Privacy as the Basis of Architectural Planning in the Islamic Culture of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The degree to which spatial partitioning occurs varies from culture to culture. In Saudi Arabia, spatial boundaries are of prime importance in planning the use of space. Saudis create physical boundaries through the use of walls, curtains and other partitions. Why do the people of Saudi Arabia partition their environment more than others? This article, by studying the effects of two organizing principles, gender and function, examines how the culture of Saudi Arabia, influenced by the Islamic religion, affects the organization of boundaries and architecture planning.

Based on this research, two primary conclusions are reached. First, physical partitions are the primary mechanisms which people in Saudi Arabia use to nonverbally communicate their concern about privacy to outsiders. Second, users of human spaces in this country make their choices regarding territorial behavior based on their strong adherence to the Islamic religion and on their sense of self identity.

Introduction

In determining whether to partition or segregate space, modern humans use culture-specific, cognitively-important practices that vary depending on the society. Therefore, certain behavior such as the use of space and architecture, can be seen as a tangible expression of the nontangible culture. Ethnological explanations (Lawrence and Low, 1990), such as territoriality and visual privacy, can be used to account for patterning that is not otherwise discernible.

In recent years, it has become increasingly common for social anthropologists, other social scientists, and architects to examine extant buildings in terms of a range of cultural and social dimensions (Altman and Werner, 1985; Rapoport, 1986; Lawrence, 1987). Several social anthropologists (Douglas, 1973; Leach, 1976) have shown that, although the classification of man-made spaces may appear to be arbitrary, this practice usually conforms to a consistent set of rules within a specific society.

Humans have purposely introduced physical and conceptual boundaries to indicate how spaces are separated and linked.

A number of ethnographers (Altman and Gauvain, 1981; Lawrence, 1982; Korosec-Serfaty, 1984) have explained that cultural predispositions related to binary oppositions dictate the design and use of spaces in the built environment. They confirm that the arrangement of spaces for human activities needs to conform to prescribed cultural conventions. This means that the organization of space in the built environment, particularly in the residential sphere, must express many binary oppositions. These may include male and female, public and private, or front and back (Goffman, 1959), and may be spatial, functional, social or psychological in nature. Leach (1976) notes that people use both spatial and temporal boundaries to highlight the differences between various categories of space. Bearing in mind the preceding observations, the concept of a *boundary* becomes important for the planning and design of architectural spaces.

This paper aims to explain the concept of boundary and its use in the cultural context of Saudi Arabia. Emphasis is placed on residential buildings, where the psychological implications of boundaries are fundamental. The objective of this research is to broaden the limited scope of studies of the cultural and social dimensions of dwelling designs. This study develops a theoretical interpretation of privacy (in the cultural context of Saudi Arabia) and its impact on the design and use of boundaries in this country.

Cross - Cultural Studies of the Built Environment

To understand how boundaries are used and why space is divided or segmented both conceptually and physically, it is necessary to examine how the partitioning of space correlates with architecture. A literature review, which includes ethnographics and the Human Relations Area Files, shows that spatial partitioning varies cross-culturally (Rapoport, 1962, 1990; Altman, 1977; Kent, 1984; Khazanor, 1984; Bourdier, 1985; Lawrence, 1990).

Scholars from a variety of disciplines have been interested in how societies use space in the built environment, including domestic, or vernacular, architecture. Some have viewed space usage from a primary descriptive perspective (Yellen, 1977; Watson, 1979; Kramer, 1982), while others have studied space usage in a symbolic or structural context (Bourdieu, 1973; Cunningham, 1973; Hugh-Jones, 1979; Lawrence, 1986; Hodder, 1987). Spatial behavior at a single settlement (Abu-Ghazzeh, 1994a, 1994b), or in a single country (Denyer, 1978), has been examined at both a single point in time and over time (Hardie, 1981; D. Lawrence, 1986; R. Lawrence, 1987, 1990; Lawrence and Low, 1990; Moore, 1986; Pellow, 1988).

Members of various cultural groups differ in spatial habits. Norms and customs of different ethnic and cultural groups are reflected in their use of space, home configuration and design, and even in the distances and angles of orientation that people

maintain from one another. According to Hall (1966), Germans are much more sensitive to intrusion, have larger personal space bubbles, and are more concerned with physical separation than are Americans; they go to considerable lengths to maintain privacy by means of doors and physical layouts. Hall explains that the English are also private people, but manage their psychological distance from others via verbal and nonverbal means (such as voice characteristics and eye contact), rather than by physical and environmental means. The Japanese, according to Hall, use space in an elaborate way, perhaps in response to their dense population. Japanese families have a great deal of close interpersonal contact; they often use the same space for many activities. Spatial arrangement of gardens, landscaping and artwork is a highly developed activity, designed to illustrate man's unity with nature, the interplay of all the senses, and the importance of relationships between people and their environment.

Studies conclude that the use of space is not isomorphic among cultures. Each culture has specific variables that influence its use of space. Even broad-based principles that structure all cultures may be manifested in such a specific manner as to actually appear to be unique to a particular society. While Hall, among other scholars (Rapoport, 1969, 1982, 1990; Prussin, 1986; Lawrence, 1990), has promoted research on cross-cultural differences of space-use habits, the question of cultural-specific differences has not been investigated to any great extent.

