

## Original Research Article

## Reproduction of Urban Space Based on Women's Discourse in Lalehzar Street, Tehran\*

Mahsa Sasanfar<sup>1</sup>, Mahmud Rezaei<sup>2\*\*</sup>, Varaz Moradi Masihi<sup>1</sup>

1. Department of Urban Planning, CT.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

2. Department of Architecture, CT.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

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### Abstract

**Problem statement:** urban space is a social, historical, and multi-layered phenomenon, continuously shaped and reproduced over time through the persistent interaction of power, politics, and capital. This reproduction occurs not only through structural transformations but also within the heart of everyday actions, lived experiences, and social discourses. Within this framework, women's discourse -as a frequently overlooked force- plays a significant role in redefining private-public boundaries and reconstructing collective memory. Nevertheless, this discourse has remained largely marginalized, particularly in the spatial analysis of historical urban areas in Iranian cities. This study thus examines the agency of women's discourse within the context of these forces and spatial activism on Lalehzar Street in Tehran.

**Research objective:** The present study aims to investigate the role of women's discourse in the reproduction of urban space, focusing on Tehran's Lalehzar Street as one of the capital's most prominent historical and cultural arteries. As a stage for the interactions and confrontation of social forces, as well as a platform for women's presence and activism across various historical periods, Lalehzar reveals the process of spatial rearrangement through a gendered lens.

**Research method:** This study adopts a qualitative, discourse-oriented approach, employing inductive content analysis to examine the gathered data. The data were extracted from diverse written, visual, and oral sources covering three distinct historical periods: the Qajar era, the Pahlavi era, and the Islamic Republic period. The theoretical framework of this research is grounded in the mechanisms of urban space reproduction, utilizing the concepts of activism, agency, and spatial peripheral-central to analyze women's discourse.

**Conclusion:** women's activism in Lalehzar Street can be understood as an integral part of the historical reproduction of urban space, shaped through a complex interplay with relations of power, politics, and capital. Across different eras, this activism has evolved from the "spectator" to the "spectacle" and eventually to the "actress", represented through diverse discursive formulations such as passive-symbolic presence, consumption, isolation, and participation. The everyday behaviors, social roles, patterns of presence and absence, and women's participation in the street sphere have not only influenced the transformation of spatial meanings and the redrawing of private-public boundaries but have also played a decisive role in the formation of collective memory and the spatial organization of Lalehzar.

**Keywords:** *Spationious-prescribed activism, Event-place agency, Peripheral-central disposition, Spectator-spectacle-actress.*

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\*\*Corresponding author: +989122147548, Mahmud.rezaei@iau.ac.ir

### Introduction and Problem Statement

The urban space is a social and historical phenomenon that is shaped through the interaction of three components: power, politics, and capital. Within the context of these three components, depending on how the “disposition” of the subject behaves from the center to the periphery in terms of the scope of “agency”—ranging from place to event—and the scope of “actorship”—ranging from prescribed to spontaneous—the spatial alternatives are reproduced (Hosseini et al., 2024; Sasanfar et al., 2025). In this process, space is not merely a physical container but an arena of meaning, experience, and collective memory, shaped through the interaction between material structures and social forces—an approach that Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996) have explained in the form of a dialectical relationship. In such a context, the reproduction of space is not merely the result of physical or economic forces; everyday discourses and actions also play a vital role. Among these, women’s discourse is a significant yet understudied influence. As social actors, women shape the meaning and identity of space not only through their physical presence but also through cultural representations, collective memory, and the reinterpretation of public-private boundaries. Nonetheless, in Iranian urban planning literature, the role of women has largely been reduced to descriptive or behavioral experiences, and theoretical analyses linking ‘power,’ ‘discourse,’ and ‘spatial reproduction’ remain scarce (Bidar et al., 2020; Pour Hossein Roshan et al., 2021). International research also indicates that urban design and planning have been dominated by androcentric patterns, effectively marginalizing the lived experiences of women (Beebejaun, 2017). In this regard, contemporary feminist approaches—emphasizing gender mainstreaming and female agency—analyze space as a field of power and resistance (Donati & Rodríguez-García, 2024). On the other hand, Butler’s theory of identity as a repetitive act provides a dynamic understanding of gender reproduction and the role of discourse in shaping female subjectivity—an understanding that can also

be applied to the analysis of spatial reproduction (Butler, 1990). Extending these perspectives, the works of McDowell, Rose, and Hayden demonstrate that the presence or exclusion of women from space is a direct reflection of urban politics and power relations (Hayden, 1980; Rose, 1993; McDowell, 1998).

