Original Research Article

Investigating the Effect of Social Anomie on Safavid Architecture from Travelogues Point of View[*]

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Abstract

Problem statement: During the Safavid era, numerous European travelers visited Iran and produced travelogues that, alongside praise for Iranian culture, manners, and architectural achievement, also reveal the disorderly condition of cities and buildings. Coupled with observations of socially disapproved morals and behaviours, these accounts indicate an anomic society and a built environment shaped by it. Such reports illuminate lesser-known aspects of the lifecycle of Iranian buildings, from construction to decay, that have been overshadowed by the dominant grand narrative of Persian architecture`s splendour and magnificence. Like all cultural products, architecture requires critique and diagnostic analysis to be understood holistically.

Research objective: To address this gap, the study mobilises sociological theory and a critical approach, adopting an outside-in perspective via non-Iranian travelogues to surface hidden dimensions of Safavid architecture under anomic conditions.

Research method: This foundational qualitative study employs a mixed-methods design, conducted documentary analysis of 27 Safavid-era travelogues and, through purposive screening, eleven robust sources retained. An interpretive-historical approach, triangulated with content analysis and comparative coding, yielded the final results..

Conclusion: The findings point to recurrent patterns: construction of new buildings instead of repairing and renovating existing ones, demolishing buildings for superstitious reasons, leaving buildings to fate, neglecting existing structures, avoiding the restoration of buildings built by others, constructing purposeless or functionless structures, Disfiguring and deliberately rendering decorations incomplete, poor condition of buildings and public spaces, construction of public buildings, and avoiding long-term investment in architecture. These issues are architectural expressions of a society with harsh climate, autocratic rule, juridical fragility, and pervasive superstition, conditions that channeled individuals toward anomic behaviours.

Keywords: *Architecture History, Cultural History of Architecture, Social Anomie, Travelogue, Safavid Architecture..*

Introduction and Problem Statement

The Safavid period represents both a pinnacle of Iranian architectural achievement and a unique historical juncture coinciding with the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, arguably the last era in which Iran and Europe maintained relatively balanced relations. This convergence of humanist inquiry and critical rationalism in Europe spurred

numerous arduous journeys, driven by a desire to observe and document the world in the form of travelogues (Schuster-Walser, 1985).

Travelogues offer an outsider's perspective that reframes the "self" through the eyes of the "other," presenting host societies with observations that, habituated by everyday routines, they may have overlooked or deemed ordinary. The critical views of post-Renaissance European travelers, who accepted little without the filter of reason, placed Iranian governance, social ethics, beliefs, art, architecture, and everyday life under external scrutiny for the first time. Meanwhile, advances in the human sciences in the contemporary era have reshaped our understanding of society and the self, enabling researchers to explain past events more rigorously and to inform improvements in present and future conditions.

The necessity of such interdisciplinary research becomes evident when we recognise that, without a deep understanding of the societies that produced architectural works, a realistic account of their origins cannot be obtained. Despite their importance, such studies remain scarce due to methodological complexity and the novelty of cross-disciplinary integration.

The main objective of this study is to examine how social conditions shaped Iranian architecture, in order to reveal its lesser-known dimensions under anomic circumstances. Employing documentary analysis of travelogues and a critical perspective grounded in Robert K. Merton's theory of anomie, the research asks: What are the indicators of anomie in Safavid society, and how did these conditions affect the architecture and urbanism of that era? A realistic understanding of Iranian architecture, with all its strengths and weaknesses, like any other phenomenon, benefits from diagnostic analysis, fostering growth, development, revival, preservation, and opening new avenues for future scholarship.

Research Background

Given the study's interdisciplinary nature, the prior research can be surveyed under several broad categories.

• Sociology

Jamily Kohne Shahri & Nadi (2013) analyze travelogues through Robert K. Merton's theory of sociological ambivalence. In their study, "The Typology of Sociological Ambivalence in Foreign Itineries of Ghajar career," they locate ambivalence at the nexus of tensions between cultural and social structures and among divergent sets of cultural values. Among foundational works, Merton's "Social Structure and Anomie" (Merton, 1957) articulates anomie theory, and "Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays" (ibid., 1976) compiles four decades of research, notably on anomie and ambivalence.

• Travel Writing

The "Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing", edited by Youngs (2013), surveys genres of travel writing and methods for historical analysis, emphasizing cross-comparison with other sources in their historical and cultural context. Another reference is Di Bella & Yothers' (2020) "The Long Journey: Exploring Travel and Travel Writing", which adopts an interdisciplinary approach, examining travel writing through anthropology, social history, and literature with historical and contemporary examples. Burke (2010), in "The cultural history of the travelogue," addresses travel writing through the lens of cultural history. Walser-Schuster's (1985) "Safavid Persia in the Mirror of European Travel Reports" seeks to elucidate Safavid Iran's internal dynamics, governmental mechanisms, religious and ethnic relations, and the role of the court's transcendental discourse in consolidating and preserving the realm. Carl Thompson (2011/2017), in "Travel Writing," a volume within Routledge's 40-volume series, offers a useful interdisciplinary resource, outlining definitions and the history of travel writing and engaging cross-disciplinary themes such as self-disclosure and representation of the Other, gender, and postcolonial studies, while analyzing travel writing's role in shaping national identities. Another key source, Daneshpazhouh's (2006) "A survey of travelogues from the Safavid period", provides texts and introductions to 25 Safavid travelogues. Finally, the "Travelogue Studies Center" website specializes in books, articles, analyses, and related materials on travel writing.

