation through the main arterial of Hilal-e-Ahmar (Roudaki Street)—the park has attracted diverse cultural, economic, and social constituencies. However, despite its public character, the prevailing cultural and physical structures have transformed it into a predominantly male-dominated space. Women's presence in this park typically occurs in groups, with caution, and within enclosed areas, aiming to remain out of public visibility and attention.

This research, through visual documentation of women's activities, analyzes their spatial preferences and examines their interactions with the environment across both physical and behavioral dimensions. The selected images (Figs. 2 to 7) capture women's general behaviors and provide a basis for identifying the factors influencing these actions.

Through content analysis of the images and expert opinions, numerous components have been extracted (Figs. 2 to 7), which are categorized into two main groups: "spatial agency" (stemming from

physical attributes) and "non-spatial agency" (rooted in cultural and social factors) 9. These domains were independently defined based on a review of theoretical literature and are illustrated in Fig. 8.

The analyses, conducted with fidelity to the experts' original expressions, have led to a deeper understanding of women's spatial condition within this park.

### • Analysis of women's spatial preferences based on expert questionnaires

As detailed in Sections research methodology, the components related to women's environmental preferences, extracted through expert analysis of images, were evaluated through a survey of 40 site users using bipolar attributes and a Likert scale. The results indicated that most components aligned with users' perspectives, with only two instances of minor discrepancies (Table 1).

In this study, by comparing the perspectives of experts with user preferences regarding the adaptation of Takht-e Safar's urban space, behavioral and contextual dimensions influencing women's presence in the space have been examined.

Findings indicate that women's preference to occupy space alongside their families simultaneously reflects cultural conditions, social norms, and the influence of dominant structures on their spatial perceptions and behaviors. Although women emphasize freedom and equality in utilizing space, such freedom is framed within their cultural constructs.

Qualitative analysis of interviews reveals that fear of public gaze, alongside religious and cultural constraints, reinforces the tendency to occupy spaces that are visually secluded (Fig.3, Photo b). At the same time, the rejection of the necessity for protective accompaniment suggests that with improvements in spatial conditions, women express a stronger preference for autonomy. In particular, male accompaniment is interpreted not as dependency, but as a means of protection against prevailing insecurities (Fig.4, Photo a).



Fig. 8. The components involved in gender-discrimination in urban spaces Source: Authors.

Table 1. Assessment of the selected women's environmental preferences regarding the Takht-e Safar Park space. The shaded portions of the circles in the tables indicate the degree of preference (i.e., the assigned numerical weight). Source: Authors.

<b>Women's Environmental Preferences Derived from Image-Based Analysis by Experts</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>	<b>Women's Environmental Preferences Based on Users' Directly Experienced Perceptions</b>
Gender separation in spaces		Mixed-gender family spaces
Access to suitable facilities in women-only spaces		Spatial freedom and equal rights for women in the use of facilities in mixed-gender-discriminatory spaces
Preference for enclosed spaces		Preference for open spaces and soft buffers
Preference for uncrowded corners away from prying eyes		Preference for busy, mixed-Gender-discriminatory spaces and natural active supervision
Sense of vulnerability and need for protection		Sense of Independence and Autonomy in mixed-Gender-discriminatory spaces
Mother's accepting the role of children's sole caretaker		Cooperation between the parents in taking care of the child
The tendency for spatial-cultural separation based on culture and ethnicity		Spatial-cultural integration and sharing of cultures

Moreover, findings suggest that ethnic, religious, and class-based differences among Afghan women significantly influence their attitudes toward gender roles, intercultural interactions, and familial responsibilities. A lower inclination toward cultural integration and varying acceptance of caregiving roles based on class and urban pedigree underscore the impact of socio-cultural stratification on women’s spatial preferences in the studied society.

**• Inferential findings**

To assess the statistical significance of each identified component, the mean of each was first

calculated. Subsequently, a one-sample t-test was performed on the five-point Likert scale, with a 95% confidence interval (Table 2). Ultimately, the summarized results are illustrated in a line graph of statistical descriptions (Fig. 9).

Statistical analysis shows that women’s spatial preferences exhibit significant differences in two components—preference for enclosed spaces and avoidance of intercultural interactions—both of which partially reflect Afghan women’s cultural and communicative patterns. However, confirming these correlations definitively requires further investigation.

Table. 2. One-Sample Test. Source: Authors.