"Privacy" in the Cultural Context of Saudi Arabia

As a result of the rapid expansion of urban centers in Saudi Arabia, following the oil boom of the mid-1970's, modern concepts of planning and building have emerged. Various human groups, both Saudi and expatriate, have settled into recently-built urban neighborhoods. This, along with the resulting mixture of various cultures, has brought about a relaxation of the inherited cultural conventions of planning and building. It has also produced some loss of the embodied concepts of privacy control (Al-Hathloul, 1981; Abu-Ghazzeh, 1994b) that are observed in traditional Saudi architecture. This has been accompanied by the importation of various design concepts that are ill-adapted and ill-integrated with the host culture. As a result, the concept of privacy has become a subject of growing concern for people, architects, urban designers, landscape architects and social scientists involved in development projects in Saudi Arabia.

An analysis of diverse interpretations of the concept of human privacy shows a common core definition: it is a process that aims to control transactions between persons, the objective of which is to enhance autonomy and/or minimize vulnerability. From this perspective, privacy serves three main functions: the limiting of social interaction; the establishment of plans and strategies for managing interaction, and the maintenance and development of self-identity.

Bearing in mind the functions and contextual definition of privacy, it is important to consider the cultural and social customs and conventions of the society of Saudi

Arabia, and how they relate to personal behavior and the design of the built environment.

The fundamental questions are, "What does privacy mean for people in the cultural context of this country?" and "How do attitudes about privacy in this society, with its strong adherence to Islamic religious principles, differ from attitudes in other (western, for example) societies?" Altman (1977) has observed that although privacy is "a universal process which involves unique regulatory mechanisms," it differs among cultures in terms of the "behavioral mechanisms used to regulate desired levels of privacy.", There is unforrtunately almost no contextual research on the religious, cultural, social and psychological variables related to the definition of privacy in Saudi Arabia.

In Saudi Arabia, the most valuable, and the only un-compromisable, cultural heritage is religion, *Islam*. It structures all aspects of human life and endeavors. Culture, as influenced by Islam and the related differentiation of gender, is an important spatial organizing device in this society. Gender roles, and in turn, the segregation of space by gender, have been linked to social/political/economic domination of males over females. Gender segregation is based on an unequal hierarchy between males and females, an hierarchy that does not exist in all societies.

Islam explains that the environmental and social influences which most frequently wreck our moral ideals have to do with sex, and especially with its misuse, whether in the form of unregulated behavior, false charges or scandals, or breach of the refined conventions of personal or domestic privacy. Based on the instructions of Islamic religion, sex offenses should be severely punished. Human privacy should be respected, and the utmost decorum should be observed in dress and manners. Domestic manners, as well as manners in public or collective life, all contribute to the highest virtues, and are part of Muslims' duties leading up to Allah (God).

The Koran (Muslims' Holy Book, Surat An-Nur, 24: 2984-2987) explains that the need for modesty is the same in both men and women. But, according to the Koran, based on the differentiation of the sexes in nature, temperament, and social life, a greater amount of privacy is required for women than for men, especially in the matter of dress and the covering of the bosom. The woman is asked to neither display her *Zinat* (meaning both natural beauty and artificial ornaments), nor to display her figure to strangers, including male relatives who have a "sense of sex."

Purity, and good form in domestic life are valued and encouraged. Muslims are taught that their chief concern should be their spiritual welfare. Our brief life on earth, according to Islam, is a probation. Each Muslim must make his individual, domestic, and social life contribute to his holiness, so that he can get the real success and bliss that is the aim of all Muslims' spiritual endeavors. The subject of *sex ethics and manners* is the determining factor in the segregation of males and females in the

Islamic society of Saudi Arabia. And the concept of privacy is introduced, perceived and judged accordingly.

From this perspective, it can be shown that the architectural, social, and psychological dimensions of privacy are fundamental to the daily life of people in the society of Saudi Arabia. In this country, as socio-religious complexity increases, the use of boundaries and partitioned spaces also increases. A direct relationship exists between urbanization and the increased use of boundaries and spatial segmentation. To control privacy in the built environment, architectural and behavioral variables must operate in tandem in order to satisfy psychological needs.

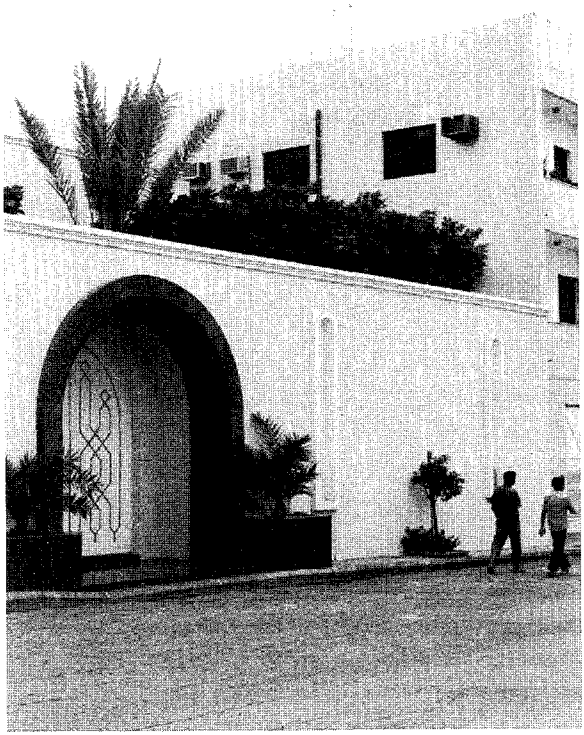
Identifying Underlying Principles of Spatial Patterning