• Architectural studies

Research directly addressing architectural questions through travelogues bifurcates into material and

meaning-oriented strands, seeks to extract evidence from travelogues to aid in the recovery of buildings, reconstruct their histories, develop typologies, and treat other material aspects of architecture -ines of inquiry outside this study's scope. From the meaning-oriented strand, studies more closely aligned with the present research include Haqir & Salavati (2017), "European Travelers' Critical Thoughts on Iranian Architecture and Town Planning (from 16th to mid-19th Century AD)" which interprets Western criticisms as signs of divergence between architectural conditions in Iran and the West, and regards them as suspect and contingent on individual observers. Another example is Sanami et al. (2024), "Criticism of Iran's Urban Planning and Architecture from the Viewpoint of Travel Writers from the 10th to the 12th Centuries," whose findings indicate that critical claims divide into two groups: objective (e.g., cityscape, street order, cleanliness) and subjective (e.g., hearsay, beliefs, interpretations), with only the former category deemed reliable.

As is evident, no study has examined the impact of anomic social conditions on architecture based on travelogues. Despite extensive research leveraging travelogues to illuminate various dimensions of Iran's architectural past, there remains a clear gap regarding the roots of socially dysfunctional mechanisms that shaped architecture.

Research Method

This foundational theoretical research stands within the historical discipline and examines the reciprocal effects between anomie as the independent variable and architecture as the dependent variable. The strategy is qualitative under an interpretivist paradigm and is deliberately hypothesis-free to minimize confirmation bias. The scope spans the sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries, simultaneous with the Renaissance/Enlightenment and the Safavid period, and is conventionally limited to the territory of present-day Iran.

The study comprises 27 Safavid-era travelogues translated into Persian, selected based on Homayoun Rafati's (1989) "Subject Index of Travelogues Relating to Iran". In preliminary screening, low-reliability items were excluded. Through purposive sampling, 11 travelogues were retained. Research-relevant statements were extracted from these texts; observations emphasized and repeated by multiple travelers were fiché-catalogued from print editions and stored as text in digital versions. For data analysis, content analysis was employed at the feasibility stage, and a mixed-methods approach was employed in the final study. This combined a history from below perspective with comparative textual analysis, historical-contextual critique, and sociological-cultural critique (Figs. 1 & 2).

- history from below
- comparative textual analysis
- contextual-historical critique
- sociological-cultural critique

Contextual–historical critique is essential, reminding the researcher to interpret each travelogue within
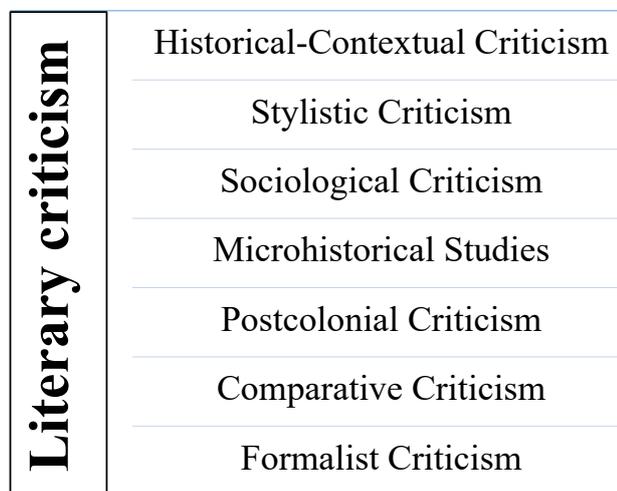
Literary criticism
Historical-Contextual Criticism
Stylistic Criticism
Sociological Criticism
Microhistorical Studies
Postcolonial Criticism
Comparative Criticism
Formalist Criticism

Fig. 1. Types of literary criticism. Source: Di Bella & Yothers, 2020.

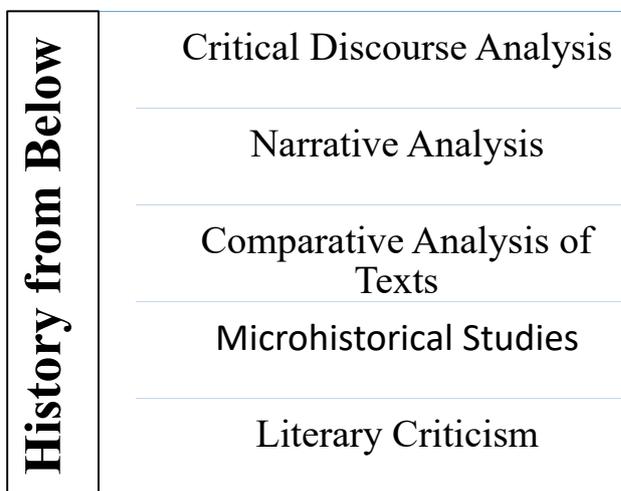| History from Below |
|---|
| Critical Discourse Analysis |
| Narrative Analysis |
| Comparative Analysis of Texts |
| Microhistorical Studies |
| Literary Criticism |

Fig. 2. Methods of conducting history from below studies. Source: Youngs, 2013.

its own historical milieu. The sociological–cultural approach treats travelogues as reflections of the host society's cultural and social relations. The comparative method, by juxtaposing multiple reports on a single topic, exposes differences in viewpoint and authors' cultural presuppositions that may introduce bias (Di Bella & Yothers, 2020). Ultimately, aligning the synthesized evidence with Robert K. Merton's anomie framework yields the study's results.