Despite the significance of these approaches, the discursive dimensions of women’s presence and social roles within the process of spatial reproduction have remained largely overlooked in Iranian urban studies, particularly regarding historical and cultural spaces. Lalezar Street in Tehran, as a primary hub of cultural, social, and physical transformations, has undergone numerous evolutions from the Qajar era to the present. In each period, distinct patterns of women’s presence and social participation have emerged, which can be analyzed in connection with the specific politics and social conditions of the time. Consequently, studying Lalezar Street provides an opportunity to historically and analytically examine the evolution of women-related discursive patterns and their role in shaping spatial boundaries between public and private spheres, as well as reinforcing the collective memory of space. Accordingly, by adopting a discursive-spatial approach and drawing upon contemporary theories of space and gender, the central problem of this research is formulated as follows: How is the process of urban space reproduction in Tehran’s Lalezar Street configured across the three historical periods of the Qajar, Pahlavi, and Islamic Republic eras within the context of power, politics, and capital; and what role does women’s discourse play in this process—through activism, agency, and spatial habitus—in shifting the boundaries of this space?

### Literature Review

Contemporary research in the field of ‘Space, Gender, and Social Reproduction’ over the last two decades has demonstrated that space is the product of interaction between structural forces and lived experiences. In this framework, women are not merely the subjects of spatial politics but

are active agents in the social production of space. International studies, focusing on power, capital, and gender relations, have highlighted the significance of women's presence, resistance, and their role in redefining spatial norms. Drawing inspiration from Federici, Chattopadhyay demonstrates that gendered bodies encounter spatial violence when confronting the structures of capitalism and patriarchy; within this dynamic, women's activism is simultaneously constrained and reinvented (Chattopadhyay, 2019). Baydar conceptualizes space as fluid and 'sexualized,' continuously constructed through gender relations and bodily performances. In this view, the alternative behaviors of women and queer groups have the potential to disrupt the prevailing androcentric order (Baydar, 2012). Nakhal illustrates that urban spaces represent women as 'consuming bodies' and men as 'dominant bodies'; however, women's everyday actions possess the potential to shift and renegotiate these spatial boundaries (Nakhal, 2015).

On a theoretical level, it demonstrates through the theory of 'spatial positioning' that space is the product of interaction between objects, bodies, and perceptions; within this framework, gender is 'inscribed' into space through these very interactions (Low, 2006). Harris explains the significance of 'safe spaces' and contemporary discourses of citizenship in the emergence of female agency, while Malson and Swann analyze the representation of the female body as a tool for either reproducing or resisting gender norms (Harris, 2005; Malson & Swann, 2003). Recent research by Rahman further indicates that Muslim women in Ladakh redefine the boundaries of the 'permitted' and the 'prohibited' through religious and social activities, constructing space as a product of the interplay between religion, culture, politics, and lived experience (Rahman, 2025).

The synthesis of these studies reveals that space is a material-discursive phenomenon, constructed through the interaction between bodies, gazes, objects, institutions, and power structures, wherein gender is 'encoded.' However, this encoded order remains susceptible to subversion through

women's everyday actions. Female activism in space is thus a dynamic, layered process, rooted in constant negotiation with power, norms, and social boundaries. Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in the existing literature: most studies lack an integrated theoretical framework that links the three components of power, politics, and capital with diverse forms of female agency within a specific historical context. Furthermore, no study has yet provided a tri-period historical-discursive analysis of the evolution of women's agency within a specific urban space, particularly in the context of Iran. In response to these gaps, the present research offers a conceptual model by integrating three levels—structural (power, politics, capital), mediatory (activism, agency, spatial habitus), and historical—enabling an analysis of spatial reproduction as a product of the interaction between discursive forces and women's actions. Beyond introducing a novel analytical model, this approach facilitates a comparative historical-discursive analysis and elucidates how gendered boundaries are redefined and how space is reproduced or transformed by women within an Iranian urban context.