Women’s Environmental Preferences Derived from Image-Based Analysis by Experts	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Women’s Environmental Preferences Based on Users’ Directly Experienced Perceptions
Gender separation in spaces	-3.749	.001	2.3000	Mixed-gender family spaces
Access to suitable facilities in women-only spaces	-3.986	.000	2.2250	Spatial freedom and equal rights for women in the use of facilities in mixed-gender-discriminatory spaces
Preference for enclosed spaces	-1.393	.172	2.7000	Preference for open spaces and soft buffers
Preference for uncrowded corners away from prying eyes	-5.874	.000	2.0250	Preference for busy, mixed-Gender-discriminatory spaces and natural active supervision
Sense of vulnerability and need for protection	-6.444	.000	2.0500	Sense of Independence and Autonomy in mixed-gender-discriminatory spaces
Mother’s accepting the role of children’s sole caretaker	-3.340	.002	2.3500	Cooperation between the parents in taking care of the child
The tendency for spatial-cultural separation based on culture and ethnicity	-1.595	.119	2.6750	Spatial-cultural integration and sharing of cultures

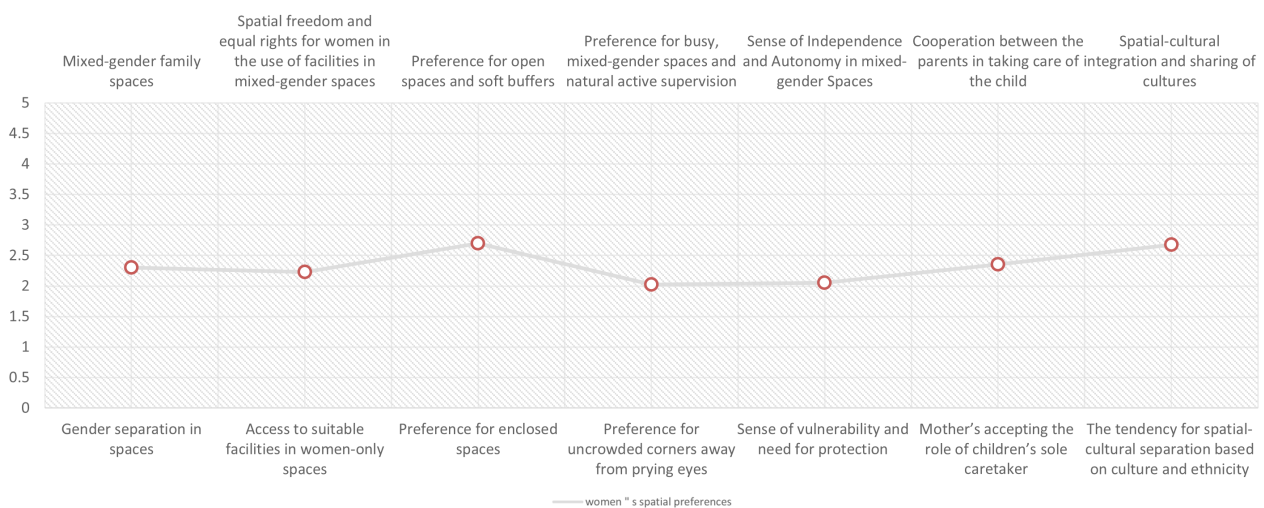


Fig. 9. Descriptive line chart. Source: Authors.

## Discussion

The concept of gender in the geography of Afghanistan differs significantly from that of other regions. While, in a global comparison, the Islamic nature of the context might initially seem to be the primary factor influencing the position of women in cities, Afghanistan presents a distinct case, even compared to other Islamic societies. Although Islamic identity plays a key role in shaping women's position in urban space, in Afghanistan — unlike other Islamic countries with similar cultural backgrounds — politics has played a more dominant role in defining female identity. This issue is especially apparent in urban spaces; for instance, the Takht-e-Safar Park has spontaneously and without planning turned into a male-dominated space, where gendered dominance is visibly imposed. On this point, studies by Bell and Koskela (Bell, 1998; Koskela, 1999) link male dominance over space to mentality and violence, whereas in the Takht-e-Safar case, this dominance has manifested as a spatial projection.

Although urban spaces in Afghanistan are labeled “public,” they possess a character distinct from the theoretical definition of public space; the neglect of women's needs has resulted in spaces that are non-responsive to them. Patriarchal culture, the religiosity of space, and social control have played a determining role in shaping women's preferences. In the absence of safety, women prefer social supervision, but once they feel safe, they prioritize invisibility and distance from prying eyes over spatial freedom.