Theoretical Framework

Three elements are essential to frame the discussion: first, the Safavid polity as the historical stage; second, travelogues as the primary data genre; and third, Mertonian anomie as the theoretical framework.

• The Safavids

The Safavids (1501–1722 CE) emerged at a pivotal historical juncture, as the West underwent the Renaissance and rapidly advanced toward modernity, aided by science and technologies such as firearms, navigational instruments, and oceangoing vessels. Beginning with the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the Renaissance precipitated a profound geopolitical shift that set Europe against the ascendant Ottoman Empire; to counterbalance this eastern superpower, Europe sought a powerful ally -found in Safavid Iran (Haqir & Salavati, 2017). In 1501, Šāh Ismail founded a new dynasty, named after his ancestor Šāh Safi, with Tabriz as its capital. He unified a fragmented polity and, by declaring Twelver Shi'ism the state religion, inaugurated a new era in Iranian history. The dynasty extended Iran's borders to near-Sasanian frontiers and, like the Sasanians, grounded its rule in a synthesis of nationalism and religion. It confronted two formidable enemies on its eastern and western flanks: the Uzbeks and the Ottomans (Newman, 2006). The Ottomans as a common adversary fostered a strategic alignment between Iran and European states to constrain Ottoman power through simultaneous pressure from east and west. The influx of diverse European visitors -political envoys, adventurers, and merchants- and

the proliferation of travelogues unfolded within this context (Daneshpazhouh, 2006,11–14).

Šāh Tahmasp I transferred the capital to Qazvin, inaugurating a resplendent phase that reached its zenith under Šāh Abbās I (1587–1629 CE), who moved the capital to Isfahan and launched vast urban works (Matthee, 2009). Through military reform and the creation of a standing army, economic measures such as silk-trade control and engagement with Europe, and administrative reorganization, Shah Abbās consolidated imperial power. This period -styled the Safavid "golden age"- saw flourishing literature and arts (e.g., painting, carpet weaving) and monumental architectural projects that publicly staged sovereign order (Savory, 1980). Much of this unfolded before the eyes of European travelers and was recorded in their travelogues.

Following Šāh Abbās I, creeping weakness -domestic and foreign policy shortcomings, administrative corruption, military decline, trade contraction and revenue shortfalls, fiscal strain, and burdens on lower classes- propelled the dynasty toward dissolution. The Afghan seizure of Isfahan and the inaction of Šāh Sultan Husayn marked the beginning of the end; subsequent attempts by princes and local rulers to restore the dynasty (1722–1736) proved futile (Sanami et al., 2024, 95).

• Travelogues

The travelogue genre long occupied a marginal, somewhat trivialized position among literary critics and cultural commentators; however, its scholarly legitimacy was rapidly consolidated in the latter half of the twentieth century, and a range of analytical methods emerged to study it (Thompson, 2011/2017, 6). Rigorous analysis of travelogues requires a suite of historical, literary, cultural, and discursive approaches, since each travel narrative constitutes a historical document of social, ideological, and cultural interactions generated within a given society.

For centuries prior to travelers' accounts, historiography in Iran largely centered on political elites. Works such as the ʿĀlam-ārās, tazkeras, rawzas, Jāhangoshāys, Matlaʿs, and Fotuhāts were commissioned by those in power and celebrated them, a "top-down" perspective that effaced ordinary people. In the twentieth century,

scholars sought to recover the voices silenced in official histories through what came to be known as history from below, which emphasizes everyday experience and the roles of non-elite social groups rather than kings, elites, and formal institutions (ibid.). Figures such as E. P. Thompson were pioneers of this approach. Related research has typically been interdisciplinary, drawing on anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies to analyze historical texts. Despite these advantages, conducting research on travelogues demands careful attention to the methodological cautions indicated in Figs. 3 & 4.

A salient concern in travelogue-based research is their evidentiary reliability -an issue that has elicited divergent, often conflicting, and sometimes contentious views (Figs. 3 & 4). Some contend that travelogues -among the principal Western sources on Iran, embedding cultural, social, and political representations- were shaped by authors' cultural presuppositions, power asymmetries, orientalist gazes, and political agendas (Greenblatt, 1991). Much of what Europeans described about Iran, they argue, rested less on direct observation than on preexisting discursive templates. European writers assessed Iran by their own cultural standards, interpreting difference as deficiency; consequently, these texts reflect the writers' outlooks, social positions, and political needs more than Iran's social reality. Recognizing such biases enables scholars to employ travelogues as historical sources, but only with rigorous discourse critique and contextual analysis.

The most influential critiques of travel writing are synthesized in Table 1.