Fieldwork observations among groups from different socio-economic levels reveal how culture in Saudi Arabia is structural and how it influences the built environment. All Saudi families differentiate between males and females in response to principles of Islamic religion and/or in acknowledgment of cultural codes. Space usage is a reflection of, and in turn, usually consistent with, culture. Therefore, it should not be surprising to find gender used as a basic organizing device for the partitioning of space. Although space use differs somewhat between rural and urban Saudi families and among families of different socio-economic classes, the basic pattern remains the same.

Saudi families live in houses inside which physical partitions of space are based on activity function and gender. While walls are the most common physical boundaries inside the dwelling unit, it is possible that space segmentation may be accomplished through the use of levels. Space is divided into rooms that are used for separate functions by different people. Gender specific spaces for guests are present in each and every dwelling unit. Wherever possible, for example in villa-type houses, even gender specific entrances are provided. In urban areas, different activities often have physically-partitioned, separate rooms (i.e., bedrooms, dining room, kitchen and bathrooms). In comparison, in rural areas, one room may function to serve more than one purpose (i.e., sleeping and sitting).

Buildings used as homes for Saudi families are cognitively distinct from nondomestic buildings (hospitals, schools, shops, offices etc.) and can symbolize protection, security, warmth and belonging (Fig. 1). This explains, in part, why Saudi families feel personally "violated" if their houses are physically, or even visually, intruded.

One aspect of the analysis presented in this paper concerns behavioral mechanisms used to achieve privacy goals. These mechanisms include verbal and paraverbal behavior, personal space, territory, and cultural mechanisms (i.e., the customs, norms, and styles of behavior by which members of Saudi society regulate their contact with others). This paper will concentrate on territory and cultural mechanisms.



Various kinds of mechanisms are used to regulate social interaction in the cultural context of Saudi Arabia. A precise understanding of these mechanisms is necessary in order to define, design for, and regulate privacy in the Saudi built environment. First, there is a dialectical process involving changes in the degree of accessibility to, and separation from, other persons. Second, gender relation calls for a process of controlling social interaction. Third, there is a non-nomothetic process which seeks to achieve a level of interaction with others that is culturally acceptable. Fourth, distinction between the desirable and actual levels of privacy requires emphasis on autonomy or isolation. Fifth, privacy has a dual direction, such that the reciprocal relationship

Fig 1 Homes for Saudi families are cognitively and physically distinct from non-domestic buildings and symbolize protection, security, warmth and belonging High boundary walls constructed around houses prevent visual and physical intrusion, thus serving to maintain privacy

between parties must be considered.

Culturally-Based Privacy Mechanisms in Saudi Arabia

The physical environment imparts messages to its users. The role of the physical environment as a privacy mechanism is quite complex. To break the problem down, this paper will first focus on aspects of the environment closest to the person (such as clothing), then move to personal space, and then to distant features of the environment (such as territories and areas).

Clothing

Anthropologists agree that different cultural groups adopt styles of clothing to tell the world who they are and to reflect their culture. For example, females in Saudi Arabia use clothing to define their approachability. They wear veils to cover their faces, and abayahs (long gown like dresses) to cover their bodies (Fig. 2). The veil is constantly adjusted according to the social situation to reflect status and approachability. Restrictions on females' use of clothing and adornments in public places, in response to Islamic instructions, are visible indicators of the importance of privacy-regulation mechanisms.

Personal space

The next layer of the self that serves as a privacy mechanism in the Saudi culture is personal space - that is, the invisible boundary surrounding the self. Intrusion into this space creates tension or discomfort. During social occasions, members of the same gender are accustomed to interacting at very close distances, including exchange of visual, touch, smell, and sound cues, often to the dismay of western people. In comparison, in public places, families seek to maintain as much distance as they can from any unaccompanied, unrelated males. People in Saudi Arabia perceive personal space as a privacy-regulation vehicle, sometimes opening the self to others, and sometimes closing the self off from interaction.

Gender differences are culturally emphasized. In addition to religious-based segregation, males and females are separated based on a cultural convention that the sexes are physically and emotionally different. These differences contribute to segregation that permeates all facets of Saudi culture. Cultural segregation is associated with power differentials and hierarchies whereby one group subjugates another. Gender hierarchies, based on physical sex segregation, are visible in the separation of sexes into different work settings, sex-specific schools, campuses, and even sitting and waiting areas in such places as mosques, hospitals and airports. There are even sex-specific sitting zones in all public bus transportation vehicles.