### Theoretical Framework

Analyzing the reproduction of urban space from the perspective of women's discourse necessitates a theoretical framework capable of enabling a multifaceted understanding of the interaction between structural forces, power relations, and social agencies. To this end, the theoretical foundations of this research rest upon three primary pillars of critical urban thought: First, theories of spatial production and reproduction, which elucidate the social and historical nature of space through the analysis of power, politics, and capital. Second, feminist and discourse-oriented approaches regarding spatial agency and activism, which explore how women manifest themselves and resist patriarchal spatial structures. Third, perspectives emphasizing the concept of 'spatial habitus' and the positioning of social groups in relation to the center and periphery,

thereby explaining the processes of spatial formation and redefinition in connection with the lived experiences of actors. By synthesizing these three domains, the conceptual framework of the present study serves as an analytical model for explaining the reproduction of space in Tehran's Lalezar Street from the lens of women's discourse—a model that simultaneously attends to the material, symbolic, and discursive dimensions of space, providing a multi-layered understanding of the relations between gender, power, and place.

#### • Theories of spatial production and reproduction of space

In contemporary urban thought, 'space' is not merely a physical entity; rather, it is a social, historical, and political product. Henri Lefebvre, in his seminal work *The Production of Space*, demonstrates that space is shaped through a dialectical process between power structures, relations of production, and everyday actions. By proposing the spatial triad of 'Perceived Space,' 'Conceived Space' (Representations of Space), and 'Lived Space' (Representational Spaces), he emphasizes that space is neither natural nor neutral; instead, it is produced and reproduced within the context of social relations (Lefebvre, 1991). Following this approach, David Harvey focuses on the nexus between space and capital. In his view, the city serves as an arena for capital accumulation, where the logic of the market steers the processes of spatial organization and reproduction. From this perspective, space can simultaneously function as a site for both domination and resistance (Harvey, 1985; 2001). Furthermore, Neil Smith analyzes urban regeneration to demonstrate that capitalism, through the reappropriation and commodification of space, marginalizes disenfranchised groups and reinforces the existing social order (Smith, 1996). Edward Soja, by introducing the concept of 'Thirdspace,' provides a mediatory perspective in which space is regarded not merely as a physical reality or a mental construct, but as a framework for the emergence of social differences and resistances (Soja, 1996).

On a broader scale, Saskia Sassen (2013), through her 'Global City' theory, demonstrates how global power flows and transnational capital transform urban spaces, reproducing inequalities while simultaneously fostering the emergence of new identities (Sassen, 2013). The synthesis of these perspectives offers a multi-layered understanding of space: a field of forces shaped by power, politics, and capital, evolving through interaction with human agency. Consequently, space is not merely a physical shell but a 'social text' wherein social relations, meanings, and contradictions are embodied and materialized.

#### • Women's discourse, space, and gendered agency

Within the framework of feminist theories, space is a social and gendered construct. Judith Butler, through the concept of 'gender as a repetitive act' (performativity), demonstrates that gender identities are shaped through everyday actions within the framework of power discourses; consequently, these identities possess the potential to transform established patriarchal structures (Butler, 1990). Urban spaces are carriers of gendered power relations, and urban design and planning have frequently been shaped according to masculine patterns; in contrast, the female experience of space is grounded in a sense of belonging, safety, and visibility (Rose, 1993; McDowell, 1998). Massey further emphasizes the dynamism of space and the possibility of generating multiple meanings; accordingly, through their everyday actions, women can redefine the boundaries between the public and the private spheres (Massey, 1994). Contemporary approaches further emphasize women's active presence in space and urban policymaking. Beebejaun underscores women's right to 'everyday life' within urban spaces, while Donati and Rodríguez-García highlight the imperative for women's intervention through 'gender mainstreaming' in urban policies (Beebejaun, 2017; Donati & Rodríguez-García, 2024). In the domestic context, research indicates that the roots

of gender inequality in urban spaces are embedded in patriarchal power structures and planning (Pourhossein Roshan et al., 2019). Furthermore, Bidar et al. (2020), through an analysis of women’s lived experience, emphasize the significance of sensory and emotional perception of space and its role in the formation of female agency. Accordingly, space is not merely a backdrop for everyday life, but an arena for the emergence of female resistance and redefinitions. The nexus between the production of space, women’s discourse, and the spatial habitus of social groups—serving as the theoretical foundation of this study—is systematically summarized in Table 1. This synthesis elucidates the transition from theoretical foundations to the analytical framework of the research.