Given that this study concerns a precolonial period marked by Iranian strength and relatively balanced relations with Europeans, the travelogues of this era could not have been written in pursuit of colonial objectives. Even so, the aims and backgrounds of Safavid-era travel writers 1923/2021outlined in Figs. 5 & 6 -vary, and each traveler may have viewed and recorded Iran in line with his own purposes, interests, expertise, and incentives. Accordingly, several accounts were excluded from the research corpus due to substantive issues: Çelebi Oghlu's (1988/1959) narrative, considered by some to be fictitious owing to numerous flaws; "The Beautiful Ambassador", which is closer to a novel (Gres, 1993); Gilanentz (1992), reportedly dispatched by the Armenian bishopric for religious espionage; Georges Tectander von der Jabel (1974), a brief journey via Russia to meet the Shah in Tabriz that lacks sufficient depth; Katof (1977), whose architectural observations are unreliable for example, calling Natanz's "open dome" the "Stone Mosque" due to superficial resemblance to religious structures; Fidalgo (1978), who embroils himself in conflicts from the moment of entry so much so that even Christians are not spared and a sedition he sparks leads to the demolition of a church in Isfahan; and Krusinski (1733/1984), who, despite detail and accuracy, remains confined to the Afghan war and the fall of Isfahan.

Limitations of Travelogues
Gender restriction
Superficial contact and short-term residence
Supremacy and Top-Down view
Language, colloquialisms and accents
National and religious prejudices
Conflicts of national interests
Self-orientation

Fig. 3. Limitations of travel writers. Source: Hulme & Youngs, 2002.

Essential tips for reading personal narrative
Examining the travel narrative in the historical and social context
Validating data by comparing it with other travelogues
Paying attention to things that lead to author`s bias
Paying attention to differences between cultural habits
Paying attention to the writer`s moods and the impact of good and bad events
Paying attention to the author`s perspective as an internal or external observer

Fig. 4. Essential tips for reading travelogues. Source: Thompson, 2011/2017.

Table 1. Views and theorists for and against the use of travelogues. Source: Authors.

Theorists	Opinion about travelogues
Said (1978)	Travelogues constitute a Western discursive apparatus that constructs the "East" through stereotype and power's imperatives, producing an "imaginary Orient" mobilised to legitimise colonial domination.
Pratt (1992)	Travelogues participate in the production of "imperial knowledge," translating asymmetries of power into authoritative taxonomies and picturesque scenes that conceal domination under the mask of science and taste.
Bhabha (1994)	Operating within Orientalism's ambivalent economy, travelogues articulate a stereotype that fuses admiration with contempt, producing the "splitting" of the Other. Mimicry and the compulsive thematisation of the harem work as colonial tropes, simultaneously alluring and demeaning, to reproduce authority
Mitchell (1988)	Travel writers stage the "East" as a scripted spectacle calibrated to European expectations.
Duncan (1990)	Descriptions of Eastern cities and cultures in travelogues are ideological artefacts, structured by prevailing power relations.
Benjamin (1968)	Travelogues are constructed narratives that capture only a partial slice of reality.
Greenblatt (1991)	The travelogue does not merely represent the "Other"; it also manufactures the "European self.
Lewis (1982)	Orientalism is scientific in nature, and travelogues are impartial reports.
Mills (1991)	European women travelers often reproduced colonial discourse, inflecting it with moralizing and maternal authority.
Melman (1992)	Female travelers often cast the harem as a domestic, sometimes sympathetic space, yet still frame it within a colonial optic.

Travelers` Goals

- Making political and military treaties
- Knowing the geography and drawing road maps
- Encouraging Iranians to accept Christianity
- Study on the history of Iran and the middle east
- Searching for treasures and antiques
- Trade and commerce

Fig. 5. Travelers' purposes for entering Iran. Source: Burke, 2010.

Travelers` Background

- Officers and military forces
- Religious missionaries
- Traders and reprentatives of companies
- Explorers and adventurers
- Government officials and ambassadors
- Technocrates and specialists
- Archaeologists

Fig. 6. Travelers' occupational background. Source: Burke, 2010.

Accordingly, discourse-aware critique with comparative corroboration was combined across multiple observers and topics. Following the exclusion of low-reliability items, the retained corpus is listed in Table 2, ordered by the authors' arrival in Iran.

• **Anomie**

Robert Merton's (1957) seminal article "Social Structure and Anomie" demonstrated how certain social structures pressure individuals toward deviant behavior when culturally prescribed goals are unattainable through institutionally legitimate means. Anomie arises from the disjunction between culturally emphasized success goals, socially approved norms, and differentially distributed institutional means (Agnew, 1985). Under such conditions, those with limited access to legitimate means for attaining culturally prescribed goals are pressured into deviance and normlessness (Cashmore, 2002). Merton's (1976) model for experiencing and analyzing anomic conditions rests on three factors:

A. Goals: the desires and aspirations a culture teaches individuals.

B. Norms: legal and legitimate methods endorsed by society to reach those goals.

C. Means: resources, opportunities, and tools needed to attain those goals.

Feelings of strain, confusion, and frustration do not stem from any single factor above, but from their interrelations. A society's cultural structure directs individuals toward shared goals and sets legal rules for achieving them; however, legitimate means are not equally available to

Table 2. List and details of travelogues used in this research, ordered by authors' date of arrival in Iran. Source: Authors.