In this regard, Jane Jacobs' “Eyes on the Street” theory — which emphasizes the presence of passersby as a safety factor — is not applicable in the Afghan cultural context. In Takht-e-Safar, the presence of others (strangers) is not a source of safety, but rather perceived as a threat; thus, women prefer enclosed, obscured spaces with dense vegetation.

The issue of vulnerability and the need for male companionship has also been confirmed by

interviewees. According to one of the researchers, women consider the presence of a man as a symbol of safety. While this may partly relate to the lack of security, its roots must be sought in patriarchal culture — a culture that restricts women to caregiving roles and hinders their social participation. In such a setting, recreation for women is often associated with motherhood and defined by the presence of their children.

At the level of social interaction, ethnic and religious biases have a visible influence on women's verbal and behavioral patterns. As a result, spatial separation and avoidance of intercultural interaction are prioritized over communication and dialogue. However, these preferences are unstable and subject to change depending on the government in power and the broader cultural context.

A prominent feature of this study is its focus on the intersection of geography, politics, culture, patriarchal laws, and design that is insensitive to women's presence. Legal and administrative difficulties encountered during field research point to the current severe limitations on conducting studies in Afghanistan. The findings are tied to a specific time and place, and their generalizability depends on further investigation of similar cases.

## Conclusion

Afghan women's presence in urban spaces in Afghanistan has always faced numerous restrictions. This research, through documenting behaviors within the gender-discriminatory space of Takht-e-Safar, seeks to offer a more accurate representation of Afghan women's presence in the city. Beyond a review of theoretical literature, the core focus is on the influence of cultural and social context on environmental factors and the behavioral patterns shaped in urban space. Women's behaviors and their interactions with spatial-cultural norms were analyzed through photography, interviews based on the photographs, and a survey of their spatial preferences.

The image analysis results indicate that behaviors are primarily influenced by contextual components, and secondarily by the prevalent norms of Afghan society. One could infer that environmental and spatial agencies are also at times shaped by the context in which they are embedded — as is the case with Takht-e-Safar's urban space, where recreational activities are almost entirely male-oriented. For example, although the role of child caregiving falls largely on women in this culture, the park lacks the infrastructure to support their safe and active presence — even the playground does not meet basic safety standards.

In Afghan culture, women show a greater inclination toward spatial territorialism; they prefer areas out of public view and do not use family spaces in the absence of male family members. These patterns may stem from mental restrictions or the lack of security. In the spatial analysis, the concept of inter-visibility between spaces is identified as one of the inhibiting factors. Despite ethnic diversity, interactions between women from different subcultures do not meet expectations, and this is attributed to a non-spatial factor: a lack of social trust. To validate the findings, a questionnaire was conducted to assess women's preferences. The results showed a relative consistency between expert analyses and user preferences in most cases, though two points of divergence emerged. Women preferred secluded, enclosed spaces and wished to avoid being seen, whereas the experts proposed design-based strategies to mitigate the spatial limitations women faced in open areas. In another case, while the experts linked the lack of intercultural integration to the absence of social trust and suggested intercultural activities as a means to foster interaction, women expressed reluctance toward spatial-cultural integration. This difference in perspectives highlights the need for future comparative studies in similar contexts within Herat and other Afghan cities.

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to sincerely express

their gratitude to all individuals who contributed meaningfully to the development of this research. Special thanks are extended to the esteemed faculty members of the Departments of Urban Planning and Sociology at Herat University, whose shared knowledge and experience greatly supported the achievement of the study's objectives.

## Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with this research.