**• The Nexus between women’s Discourse and the reproduction of space: The research’s analytical framework**

In contemporary spatial and gender theories, understanding the social reproduction of space is impossible without considering the mediatory level of action, agency, and spatial habitus. While macro-structures—power, politics, and capital—shape the organizing frameworks of space, it is this mediatory level that determines how subjects occupy, interact with, or resist these structures. The process of place reproduction can be analyzed based on the center-periphery model (Sasanfar et al., 2025, 126). In the ‘central habitus,’ places are primarily shaped by powerful structures and formal institutions, whereas the ‘peripheral habitus’ emerges when

informal or grassroots forces redefine the space. In feminist studies, activism refers to the subject’s capacity for ‘action within constraints’ and is often subtle, everyday, and micro-scale in urban spaces (Kern, 2020). McDowell demonstrates that through movement, stillness, socializing, or avoidance, women construct new maps of space (McDowell, 1998). Experience shows that women’s agency is a combination of resistance, adaptation, and the rereading of gender norms, capable of transforming formal and power-oriented spaces (Beebeejaun, 2017).

Female agency is defined as the ability of women to create possibilities within structural constraints (Butler, 1990). Agency is the result of the entanglement of body, discourse, and power, always forming within dominant norms yet capable of reconstructing or challenging them. In urban studies, women make urban spaces more livable and intelligible through their modes of usage, care, social presence, and the timing of their activities (Fenster, 2005). Spatial habitus refers to established patterns of presence, orientation, and spatial habits (Cresswell, 2011). Female habitus is not passive; rather, it is the result of social boundary-making and everyday resistances. Women’s experience in space reflects historical and cultural gender politics (Kern, 2020). The integration of these three concepts—activism, agency, and habitus—with the three structural forces of power, politics, and capital, enables an analysis of the reproduction of space as a multi-layered and dynamic process. Within this framework, the

Table 1. Summary of the Research’s Theoretical Foundations in the Three Conceptual Domains of Space, Power, and Women’s Discourse. Source: Authors.

Concept	Key Conceptualizers	Core Concepts	Research Application
Production and reproduction of space	Lefebvre, (1991); Soja, (1996); Harvey, (2001); Harvey, (1985); Smith, (1996); Sassen, (2013)	Lived Space, Representations of Space, Thirdspace, Commodification of Space, Urban gentrification	Space, as a dynamic and social platform, is interpreted as a site of conflicting interests and resistance in the reproduction of power. In this space, women are agents of activism.
The Right to the City	Lefebvre, (1991); Mitchell, (2003)	Right to presence, participation, security, diversity, social interaction	Women’s participation in the creation of urban spaces redefines the street as an equal social space.
Women’s Discourse of Space	Butler, (1990); Donati,Rodríguez-García, (2024); Massey, (1994); Rose, (1993); McDowell, (1998)	Performative gender, patriarchal spatial structure, spatial exclusion	Analyzing the formation of spatial inequalities and the role of women’s everyday actions in redefining public spaces.

‘mediatory level’ allows the research to analyze the interaction between structure and women’s lived experience in the reproduction of space.

Discourses are effective tools for identifying the agencies active in shaping space, and they can emerge in either central or peripheral positions relative to the power structure. These agencies manifest in data such as memories, narratives, or virtual representations, often linked to sites that have hosted historical events—a concept known as ‘Place-Event.’ This concept is crucial in urban design, placemaking, and planning, where discourse analysis enables their reinterpretation and revelation. In the ‘central habitus,’ place-events are primarily shaped by formal structures; however, in the ‘peripheral habitus,’ places and events are redefined by informal or grassroots forces. These can be analyzed based on their distance from the central or peripheral habitus across historical periods—a framework that illuminates the historical dynamics of places and the role of dominant or marginalized discourses in shaping space (Sasanfar et al., 2025, 125-126). In conclusion, the reproduction of Lalehzar’s urban space is not merely a physical process, but a discursive phenomenon shaped by the interaction of structural forces with women’s activism, agency, and habitus. Power refers to the control and legitimation of women’s presence; politics determines the representation of women in official and media discourses; and capital dictates the access and the economic and cultural opportunities within the space. The three analytical dimensions—activism, agency, and habitus—demonstrate how women occupy, experience, and bestow meaning upon space. ‘Activism’ encompasses behaviors ranging from spontaneous to prescribed; ‘Agency’ illustrates how space is transformed from a physical site into an event-driven and meaning-making arena; and ‘Habitus’ explains the social orientation of women’s presence as it shifts from the periphery to the center and vice versa. Within this framework, space functions as a discursive field—a site where meanings, power, and agency are continuously