Author	Country	Years of presence in Iran	Background / Motivations	Travelogue Themes
Robert Sherley (1951)	Britain	1598 - 1609 AD. 1613 - 1615 AD. 1627 - 1628 AD	Explorer and military adviser who, with the goodwill of Šāh Abbās, became Iran's ambassador to England and Spain, and served as a military instructor introducing new tools such as cannons to the Iranian army.	A report on diplomatic missions as Iran's ambassador to England and Spain; Iran–Europe relations; Iran's military organization; the vicissitudes of relations with Šāh Abbās; and the events that led to their deterioration and his expulsion from the court.
García de Silva Figueroa (1677/1984)	Portugal	1617 AD.	Diplomat and senior court official whose primary motive was to preserve Hormoz for his government.	Geographical, historical, cultural, and social descriptions, including customs, daily life, political and diplomatic analysis, with reports on the Iranian court and political structure, trade routes, archaeological notes, and detailed accounts of architectural works.
Pietro Della Valle (1843/1991)	Itally	1617 – 1622 AD.	Writer, orientalist, and traveler/ Driven by adventure, fame, hatred of the Ottomans, and a desire for war with them.	A detailed account of the journey and routes taken individually and along with Šāh Abbās, a description of the Šāh Abbās court, Iranian customs and culture, economy and trade, the war with the Ottomans, and architecture and urban planning.
Thomas Herbert & Robert Herbert (1928/2021)	Britain	1628 – 1632 AD.	Courtier, motivated by exploration and curiosity, along with Robert Stoddart and Dr. Gooch, one optimistic, the other pessimistic, and the last neutral in their views; Thus, the other two reports were excluded from this study.	Descriptions of geography, nature, and cities, customs and social behavior, the economy, and the prosperity of Iran's trade, political structure, and everyday observations.
Ian Smith (1977)	Netherlands	1628 - 1630 AD.	East India Company merchant and representative/ Dutch ambassador.	Accounts of geography and cities; customs and culture; markets and trade with the Netherlands; interactions with locals; and the challenges of travel.
Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1841/1957)	France	1632-1668 AD.	Tourist and businessman/ travel and trade.	Dress, manners, religious ceremonies, food, clothing, popular temperament, trade, descriptions of the court and government apparatus, travel experiences, and details of cities and buildings
Jean Chardin (1825/1991)	France	1665-1670 AD. 1673-1677 AD. 1681 AD.	Jeweler and traveler/trade with the Iranian court.	Descriptions of the travel route, climate, and natural environment, detailed portraits of cities, neighborhoods, and architectural works, crafts and arts, social behaviors and customs, domestic and foreign trade, justice and laws.
Engelbert Kaempfer (1727/2021)	Germany	1683 - 1686 AD.	Physician and naturalist/ travel and tourism.	Descriptions of geography, road maps, cities, villages, the natural environment, architectural and urban works, arts and crafts, customs and culture, rituals and ceremonies, science and education, markets, trade routes, and goods.
Pere S. N. Sanson (1695/1967)	France	1683 – 1686 AD.	Geographer/ artographer.	Cartography; determining geographical boundaries and locations; general descriptions of city structure; historical sites and landmarks; local governments; and commercial centers.
Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1872/1967)	Italy	1727 AD.	Geographer and historian/ Travel and tourism.	A detailed, documented account of Iranian cities and culture, architecture, and art; the economic and commercial situation; and the political and social structure.
Jonas Otter (1923/2021)	France	1734-1743 AD.	Translator, travel writer, and painter/ envoy of the King of France.	Diplomatic relations; descriptions of the court and royal life; geography and cities; travel routes; and details of the city and architecture after the fall of Isfahan.

all, producing frustration and disappointment among some individuals and pushing them toward anomic behaviors (Jamily Kohne Shahri & Nadi, 2013, 36).

Findings

Almost all travelers observed the host culture through a comparative lens and, in addition to describing local conditions, consistently juxtaposed admiration with critique, producing dual narratives of praise and disapproval. Thus, travelogues became dual narratives1923/2021both praising and critiquing. At the outset, two points must be emphasized: first,

anomic conditions appear in all societies, to varying degrees, and were not specific to Iranian society; second, the overwhelming majority of travelers considered Iran one of the finest lands in the world, greatly admiring its art, architecture, and culture. Sherley & Sherley (1981, 52) write: "As soon as we set foot on Iranian soil, we immediately perceived such a profound difference, both in its people and the country itself, that we were instantly filled with the utmost joy and satisfaction". Even after famine, war, and the fall of the Safavids, Otter (1923/2021) describes Naqsh-e Jahān Square as "very beautiful, orderly, and large," unmatched "in any country in the world," and recounts the half-ruined Ālī Qāpū Palace as a building "more beautiful than anything I have seen anywhere".

Pre-modern architecture had hallmarks long addressed in architectural studies; a summary of them across ten headings appears in Table 3, most of which travelers also noted to varying degrees. Synthesizing these features reveals four domains: People and Lifeworld, Politics, Economy, and Belief, whose intersections with anomie's components pave the way to the study's results.

• People and lifeworld

Architecture in any land responds to people's needs and its climate. Chardin (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 2, 689) describes Iran as "water-scarce, dry, and sparsely populated," with "only one-twelfth" inhabited and cultivated; water scarcity is so severe that "people look up to the sky for rain to meet their needs".

While praising the character of Iranians and emphasizing that there is always an "exception," he notes good qualities such as the "intelligence and talent" and "power of innovation and thought" of Iranians; he argues that given their conditions they "live in the moment," "pay no attention to the future, whether good or bad," "seize the day," "cheer their hearts in any possible way," "do not worry about tomorrow," and believe that "whatever God wills, will happen." In hardships, they calmly say: "It is written," meaning "this affliction was destined for me from eternity" (ibid., 736).