## Endnotes

1. Due to budget shortages in public urban projects, urban spaces in Herat have predominantly been handed over to the private sector, resulting in the erosion of their public nature
2. The history of Afghan women has been marked by periods of relative emancipation, predominantly shaped by modernist reforms and the influence of Western values. However, these freedoms were largely accessible only to a minority of women, while the majority bore the consequences in the form of violence, subjugation, and socio-political instability. Some Russian officials have even argued that this limited liberalization played a contributory role in the eventual rise of the Taliban.
3. The Taliban government, by issuing new decrees, has imposed more extensive restrictions on women's rights; including the prohibition of employment, the requirement of accompaniment by a mahram for leaving the house, mandatory dress code, and deprivation of medical services, education, and media. All these measures have been carried out with the aim of eliminating women from public spaces and urban life.
4. According to Auguste Comte, the founder of formal sociology in the West, "It is the dead who exert the greatest influence over our lives." Cities gain meaning under the influence of historical memory and myths; this phenomenon is visible in contemporary Afghan society. Gender identity is formed within a predetermined and imposed context; the ruling structure, under ideological slogans, has restricted women's rights in areas such as education, employment, travel, and social participation and has even prohibited their sports activities.
5. Except for 6 years or more during which the Tajiks were in power.
6. As Rose suggests in her book entitled "Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials," visual images can be extremely powerful and deceitful (Rose, 1962), as they are capable of providing exceptional qualitative information and - when introduced into the interview process - allow the respondents to reread better the memories and latent behavioral properties in their environment.
7. Due to the lack of precise understanding of research topics by some of the women present at the site, as well as the low literacy levels among many of them, the sample population was selected through a non-probabilistic and purposive method.
8. The responses provided were mostly limited to users' basic needs; and since these aspects had already been raised by experts, they were not repeated and were instead integrated and summarized within the questionnaire.
9. From the correlation of these components, twelve higher-order factors were extracted, which are themselves related to six broader thematic domains. These domains were independently defined based on a review of theoretical literature and are illustrated in Fig. 8.

## References list

- Ahmadi Niaser, M. (2021). *Investigation of the degree of Zafaranih and Haft Chenar neighborhoods' urban public space adaptation to the needs of women* [Master's thesis, Shahid Beheshti University]. <https://ganj.irandoc.ac.ir/#/articles/ecf5c4528ef2a38291c029aee306b6e4>
- Alderton, A., Henry, N., Foster, S., & Badland, H. (2020). Examining the Relationship between Urban Liveability and Gender-Based Violence: A Systematic Review. *Health & Place*, 64, 102365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2020.102365>.
- Baydar, G. (2012). Sexualised Productions of Space. *Gender, Place & Culture* 19(6), 699–706. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.675472>.
- Bell, W. (1998). Women and Community Safety. *Bell Planning Associates South Australia*, 32, 11–73.
- Damyancovic, D., Reinwald, F., & Weikmann, A. (2013). *Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development*. Urban Development Vienna, Viena.
- Day, K. (1999). Introducing Gender to the Critique of Privatized Public Space. *Journal of Urban Design* 4(2), 155–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809908724444>
- Farahani, M. (2018). *Adapting urban public space for families to participate with experience based on women's lived experience (Redesign of Golestan Garden, Tabriz and its surrounding context)* [Master's thesis, Tabriz Islamic Art University]. <https://ganj.irandoc.ac.ir/#/articles/8ee27477c8068d37bb2efe93b82c21c0>
- Galkowski, M., & Antosz, P. (2022). "The Hidden Boundaries of Public Space: Awareness of Civil Rights Restrictions in Privatized Urban Squares in Poland. *Cities*, 127, 103722 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.103722>
- Gholami Hatke Loui, S. (2020). "Spatial analysis of the presence of women in urban spaces (case study: Sub-district 1, District 11, Tehran)" [Master's thesis, Shahid Beheshti University]. <https://ganj.irandoc.ac.ir/#/articles/9e6418442adc2eb3600e8b2021dd818>
- Hosseini, Z. (1402). *Designing a gendered urban space in Takht Safar Park to increase the presence of Afghan women* [Master's thesis in Urban Design, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad]. <https://ganj.irandoc.ac.ir/#/articles/4a7c62fefe77ff4775dd1b1d3d1795a8>
- Hille, K. (2016). gendered exclusions': women's fear of violence and changing relations to space. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 81(2), 111–124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0435-3684.1999.00052.x>
- Kandiyoti, D. (2007). Old Dilemmas or New Challenges? The Politics of Gender and Reconstruction in Afghanistan. *Development and Change* 38(2), 169–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2007.00408.x>
- Karimi, M. A. (2011). *The West Side Story': Urban Communication and the Social Exclusion of the Hazara People in West Kabul* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Ottawa.
- Kasa, T. (2014). *Published by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Assessing Women's Rights in Afghanistan in 2014: Many Stumbling Blocks on the Way towards Equality*. Washington D.C. [https://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/kasa\\_-\\_womens\\_rights\\_09.2014](https://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/kasa_-_womens_rights_09.2014)
- Kiavar, D. (2011). *User Assessment in Public Spaces by Gender: A Survey on Seğmenler and Keçiören Parks in Ankara* (Publication No. 31670423) [Master's thesis, Middle East Technical University]. <https://shorturl.at/qZ3kY>
- Moghadam, V. M. (2002). Patriarchy, the Taleban, and Politics of Public Space in Afghanistan. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 25(1), 19–31. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395\(02\)00224-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(02)00224-8)
- Mowl, G., & Towner, J. (1995). Women, Gender, Leisure and Place: Towards a More 'Humanistic' Geography of Women's Leisure. *Leisure Studies* 14(2), 102–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614369500390091>.
- Mushkani, R., & Haruka, O. (2021). The Role of Land Use and Vitality in Fostering Gender Equality in Urban Public Parks: The Case of Kabul City, Afghanistan. *Habitat International*, 118(2), 102462. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2021.102462>
- Navarrete-Hernandez, P., Vetro, A., & Concha, P. (2021). Building Safer Public Spaces: Exploring Gender Difference in the Perception of Safety in Public Space through Urban Design Interventions. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 214, 104180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2021.104180>
- Neaga, D. E. (2014). Doing and Undoing Gender in Urban Spaces. *The University Square Bucharest. AnALize: Revista de studii feministe*, 3(17), 28–49. <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=639723>
- Noury, A. G., & Speciale, B. (2016). Social Constraints and Women's Education: Evidence from Afghanistan under Radical Religious Rule. *Journal Comparative Economics* 44(4): 821–841. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2016.07.005>
- Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. K. (2016). Where Gender Comes to the Fore Mapping Gender Mix in Urban Public Spaces. *Spaces and Flows: An International Journal of Urban and ExtraUrban Studies* 8(1), 19-30. <https://dx.doi.org/10.18848/2154-8676/cgp/v08i01/19-30>.
- Pour hossein roshan, H., Pourjafar, M., & Aliakbari, S. (2021). Explaining the Approach of Gender Justice in Urban Spaces Case Study: Urban Space of Imam Rasht