reproduced through interaction. The research’s conceptual model (Fig. 1) illustrates the network of interactions between structural forces and female actions, providing a basis for analyzing historical periods and the evolution of women’s discourse on Lalehzar Street.

## Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative approach based on Discourse Analysis to investigate the reproduction of Lalehzar Street’s urban space through the lens of women’s discourse. The research design is centered on Inductive Qualitative Content Analysis within a discourse-oriented framework.

### • Population and Sampling

The research population comprises historical, cultural, visual, and audio-visual sources related to Lalehzar Street from the Qajar era to the Islamic Republic, which provide a representation of women’s presence, activism, and agency in space. The analyzed sources include:

**Written Documents:** 14 articles, 14 books, 2 travelogues, and 3 narratives.

**Visual Documents:** 21 photographs and 28 sketches.

**Audio Documents:** 3 podcasts.

**Audio-Visual Documents:** 6 films and 4 documentaries. The selection of sources was conducted through purposive sampling to ensure data richness and direct relevance to the research objectives.

### • Data analysis method

Data analysis was conducted using Inductive Qualitative Content Analysis, focusing on both manifest and latent themes. The process involved three primary stages:

-Open Coding: Identifying concepts and signs of agency within the discourses.

-Axial Coding: Investigating the relationship between women’s activism and urban space.

-Selective Coding: Extracting core components and structuring the research findings.

Throughout this process, the relationship between women’s everyday micro-actions and the macro-structures of power, politics, and capital was interpreted.

### • Credibility and Trustworthiness of Findings

to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the

data, strategies such as data triangulation, constant comparative analysis, transparency in the analytical process, and theoretical matching were employed. This method, focusing on an interpretive reading of the data and its direct link to theories of spatial production and women's discourse, provides a systematic and in-depth analysis of the spatial reproduction of Lalehzar Street.

## Discussion and analysis of findings

The analysis of the findings was conducted based on a conceptual model derived from the integration of urban space reproduction theories and women's discourse, formulated within a qualitative framework. This model examines three macro-components—Power, Politics, and Capital—in relation to the analytical dimensions of Activism, Agency, and Spatial Habitus, thereby reinterpreting the position of women in the reproduction process of Lalehzar Street.

Within this framework, Lalehzar is perceived not merely as a physical space but as a “discursive field” where women's actions, meanings, and agency are redefined through interaction with social, political, and economic structures, as well as historical transformations. Women's discourse is analyzed at three levels: Activism (spontaneous-prescribed), Agency(place-event), and Spatial Habitus (peripheral-central). The mechanisms of power, politics, and capital shape the orientation of these components, and historical changes in Lalehzar are interpreted through them (Fig. 2).

The findings are presented across three levels: the extraction of open codes, the analysis of agency, and the explanation of macro-categories of spatial reproduction, illustrating the nexus between everyday micro-actions and macro-structures. This approach enables an investigation into the discursive and spatial mechanisms that shaped women's presence across three historical periods: the Qajar, Pahlavi, and the Islamic Republic.