Entrusting affairs to fate is an anomic condition that yields beliefs such as: "Not only public buildings but no building at all should be repaired or restored. Buildings and structures, like human beings, get old and pass away; just as a person dies when old, so repairing buildings that go to ruin is futile [...] These beliefs rest on their religious notions that the world and all within it pass away and should not be clung to" (ibid., 1375). Chardin (ibid., 85) quotes an inscription on a ŠāhiAbbāsi caravanserai portal: "The world is a caravanserai and people its caravanners; in a caravanserai, it is not permissible for caravanners to build a house in [the] caravanserai".

Another cultural-ethical trait arising from anomic living conditions, functioning as a coping mechanism,

Table 3. Factors influencing the formation of architectural works in the traditional world. Source: Authors.

Factor	Definition/Characteristics	References
Politics and power	Representing power, legitimacy, and ideology through the enactment of laws, by building palaces, markets, and public buildings	Vale (2014)
Economy and financial resources	The cost of materials, land, and labor affects the scale, quality, and detail of the building, as well as the number of buildings.	Sklair (2005)
Climate and environment	Historical architecture uses bioclimatic methods derived from the experience of its predecessors to mitigate natural disasters, temperature, humidity, terrain type and slope, wind, rain, and snow.	Olgyay (1963)
Culture and norms	Patterns, functions, forms, and motifs reflect the values, lifestyle, and social behavior of a society.	Oliver (2003)
Religion and beliefs	Beliefs affect the private-public realm, orientation, form, organs, and symbols of architecture.	Kostof (1995)
Technology and materials	Materials, technologies, and construction methods affect the construction and durability of buildings.	Rael (2009)
Founders and investors	The tastes and goals of owners and clients influence the choice of type, form, scale, and maintenance of the building.	Mumford (1961)
Population and society	The household dimension, ethnic relations, and migration affect the form, function, and spatial plan of the city and the types of buildings.	Rapoport (1969)
History and identity	Identity, national symbols, and past experiences have transformed traditional buildings into reflections of historical traditions.	King (2004)
Function and use	Every city requires different types of buildings with different functions, such as commercial and religious.	Lawson (2010)

is duplicity, hypocrisy, and dissimulation. "Iranians are bold and unashamed in deceit, guile, and lying [...] and if they can deceive someone, they will not hesitate for a moment" (ibid., 766). Such behaviors can have positive results in cases such as the collective effort of the elders to attract the Šāh's attention to advance the Naqsh-e-Jahān project and the public-benefit buildings around it; however, there are also cases of strange methods of deception reported by travelers. Šāh Abbās once encountered a bridge built atop a high, useless location. When he inquired about it, the builder replied: "I built this bridge solely to gain an audience with Your Majesty" (Gemelli Careri, 1872/1967, 37).

Another ethical trait is striving to present oneself better. Iranians "will resort to any means to gain fame, reputation, and lasting renown" (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 2, 767). This entrenches the belief that "no one should spend time and money repairing a building founded by someone else and bearing his name. Even the children and heirs of the founders of public buildings do not exert themselves to repair what their fathers built. Consequently, the prosperity of caravanserais, bridges, and public roads does not endure as long as it should" (ibid., Vol. 4, 1375). Because "Iranians all prefer to construct a new building, old structures are left to ruin" (Tavernier, 1841/1957, 663). Thus, the coexistence of ruined and newly built structures with identical functions next to each other becomes normal, because everyone wants their name inscribed on buildings and will not invest in a structure known by another's name. Gemelli Careri (1872/1967, 55) writes: "If the vast expenses spent on building new mosques were devoted to the repair and maintenance of the few old mosques, they would be saved from demolition and destruction. Unfortunately, every wealthy person, to have his sins forgiven and his name preserved, undertakes the construction of a new mosque, even if a few years after his death it turns into a heap of earth. Thus, the number of ruined mosques increases day by day". Another consequence is the dependence of the life and death of buildings on the life and death of the builder, for example, the Mahyar Caravanserai, which is often praised by travelers and named as one of the most beautiful caravanserais in Iran, falls into ruin 11 years after its construction, despite the fact that "a great effort has been made to decorate it, and the entire building is made of brick and has wide passages" (ibid., 173), but after the death of its builder, King Suleiman, Mahyar looks "too old and broken to be habitable" (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 4, 1363). In such a society, people even refrain from maintaining buildings that have been constructed to provide services and comfort to them. The governor of Šīrāz built a magnificent garden with various trees and animals for public recreation; while alive, he cared for it greatly, and it was among the most delightful places, but after his death, no one tended it and "its walls have begun to crumble and it is generally on the verge of ruin" (Tavernier, 1957, 666).

Anomic conditions also cause individuals to prioritize private interests over collective and public welfare. Thus, in many cities, "in front of every house, a small pit has been dug in which the dirt and excrement of the household are collected [...] They throw carcasses of aborted animals without any hindrance or concern in the middle of streets and bazaars; they spill animals' blood in every alley; unbelievably, adults relieve themselves wherever they please" (Gemelli Careri, 1872/1967, 64-67). These conditions have caused disarray to be seen in the perspective of most cities, despite the beauty inside the houses and the splendor of individual buildings; and except for the capital and a few cities such as Kāšān, praised for order and cleanliness, conditions are similar elsewhere: "Most parts of [Qom] are in ruins" (ibid., 52). Šīrāz is "completely out of shape and half-ruined" (Silva Y. Figueroa, 1667/1984, 147). Kermān has been destroyed many times and contains no fine buildings" (Tavernier, 1841/1957, 112). Karaj is "a filthy village" (Herbert & Herbert, 1928/2021).