Fig 2 In Saudii Arabia, femals wear a veil to cover their faces, and abayahs (long gown-like dresses) to cover their bodies. Restrictions on females' clothing and adornment in public places are indicators of the importance of Islam-based privacy-regulation mechanisms

Sex differentiation also exists in the division of domestic and non-domestic tasks and the segregation, by sex, of occupations. For example, presently, certain fields such as architecture and engineering are open (academically and professionally) only to males. There are also sex-based social distance mechanisms, with different rules of etiquette applying to each sex. This hierarchical segmented view of gender is expressed spatially in the designation of superior areas for use by males and inferior areas for use by females. This form of segmentation by gender results in special boundaries being created in otherwise unbounded spaces. The segmentation is then reflected in people's use of space and the built environment.

Some anthropologists have suggested that the built environment is recurvous. They contend that the house is both the medium and the outcome of social practice (Giddens, 1979). According to Donley - Reid (1990, 117) "People define spaces, and spaces defines people." The study of boundaries and the use of partitions to segment spaces in the society of Saudi Arabia indicates that the houses can be seen as reinforcing culture and reminding individuals of the segmentation in their culture, as Donley-Reid noted. Whereas culture segmentation influences the physical and conceptual partitioning of space, architecture, in turn, reminds users of the cultural differentiation of genders.

According to Rapoport (1982, 52), "It is the social situation that influences people's behavior, but it is the physical environment that provides the cues." Thus the separateness of males and females in the culture of Saudi Arabia is reflected not only in the separate male/female spaces in the residential sphere, but also in work places (gender-specific) and in public buildings. The planning of architecture, as reflected in house design, thus becomes committed to a central theme linked to gender segrega-

tion. The physical and conceptual separation of males and females is a constant reminder of the gender differences present in the culture of Saudi Arabia, as manifested by a rigid division of labor and strict sex role differentiation. Thus, visible and invisible boundaries serve to remind individuals of behavior that is required within this culture.

Observation of modern Saudi Arabia's built environment, (as evident in house planning, design and use) indicates that culture influences behavior, whereas architecture merely reminds the actors of that influence. In studying how Saudi families use some of the recently-built western style houses, particularly apartment buildings, it is noticeable that some Saudi families hang curtains, or some other lightweight material, to form additional separate rooms inside their houses. They seek to create more bounded space where the architecture did not provide enough to satisfy their perceived needs (Fig. 3a, b). Houses are commonly remodeled to fit the user's culture-bound perception of the need for segmentation, sometimes conflicting with the architect's perception. The owner or renter often rearranges or redesigns a house to fit his/her idiosyncrasies within a culturally acceptable range of spatial patterning. There is frequently remodeling or redefining of space, often at personal expense, that differs from the concepts of the original architect. This indicates a powerful link between perceived needs for privacy, in order to satisfy gender separation, and the influence of culture on spatial patterning and architecture.

Fig 3 a In their search for privacy, many residents of apartment buildings and villas either build partitions or use curtains or plants (i e , hedges) to enclose balcony and a villa in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia

In their search for privacy, it is also common for people in Saudi Arabia to build boundaries between private and public spaces. The residential structure and its adjacent outdoor space are turned into a private region *par excellence* contrasting with the public nature of the city as a whole. Corresponding to this separation of private/public, in terms of rules and beha-

Fig. 3b

vior, is a physical separation in terms of domains and environments. Thus, the private realm is separated from the public both physically and socially by walls, rules and behavior. It is inward looking, highly elaborate, well-tended and personalized. Physical barriers separating the dwelling and adjacent garden from the street may include the use of a hedge, a blind fence, a screen, or quite frequently, a three to five meter concrete block wall (Fig. 4a, b, see also Fig. 1). No one can be prevented from establishing these barriers, even if one party does not want this design element.

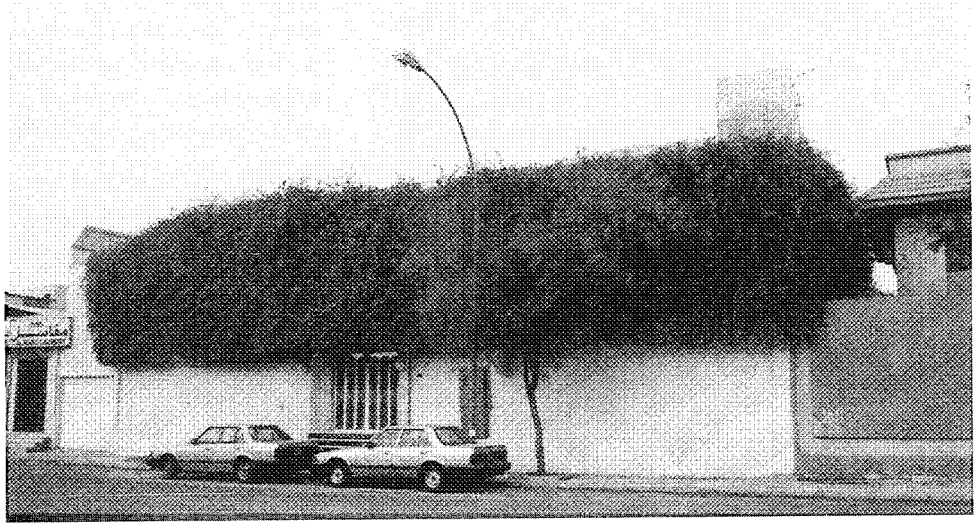


Fig. 4a Various materials and designs are used in the construction of house boundaries. These include hedges, blind screens, or frequently, 3-5 meter concrete block walls.