### • Qajar discourse (The eise of the european model: modernity and spectator-like presence)

Initially, Lalehzar functioned as a semi-private/semi-public space dependent on the Court. Women were largely ‘symbolic absentees’; their presence was defined either within the context of the Harem

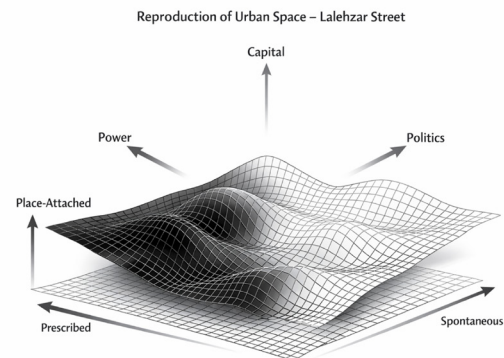


Fig. 2. Urban space reproduction through women's discourse as shaped by the interaction of disposition, agency, and activism under the influence of power, capital, and politics. Source: Authors.

and courtly relations or as transient and controlled movements. As one of the first modern urban spaces, this street marks a turning point in Tehran's spatial order—a space that distanced itself from the logic of traditional living, even though women still lacked ‘subjectivity’ in the logic of the ‘Right to the City.’ During this period, Lalehzar was not merely a location but a discursive arena where modernity, gender, and power intersected, laying the groundwork for the emergence of new forms of female agency (Lewisohn, 2015; Meftahi, 2017). Simultaneously, the diversity of attire and appearance among modernist and artistic women transformed Lalehzar into a stage for challenging the patriarchal order—an order that sought to confine female individuality within a framework of discipline, control, and specific representations. At the discursive level, this diversity shifted the role of gender from a passive object to an active subjectivity, demonstrating how women utilized aesthetic and stylistic elements to reconstitute their identity (Pourzargar et al., 2020; Habibi & Ahari, 2008). Consequently, Qajar-era Lalehzar can be characterized as an arena where women's discourse was defined through controlled spectatorship and ‘symbolic absence,’ manifesting as a forced passivity within courtly relations and transient movements. However, this process transformed Lalehzar into a street where social interaction and women's presence—within accepted social frameworks, such as shopping at modern stores—led to the formation of new patterns

of spatial usage and a gradual evolution in the methods of urban organization.

• **The Pahlavi discourse (instruments of modernization: spectacularization and consumption)**

According to some analysts, urban and social modernization policies fostered functional diversity, transformed public interactions, and created novel urban experiences that enabled spontaneous female activism in new ways (Meftahi, 2017). Lalehzar evolved into a space for entertainment and the night economy, where the use of images and individuals took on different dimensions. In certain land uses, this led to revenue generation, while in the urban public sphere, experiences such as verbal harassment and sexual threats necessitated the presence of ‘protectors’—ranging from cabaret managers to municipal police, SAVAK, and informal networks. Although women became more active players in cinemas, theaters, cafes, and the streets, the cabarets and nightlife theaters officially placed the female identity within the entertainment and commodity industries (Lewisohn, 2015). Consequently, female agency was reshaped through changing iconography and professional-cultural challenges. Gender moved from its previous position into a state of peak duality: ‘Liberation vs. Objectification.’ On the surface, Pahlavi’s Lalehzar was a symbol of the modern woman and urban freedom; however, in lived experience, this ‘apparent freedom’ often entailed restriction, discrimination, and exploitation. Gendered activism assumed multifaceted roles, where the body and appearance became instruments for expressing presence and identity in public space (Pourzargar et al., 2020). Consequently, this agency was constrained within the framework of cultural capitalism and the male gaze. The spatial success and placemaking potential of Lalehzar Street depend on the full inclusion and acceptance of all individuals—particularly women. Achieving this requires the enhancement of selective, social, and functional behavior patterns, along with improvements in factors such as public health, healthy human interactions, safety, accessibility,

traffic efficiency, nostalgia, identity, legibility, the hosting of national events, the integration of natural and built elements, the observance of human scale, and the implementation of principles of community aesthetics (Rezaei, 2022c, 136).

• **The Discourse of the Islamic Republic (opportunities for agency and participation)**

After the Islamic Revolution, Lalehzar became a ‘problematic’ space. The purging and exclusion of women from the nighttime public sphere—based on the discourse of ‘woman as an ethical subject’—was specifically prioritized for this street. In the subsequent years, spatial transformations driven by the rapid growth of electrical retail, particularly through the late 1980s, resulted in a spatial organization that heavily masculinized the street. Numerous academic studies, consulting projects, competitions, and governmental initiatives failed to reach a satisfactory outcome for Lalehzar, though they did alter some of its previous functions (Habibian & Rahmanpour, 2015). Gradually, with the shift in Tehran’s urban policies toward historical, pedestrian-oriented, and open urban spaces, the necessity of empowering Lalehzar’s fabric through public participation became more prominent (Rezaei, 2022b). While many improvement schemes faced shortcomings and failed to meet their intended goals, these efforts collectively reduced the absolute masculinization of the space, allowing for a relative increase in women’s presence. At micro-spatial levels—specifically within the network of alleys like Mehran and Berlin and their surrounding areas—diverse patterns of social presence and women’s participation persisted. This indicates that alongside official policies, everyday actions and female participation have played a vital role in maintaining the social dynamics and status of the space.