• **Politics**

Another arena shaping architecture, especially public buildings, is politics, essentially the sovereign's will. Nearly all travelers spoke of the king's "absolute power" and "quasi-divinity" (Silva Y. Figueroa, 1667/1984), writing that "the Šāh of Iran has his people's lives and property at his disposal" and "does whatever he wishes" (Sanson, 1967, 146), and that "no rule or law" protects

individuals -high or low status -and their family members from the Šāh's sudden decisions (Kaempfer, 1712/2021). To escape the uncertainty and anomie stemming from the monarch's abrupt decisions, "interpreting and predicting the Šāh's behavior" became crucial for courtiers and those around him; everyone sought to anticipate his moods (Smith, 1977). "Anyone who incurs the Šāh's wrath will have all his property confiscated [...] his wife and children are taken from him, and [...] he does not even have a shirt to replace his dirty one" (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 3, 1183). Thus, confiscation of property was very common, and, for example, nearly all houses allocated to foreign guests were confiscated properties. This fostered a perpetual readiness to flee at any time, so that "houses, land, and household goods are not considered a merchant's wealth; only ready cash counts as wealth" (Tavernier, 1841/1957, 407). Consequently, household furnishings were few and simple inside Iranian houses and limited to "a carpet, a few pots, and plates" (Tavernier, 1841/1957, 407). To avoid confiscation, Iranians often resorted to waqf (pious endowment) when danger loomed: "If a person, even one day before the Šāh confiscates his property, endows his house or other real estate, Šāh cannot seize and possess them" (Chardin, 1825/1991).

Forced relocations of ethnic groups were another feature arising from anomic conditions, sometimes yielding positive outcomes like the construction of new quarters in Isfahan or towns such as Farahābād. Figueroa describes the neighborhoods of Isfahan and their religious diversity from above the Allahvardi Khan Bridge: "The quarter closest to the bridge [...] is the [Sufi] district of Tabrizians [...] The quarter that [...] is on the other side of the river is the new [Christian] Jolfa [...] and another quarter where the Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kerman have settled." Della Valle (1843/1991, 139), who witnessed the construction of Farahābād up close and was amazed by the greatness of this construction project and its rapid growth, writes that its inhabitants were mostly Christians, such as "Armenians and Georgians, whom the Šāh had recently relocated there from different parts of the country".

Bribery was another element of anomic society, openly practiced under the names "gift" and "gratuities," so that "Receiving gifts is not deemed shameful or reprehensible by grandees; rather, it is among their honors, and they deliberately set the time of receiving them when many are present [...] and even the poorest must offer a gift when seeking a favor" (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 2, 774). "Bribery blinds the eyes of government officials and their mouths are always open to snatch the spoils" (Tectander von der Jabel, 1972). "When the king asks for twenty masons for an urgent task, the chief architect summons all the masons and demands forty instead of twenty. Whoever offers a larger bribe is exempted from labor" (Tavernier, 1841/1957, 596).

• **Economy**

Another major factor shaping architectural production is the economy, largely based on trade and taxation in this era. According to reports, Iranians' living standards appeared markedly better than those of neighboring countries. "Foodstuffs in the cities were plentiful, cheap, and accessible to all" (Silva Y. Figueroa, 1667/1984), and this description is repeated by many travelers across cities. This abundance significantly supported architectural activity: "Few people live in rented houses; even those of modest means have homes of their own" (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 2, 777). Iranians believe that "just as a tailored garment fits only the person it is made for, a built house suits only the person who constructed it" (ibid.).

Finally, if someone's income was gained illegitimately or illicitly, there were ways to "purify" it. Although Iranians have "much attention and obsession" to earn their property and possessions from "legitimate means," they sometimes falter and compensate by endowing part of the wealth gained "from wrongful or dishonest ways" to mosques and charitable affairs. For this reason, Šāh Abbās "endowed all his possessions such as palaces, other buildings, gardens, caravanserais, baths, and public buildings, and even his horses, to the holy shrine of Imām Rezā in Mashhad so that if any part of his wealth had been obtained through unjust means, it would be purified" (ibid., Vol. 3). In this way, endowments sometimes channeled resources into founding new buildings rather than repairing existing structures.

• **Beliefs**

Beliefs of each nation shape its culture and architecture, and travelers devote parts of their travelogues to this. Iranians publicly display "piety and devotion," but since they cannot uphold such purity, "they are other than what they appear" (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 2, 767).

The tension between religious inclinations and artistic practices forbidden in religion creates anomic contradictions in residential architecture. Chardin (ibid., Vol. 4, 1404) refers to the tile decorations of the rooms of a splendorous mansion, which, although beautiful, "all decorative figures had only one eye," and says "these images are painted with one eye so that the thoughts of the worshipers are not distracted during prayer [...] because it is a sin to live in houses whose walls are decorated with pictures [...] and If they are forced to live in such houses, they first use the tip of a knife or something similar to poke out one eye from the images to disfigure the human face decorations".