Sister Complex. *Quarterly Journals of Urban and Regional Development Planning*, 4(10), 115-145. <https://doi.org/10.22054/urdp.2021.50702.1195>

- Rezazadeh, R., & Mohammadi, M. (2009). An investigation on the factors limiting women's presence in urban space. *Journal of Fine Arts: Architecture and Urban Planning*, 1(38), 105-114. <https://doi.org/20.1001.1.22286020.1388.1.38.10.4>
- Riger, S., Gordon, M. T., & LeBailly, R. K. (1982). Coping with Urban Crime: Women's Use of Precautionary Behaviors. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 10(4), 369-86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00893977>
- Rose, G. (1962). *Visual Methodologies An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.
- Rush, L. M. (2012). An Autoethnography of Fuencarral 43: Women in Masculine Public Space. *The Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography*, 2(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.15273/jue.v2i1.8120>
- Sadeghi, F. (2005). "Politics of Afghan women's burqa before and after the Taliban." *Goftegou Azar*, 44. <http://noo.rs/GS7c4>
- Tandogan, O., & Bige Simsek, I. (2016). Fear of Crime in Public Spaces: From the View of Women Living in Cities. *Procedia Engineering*, 161, 2011-2018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2016.08.795>
- Velázquez, Isabela et al. (2006). "Urbanism & gender a necessary vision for all." Institut d'Edicions de la Diputació de Barcelona. <https://www.diba.cat/documents/540797/544667/seep-fitxers-urbanismgender>
- World Bank Group. (2020). *Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design*. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/363451579616767708/pdf/Handbook-for-Gender-Inclusive-Urban-Planning-and-Design>.

#### COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with publication rights granted to the Bagh-e Nazar Journal. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



#### HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Hosseini, Z., & Ghahremani, H. (2025). A Representation of Afghan Women's Presence in Gender-Discriminatory Spaces (A Review of the Experience of Takht-E-Safar Park in Herat, Afghanistan). *Bagh-e Nazar*, 22(146), 79-96.

DOI: [10.22034/bagh.2025.484312.5691](https://doi.org/10.22034/bagh.2025.484312.5691)

URL: [https://www.bagh-sj.com/article\\_222648.html?lang=en](https://www.bagh-sj.com/article_222648.html?lang=en)