In this period, concurrent with the growth of social media and emerging technologies, the concept of the ‘public-private’ divide has shifted; presence in space is now facilitated through both social networks and face-to-face interactions (Rezaei, 2022a). Presence in public spaces remains focused on formal dress codes with an emphasis on modesty (Haya and Efaf).

However, a fixed and inflexible standard has not been established, allowing for a diversity of attire and varying interpretations within smaller, semi-formal spaces. Within this context, shifts in women's agency and social participation, particularly in the realm of women's rights, are observable. With the change in the street's land uses compared to the previous era, although the relative presence of women has decreased, the nature and extent of verbal harassment and 'gendered gazes' have also changed due to the de-legitimization of viewing individuals as commodities. Overall, during the Islamic Republic era, Lalehzar Street has been viewed through a discourse that emphasizes women's opportunities, respect for their dignity, and the prohibition of their commodification. However, the pace of women's re-entry and presence in this street has progressed slowly. Today, this opportunity is ripe for female participation, driven on one hand by social media, everyday interactions, and online activities, and on the other hand, by female-led entrepreneurship and branding (such as tailoring workshops, clothing stores, and cultural services that have historically existed in this street) (Rezaei & Irani, 2020). Finally, to elucidate the process of urban space reproduction in Lalehzar Street across the three historical periods, the qualitative data gathered from various documents were analyzed based on the research's conceptual framework. The results derived from coding and data synthesis are presented in Table 2 to reveal the relationship between the theoretical components and the empirical dimensions of the study.

Based on the data presented in the aforementioned Table 2, it can be inferred that the reproduction of urban space in Lalehzar Street across all three historical periods has been shaped by a distinct configuration of power, politics, and capital. This comparative trend demonstrates that the interaction between theoretical components and analytical dimensions in each era has produced a specific type of spatial order and gendered spatial discourse. From this perspective, Lalehzar Street can be read as a discursive text in which women's presence and agency are not static but dynamic, contingent upon the macro, meso, and micro-

level historical, economic, and political structures of their respective times.

## Conclusion

The process of urban space reproduction, particularly in Lalehzar Street, is not merely a physical transformation but a discursive, historical, and social phenomenon that derives its meaning from the nexus of power relations, official policies, and the logic of capital. The analysis of female discourse across three historical periods—Qajar, Pahlavi, and the Islamic Republic—reveals that women's presence and agency in space have been continuously redefined in relation to formal social and cultural structures, fluctuating across varying levels of visibility. Female activism in space is not limited to individual acts; rather, it is a subtle, everyday process through which women reproduce and give meaning to the space. Female agency represents the ability to generate possibilities within existing structures, through which women achieve participatory agency. The 'gendered spatial habitus'—comprising established patterns of presence and orientation—is the product of the interaction between social norms and everyday resistances, shaping the lived experience of individuals. The reproduction of spatial patterns is not exclusive to men; diverse social groups, including women, play a pivotal role in this spatial reproduction through various modes of presence, ranging from visibility to economic and cultural activities. Alternative spatial identities, in the form of legitimate rights and freedoms, can be symbolically and realistically reproduced continuously and persistently within the urban environment.

Historical analysis reveals that across different eras, Lalehzar Street has served as a platform for female activism in the public sphere. Women have transitioned from peripheral, performative, and commodified positions toward the center of social and cultural attention, gaining an emerging agency through their lived experience in the space. Gendered space manifests as visibility and superficial display in its 'surface layers,' yet it constructs intricate social

Table 2. Discourse Coding (Components, Actions, and Agency). Source: Authors.