The prevalence of anomie and uncertain social conditions causes people to turn to groups of soothsayers and fortune-tellers for peace, which include various groups. Chardin (ibid.) describes in detail the types of fortune-telling methods: "astrolabe, geomancy, the six-faced lot, salvation readings, magic, incantations, spells, and like". Belief in such superstitions could result in the destruction of architectural structures deemed ominous. For instance, "the ninth gate" of Isfahan, known as the "Gate of Death," was demolished because people believed the plague had entered the city through it (Kaempfer, 1712/2021). Other travelers have noted the existence of semi-ruined and abandoned houses in the city, attributing this to "the aversion of Iranians to living in a house built by someone else," which they "consider a bad omen" (Chardin, 1825/1991, Vol. 2, 777).

Discussion

By aligning the examples obtained from the travelogues, categorized into the four categories of people and lifeworld, politics, economy, and belief, with the three elements of anomic conditions, namely goals, norms, and means, we can summarize anomic or deviant behaviors and their impact on architecture and compare them with the conditions of an ideal society in which normal behavior prevails. Accordingly, Table 4 offers a comprehensive depiction of the architectural conditions that emerged from anomic tendencies within society.

Conclusion

Travelers who visited Iran, while praising the culture and architecture of the Safavid era, also addressed the currents latent beneath the surface of society and recorded them. These included life in a harsh environment, under autocratic governments with unstable economic and political systems, and widespread superstitious beliefs that, although due to habit and repetition seemed normal to the eyes of the Iranians, are today recognized as indicators of an anomic society. Anomic conditions exist in all societies to varying degrees, and in Safavid Iran, they manifested in multiple ways, exerting different influences on the architecture of the Safavid era.

While the value system of society recommended "goals" such as leaving a good name, warding off evil, belief in divine will, belief in the transience of the world, gaining divine satisfaction, attaining higher rank, living virtuously, advancing society, performing charitable endowments, and religious devotion, legitimate and lawful ways for achieving these goals were difficult for many members of society, and the necessary means were limited. Consequently, some individuals turned to simpler "means" such as giving bribes, offering gifts and illicit payments, resorting to various forms of magic, adopting fatalistic attitudes, not taking things seriously, acting for the sake of reputation, flattery, converting property into cash, caring only for the interior of the house while neglecting the outside, and using decorations considered religiously forbidden. In doing so, they relied on "norms" such as hypocrisy, turning to tricksters, living in the present moment, renouncing worldly affairs, self-display, seeking shortcuts, living in ways that avoid the risk of confiscation, prioritizing personal interests, escaping despotism, and circumvention of religious orders to achieve the goals and values praised by society. Such behaviors reveal the inability of segments of society to achieve these aims through legitimate and lawful means, due to living within an unequal and anomic

social structure. The architectural consequences of these deviant strategies materialized in the construction of new buildings instead of repairing and renovating existing ones, demolishing buildings for superstitious reasons, leaving buildings to fate, neglecting existing structures, avoiding the restoration of buildings built by others, constructing purposeless or functionless structures, Disfiguring and deliberately rendering decorations

incomplete, poor condition of buildings and public spaces, construction of public buildings, and avoiding long-term investment in architecture.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Table 4. Comparative table of the three elements of anomie, normative, and anomic behaviors, based on the four categories of travelers' reports and their architectural manifestations. Source: Authors.

The Travelogue Quadrilateral	The Constructive Triad of Anomie	Deviated Behavior	Normal Behavior	Manifestation in Architecture
People And Lifeworld	Goals	Earning a good reputation		Construction of new buildings instead of repairing and renovating existing ones
	Norms	Hypocrisy	Piety	
	Means	Giving bribes	Earning legitimate wealth	
	Goals	Growth and progress of society		Poor condition of buildings and public spaces
	Norms	Prioritizing personal interests	Prioritizing collective interests	
	Means	Tending the house while neglecting the city	Taking care of common areas and public buildings	
	Goals	Believing in God's will		Leaving buildings to fate
	Norms	Living in the present moment	Believing in predestination and free will	
	Means	Adopting fatalistic attitudes	Living according to God's commandments	
	Goals	Believing in the transience of the world		Neglecting existing structures
	Norms	Renouncing worldly affairs	Improving this world and the hereafter	
	Means	Not taking things seriously	Building the world and the hereafter simultaneously	
	Goals	Attracting God's satisfaction		Avoiding the restoration of buildings built by others
	Norms	Self-display	Serving people	
	Means	Acting for reputation	Doing good deeds	
Politics	Goals	Progressing and improving one's status		Constructing purposeless or functionless structures
	Norms	Seeking shortcuts	Growing through stages and degrees	
	Means	Flattery	Striving for growth	
	Goals	Living well		avoiding long-term investment in architecture.
	Norms	Living in avoidance of confiscation	Developing the means of life	
	Means	Converting property into cash	Acquiring both movable and immovable property	
Economy	Goals	Waqf (Endowment)		Construction of public buildings
	Norms	Escaping confiscation	Giving away for the betterment of society	
	Means	Giving gifts and illicit payments	Giving in the way of God	
Beliefs	Goals	Repelling evil		Demolishing buildings for superstitious reasons
	Norms	Turning to tricksters	Referring to scholars	
	Means	Resorting to the talisman	Relying on science	
	Goals	Religiosity		Disfiguring and deliberately rendering decorations incomplete
	Norms	Bypassing religious orders	Observing religious standards	
	Means	Using religiously forbidden decorations	Decorating with inanimate images	

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