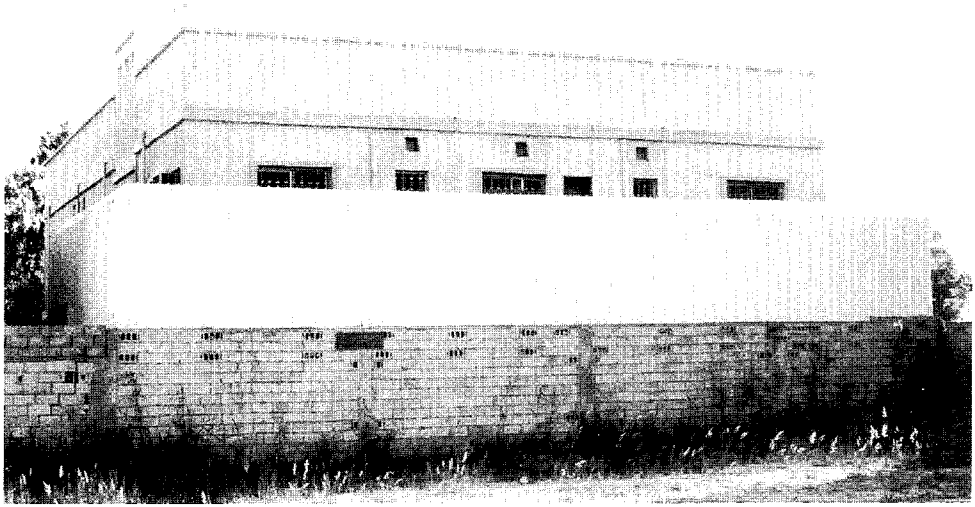


Fig 4b

Within the physical territory of their homes, residents are free to modify their own external environment at any time, regardless of how their act may affect the built environment of surrounding houses (Fig. 5a, b, 6a, b). They can employ their preferred materials to achieve their intentions.

In the recently-built Jubail City, a number of residents have even extended their activities to modify external environments including enclosing portions of the collective space of their neighborhood (Fig. 7a, b). The lack of private outdoor space among single-family detached houses has caused people to reclaim public space and redefine the demarcation between collective and private outdoor spaces. Indeed, in the Jubail example, the importance of the residents' previous experiences (in terms of personal, social, and cultural cues for boundaries, and domestic needs as they relate to privacy) cannot be overlooked.

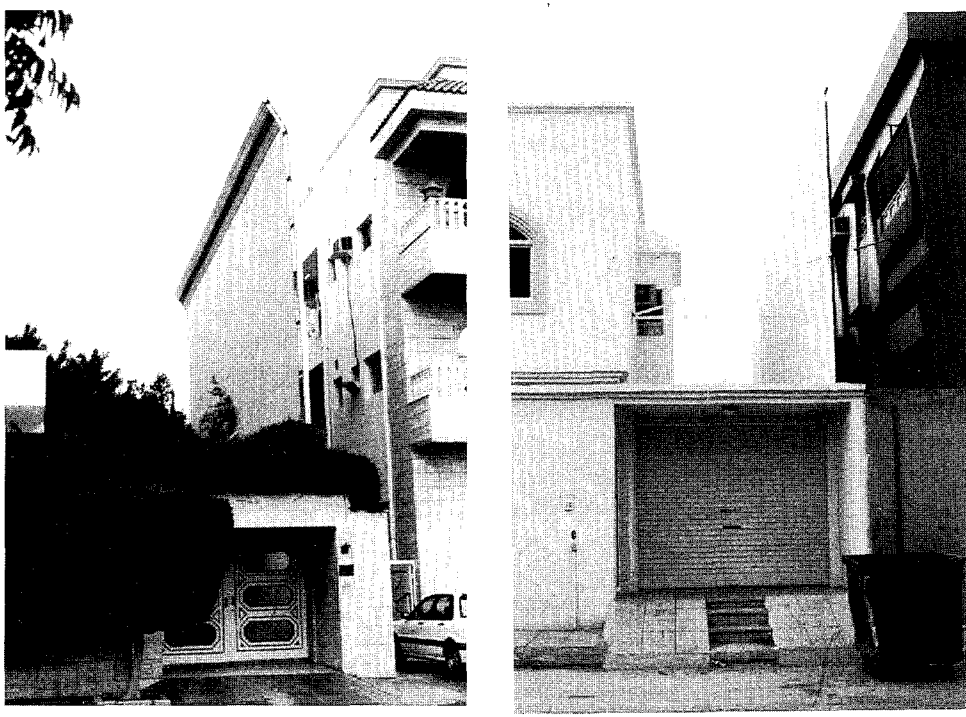


Fig 5 To ensure visual privacy, a three-story (approximately 9 meter) screen is built by a villa owner between his home and a neighboring apartment building Within the physical boundaries of their homes, residents are free to modify their own external environment at any time, regardless of how their acts affect the built environment of surrounding houses