Historical Periods	Discourse based on Selective Codes (Core Components)	Discursive Activism through Axial Codes (Agency)	Open Coding of Discursive Agency
Qajar Discourse: The Spectator (Enforced Passivity)	Policy	Community, Culture, Political Transformations, The Gender Element	The Emergence of Modernity, Shifts in Individuals' Dress Codes, Courtly Relations, Land-Use Diversity, Women as Controlled Spectators, Excluded from the Public Sphere
	Power	Modernism, National Realm, Urban Governance and Planning, Democratic Approach	Patriarchal System, The Emergence of the "Street" Element, The Concept of the "Global Street" centered on Power, Enforced Passivity of Women, Women Excluded from the Right to the City.
	Capital	Economy, Knowledge, Art, Collective and Individual Memories	Semi-Private Ownership, Court Capitalism, Women in Transitory Roles, Transient Presence of Women
Pahlavi Discourse: The Spectacle (Commodity in Performative Modernity)	Policy	Community, Culture, Political Transformations, The Gender Element	The Emergence of New "Cafe-going" and "Cafe-sitting" Behaviors, Policies Stemming from So-called Modernization, Women as Subjects (From Social to Consumer-Advertising Subjects)
	Power	Modernism, National Realm, Urban Governance and Planning, Democratic Approach	Cinema-going as a Modern Leisure Activity, Luxury Goods, Exploitation of Female Identity through Media Activism, Commercial-Advertising driven by "Modern" Policies
	Capital	Economy, Knowledge, Art, Collective and Individual Memories	Socio-economic Luxury Objects with a Spectacle and Consumerist Character, Female Activism in the form of Modern Consumption and Gender Representation, Capitalism and the Discourse of Luxury, Beauty, and Spectacle
Islamic Republic Discourse: Participation (Opportunity for Agency)	Policy	Community, Culture, Political Transformations, The Gender Element	Moral Purging, Proliferation of Electrical Land-uses, Male Dominance in the street
	Power	Modernism, National Realm, Urban Governance and Planning, Democratic Approach	Global City (Centered on Power and Wealth), The Nation's Electrical Industry Hub, Redefining Female Agency by Eschewing Sexual Desires and Instincts
	Capital	Economy, Knowledge, Art, Collective and Individual Memories	International Accommodations, Female-led Retailers, Creating Independent Economic Spaces, The Integration of Virtual and Physical Presence, Economic Renovation, Electrical Equipment Trade

interaction networks within its 'underlying layers.' Women play a multi-layered and active role in the reproduction of space; their presence in public, semi-private, and private spheres not only redefines existing social and spatial boundaries but also transforms the accessibility and legitimacy of spatial presence. Women's economic and cultural activities—ranging from tailoring workshops and retail stores to artistic and cultural productions—contribute to the reproduction of the social and economic functions of locations, turning space into a site for socio-economic interaction and cultural production. Lifestyle, attire, interactions, and the choice of spatial presence redefine the meaning of space and its social identity, shaping the community's lived experience. These everyday actions—walking, shopping, social interactions, and participating in cultural activities—do not merely alter the usage of

space; they challenge the dominant structures of power, gender, and social norms. Consequently, through their active and transformative presence, women reproduce the space and create the foundations for shifting power discourses and social participation, underscoring their pivotal role in the continuous dynamics of urban space. The three components of power, politics, and capital—in interaction with the three dimensions of activism, agency, and habitus—determine the position of women within the urban spatial structure. The relationship between these elements in each historical period reflects a distinct form of female centrality or peripherality: from the socio-cultural centrality yet gendered exploitation of the Pahlavi era to the contemporary habitus of 'legitimate freedom' which marginalizes gendered exploitation but results in a diminished spatial presence due to modern land-

use patterns. The research findings underscore the necessity of rethinking spatial policies, demonstrating that the equitable reproduction of urban spaces requires incorporating women's lived experiences, security, and agency into the design and decision-making processes. Leveraging emerging communication technologies, digital storytelling, and participatory strategies can facilitate the revival of female collective memory and restore the cultural and gendered habitus to the space. Such approaches can transform Lalehzar from a male-dominated environment into a dynamic, memory-oriented, and equitable arena—a space where urban reproduction is based on women's presence and agency within the framework of legitimate rights and Iranian cultural liberties, prioritizing 'women's rights and lived experiences' alongside 'spatial balance.'

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

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