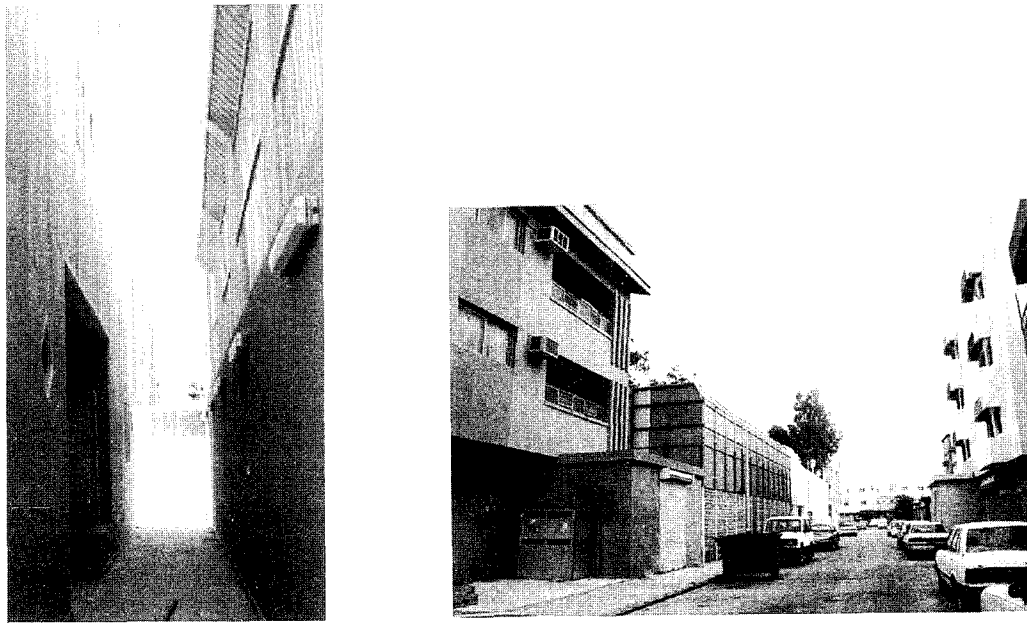
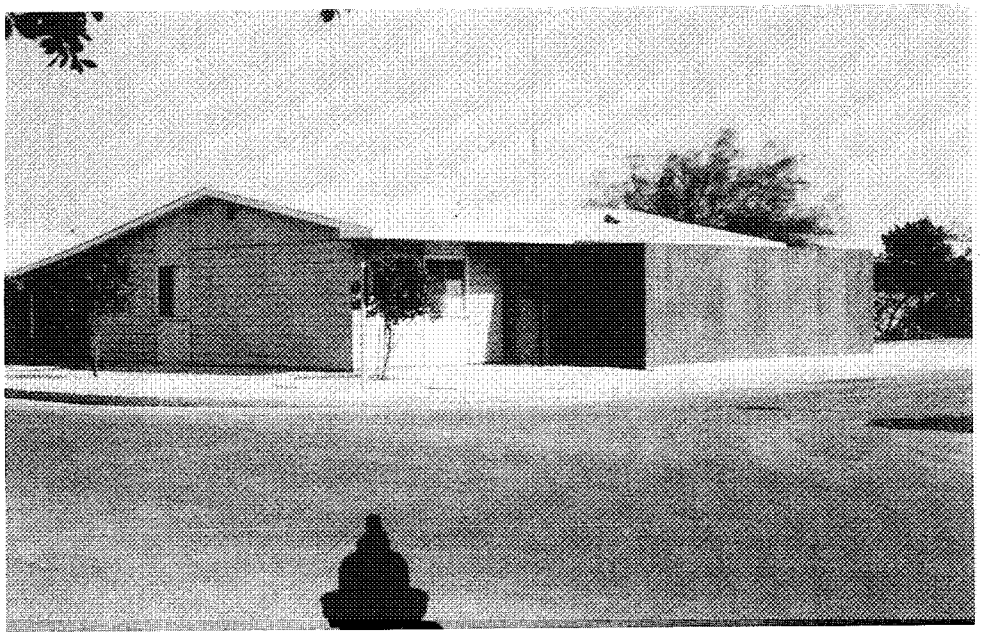


Fig 6 Corrugated metal screens have been erected on top of the boundary walls of these villa-type houses to ensure privacy and prevent visual access from surrounding 3-4 story residential buildings Riyadh



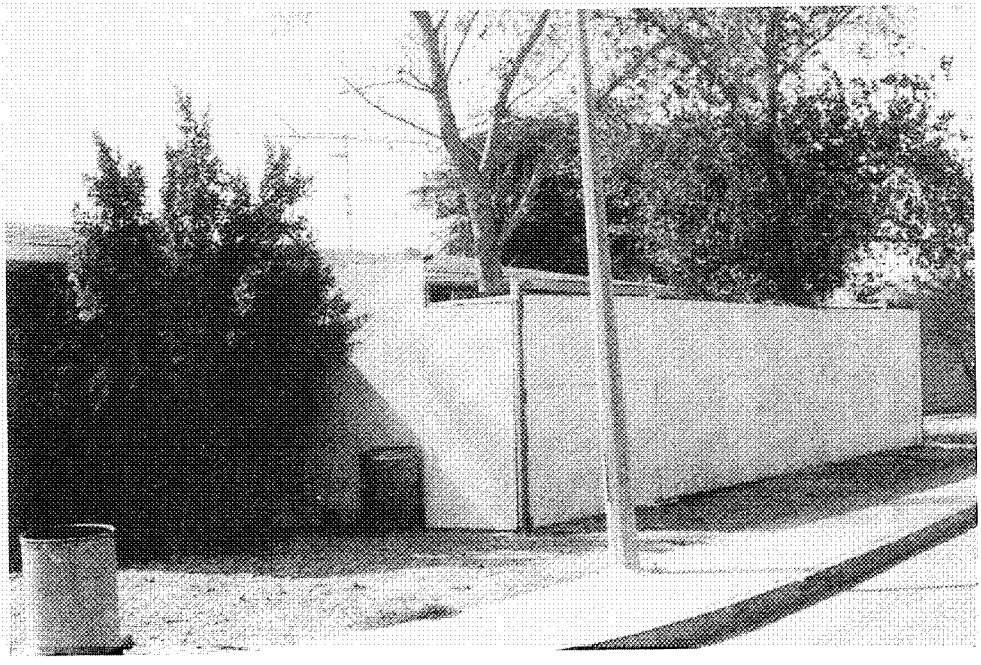


Fig. 7 In their search for privacy, residents of this house in the recently-built Jubail city have reclaimed public space by building boundary screens to separate individual and collective outdoor spaces.

In Saudi Arabia, the garden is clearly part of the private internal order belonging to the resident. The boundary wall provides an explicit dividing line between the public and private spaces, indicating that the garden is not intended to make a contribution to the composition of the townscape (Fig. 8, see also Figs. 1, 6). Because of this, the townscapes of Saudi residential areas, even those occupied by the wealthy, seem much less attractive than the open atmosphere of western style residential areas.

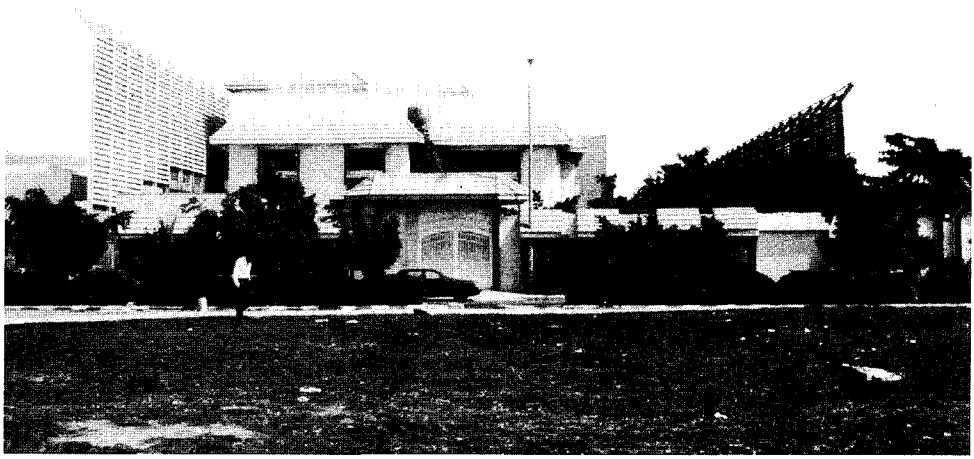


Fig 8 The boundary wall provides an explicit dividing line between public and private space, indicating that this garden is not intended to make a contribution to the composition of the neighboring towncape. A house in Jeddah City (Western province of Saudi Arabia)

People's preoccupation with privacy has exerted fundamental control upon the height of residential buildings in most neighborhoods. With the exception of certain zones defined by municipal land-use regulations, residential building height is generally limited to two stories. This has enabled people to use boundary walls that are high enough to insure privacy within outdoor private spaces. As a result, the built areas of urban centers are characterized by horizontal expansion.

Various physical elements of the environment, as well as socio-cultural devices present in Saudi Arabia, serve to selectively filter information and communication. Where to locate domains and boundaries, what boundaries and partitions to use, and how to arrange them, demands an understanding of the socio-cultural system, and its behavioral, spatial and symbolic components. The success or failure of any specific design, within the cultural context of Saudi Arabia, can be understood in terms of the congruence of the male/female and public/private domains within cultural norms.

The built environment in Saudi Arabia communicates and symbolizes people's identities. Once this communicative function of the environment is understood, the physi-

cal and social cues used to achieve privacy are not difficult to ascertain. While designers include some of the elements utilized to create privacy, individuals often add still more. The many small changes and decisions of individuals create a certain character that performs a major communication function, often misunderstood by designers. There is a specific message which people wish to communicate that comes only through individual personalization. Design and planning must consider that. If the devices used by Saudis to achieve privacy are better understood, they can be encoded in various forms of physical design and space organization, potentially allowing the original designer greater control.

Territorial Behavior as a Social-Regulation Mechanism

The control of space helps control privacy. This, of course, relates to territoriality and the rules which go with it. While some observers (Altman, 1975; Taylor and Brower, 1985) see territorial behavior simply as a way of controlling interaction, in Saudi Arabia it effectively establishes an order, i.e., a consistent spatial patterning among individuals and groups. Territorial behavior, in the Saudi cultural context, serves as one of a series of mechanisms used to achieve privacy. Empirical research on territorial behavior in the cultural context of Saudi Arabia is lacking. In this country, human territoriality is a pervasive phenomena and is quite apparent in the everyday behavior of all types of groups: rural and urban residents, home owners, picnickers, and the like.

According to Ardrey (1966), territories contribute to a sense of identity. Successful privacy regulation is hypothesized (Altman, 1975) to contribute ultimately to self-definition and self-identity. Edney (1974) describes the role of territoriality as providing a stable social organization in humans as well as in animals. In Saudi Arabia, territories serve a stabilizing and regulatory role at individual, group, and traditional settlements (Abu-Ghazzeh, 1994a), at community levels, to smooth social interaction, to provide a set of cues to others, and to create explicit role relationships and readily observable status hierarchies.

The idea of territory is important in Saudi Arabia where "A man's home is his castle." The use of boundary walls around the house is just one example of the validity of the idea of personal territory. It also involves personalization of the home by using marking devices such as, for example, the design of the boundary wall itself. Often, the process of personalization involves controlling the boundaries. Saudi families consider their bounded property a space that they defend as an exclusive preserve. It is their primary territory. There is a psychological identification with the place, and this is symbolized by attitudes of possessiveness and by arrangements of physical components within the bounded area.

The identity of home owners is salient. Invasion or unpermitted entry by outsiders is a serious matter, and control over access is highly valued. Primary territories are important in Saudi Arabia; boundary-regulation illustrates the close linkage of privacy control, territorial mechanisms, and self-identity. Clearly then, if one is designing

an environment for the Saudi cultural group which places high value on primary territories, the design should build this style into the environment.

The diverse data collected during this research have yielded complementary information about the affective characteristics and the social and psychological aspects of privacy within the cultural context of Saudi Arabia. This should provide researchers and designers of projects in this country with knowledge pertaining to themes that include: the meaning and use of boundaries; the role of privacy and its gradients; the spatial relationship between the inside and the outside of the house; and the relationship between spaces and human activities.

In essence, this research shows that the materialization of the design of boundaries embodies a *psychological* goal that is shared by members of the Saudi society. Thus, boundaries acquire symbolic connotations because of the polyvalent meanings different people in this society attribute to them. It is important to consider the relationship between people and designed spaces in the built environment because this relationship reflects consensus decisions, affecting even those shared spaces that are not reserved for private use.

Conclusion

People in Saudi Arabia alter architecture in order to adhere to cultural concepts of segmentation and differentiation. They are less willing to alter their culture and associated behavior to accommodate the built environment. Architecture is in active force only in the sense that it is a visual expression and a reminder, and in that way a perpetuator of culture, not a creator or modifier of culture. The organization of the built environment and use of space is a metaphor for the organization of a culture; the former are the visible, tangible expressions of the invisible, intangible culture. The amount of segmentation present in the culture of Saudi Arabia structures its architecture and spatial patterns and then integrates them into a coherent and cohesive whole.

This paper maintains that socio-religious and cultural norms are the primary principles that influence the spatial and architectural planning and differentiation present in the society of Saudi Arabia. They account for the variation in spatial and architectural partitioning of people, genders, and activities. The concepts of privacy and privacy-related issues presented here can also be useful in the field of environmental design. In addition to dealing with technological concerns and architectural design, it is necessary that practitioners deal with a host of sociological and psychological questions, in order to create a viable entity. The goal is to synthesize these different areas of knowledge in the design process.

Today's architects, planners, and anthropologists must understand how socio-religious and cultural complexities affect the structuring of spatial and architectural domains in the present society of Saudi Arabia. This understanding involves translating anthropological concepts into architectural planning and design practice. Cultu-

ral complexity and its manifestation in space utilization and design must be studied thoroughly before planning architecture in Saudi Arabia. Designers creating for this country must study the cultural schemata of the people in addition to the more usual studies of their activities and ecology. In this way developers can provide a built environment that will most closely fit the group's spatial and cultural needs. Designers in Saudi Arabia must pay attention to the behavioral styles of the Saudi cultural group, as well as to their perceptual-cognitive-motivational dynamics. To focus on only one level of behavior misses the point that one is dealing with a complex system of needs, wants, and behavioral styles.

This paper concludes with a suggestion for the redefinition and diversification of current research and design practice in the cultural context of Saudi Arabia. Human spaces are like a seamless web of affective and spatial considerations that form an interactive whole. For this fundamental reason, knowledge and information about the design, meaning, and use of boundaries and spaces in Saudi Arabia can only be derived from a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural and religious norms present in this society.

Understanding the Saudi principles of privacy and the mechanisms employed to control it will enhance the professional acumen of parties involved in the development of the Saudi built environment. It is important, therefore, that a dialogue between designers and users of human places be established. This will provide a better understanding of how various individuals value the concept of privacy, and will help establish more appropriate parameters for the design of activity domains.

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