

# **Domestic Space and Socio-Spatial Relationships in Rural Pakistan**

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## **Abstract**

This article explores the changing use and management of domestic space and socio-spatial relationships constructed in a Pakistani rural setting. It offers a case study which highlights the central position of domestic space as a residential and social unit in rural Pakistan. It discusses how domestic space is appropriated in multiple ways into a social unit through social practice. Given that changes in the physical structure of any place lead to negotiation of social relationships, it is shown how recent modifications in design and structure of houses are indicative of, and to some extent facilitate, social change in rural Pakistan.

## **Keywords**

anthropology, biraderi, caste, domestic space, globalisation, home, house, kinship, neighbourhood, Pakistan, rural societies, Saraiki, socio-spatial relationships

## **Domestic Space and Social Change in Rural Pakistan**

Much of the rural social organisation of Pakistan is based on extended social networks of kinship and marriage preferences (Ahmad, 1974, 1977; Alavi, 1972; Chaudhary, 2010; Donnan, 1988; Eglar, 1960; Lyon, 2004, 2013). The house, being central to family and kin relations, plays a significant role in maintaining various social relationships. In many parts of rural Pakistan, design and structure of houses have in recent decades undergone considerable modifications. Among several other reasons, technological change, urbanisation and industrialisation have played a major role in bringing about such changes.

I have discussed elsewhere that the scarcity of land for residential or agricultural purposes in many villages has in recent decades given rise to occupational change from agriculture towards cash-based economy (Mughal, 2008, 2012, 2014a, 2014b). Such shifts have triggered changes in overall social organisation by altering some cultural models of time and space in

rural areas. Many people from rural areas have abandoned agriculture and some have migrated to cities and overseas in search of economic and educational opportunities (Weiss & Mughal, 2012). Globalisation, urbanisation, the media and technological innovations have brought change in the structure of the house, as much as they have influenced any other form of human activity or relationships. The organisation of domestic space is thus shaped by, and is indicative of, the history, religion, economics and socio-economic and technological change. Similarly, natural catastrophes, migration and other demographic features bring about significant changes in reconfiguring socio-spatial relationships, not only in urban areas but in rural contexts, too.

Studying the socio-spatial relationships constructed around domestic space is very challenging, as everything is highly dynamic and subjective. First, questions whether the structure of a house shapes social relationships, or the nature of social relationships gives rise to particular kinds of architecture, still need to be further explored and remain unsettled in anthropology. There is evidently a strong correlation between the construction and spatial patterns of a house and the relationships of its members. The location of the house, the types of walls within and around a house, who can and who cannot share rooms or beds, and gendered and age-specific management of domestic space are all deeply informed by cultural norms and values (Dickey, 2000; Nielsen, 2011; Rapoport, 1969). Second, it appears to be difficult to reach some universally applicable definitions of household and family. This issue has posed a challenge also at macro-level, for national census operations and for cross-cultural comparisons of family and household structures anywhere in the world (Hammel & Laslett, 1974). A widely accepted characteristic of the household is its association with space, proximity and residence, whereas the concept of the family is more closely associated with kinship relations (Yanagisako, 1979: 162–3). Therefore, the household has certain cultural dimensions, which can be studied separately from broader models of the family (Sanjek, 2010). Domestic space, as linked to the household, is the dimension of socio-cultural experience that provides an insight into socio-spatial relationships. The location, construction and use of domestic space are known to be important elements in such a cultural landscape.

This research is based on presuppositions to the effect that the social organisation of domestic space is culturally mediated. Hence, while studying the social organisation of domestic space, local social and economic conditions and changing circumstances of social realities must always be taken into account. We also know that the nature of the socio-spatial relationships

within and outside the house undergoes all kinds of transformations because of social change (Akbar, 1998; Robben, 1989). Since domestic space is arranged with respect to the social relationships of its residents, modifications in its physical attributes also unfold into social change in society. A house has connections with the outer globalising world, which influences change in household dynamics, for example by introducing electric appliances, kitchens and new furniture. It has been argued that making generalised assumptions regarding social and behavioural changes from a globalisation perspective has been a major problematic issue without finding any evidence at micro-level (Galvin, 2009; Inda & Rosaldo, 2008; Mazarella, 2004; Rankin, 2003; Zoomers, 2010).

This article aims to highlight that studying socio-spatial relationships centred around domestic space in rural areas can help analyse the effects of globalisation and urbanisation at micro-level. An ethnographic analysis of domestic space and the socio-spatial relationships constructed around it enhances our understanding about people's association with places in general and with the house in particular, in a wider cultural context.

The article therefore focuses on what changes have recently taken place in the design and structure of the house in rural Pakistan, what are the factors behind these changes, and it asks in particular what the social implications of such spatial modifications may be. Through the ethnographic example of a village in Lodhran district, this article argues that the social organisation of domestic space mediates people's responses to social change. The social organisation of domestic space is maintained through kinship, religion and economics. As a consequence of economic transitions, the physical attributes of domestic space have undergone various transformations. These changes point to urbanisation in rural Punjab. Since kinship is the essential, and perhaps defining, feature of social networks and boundaries in rural areas, domestic space is marked by certain norms and values. These norms and values shape gender relations and generational interactions in the inner boundaries of domestic space. Urbanisation coupled with technological and economic change has caused shifts in family structure as well as the physical attributes of domestic space. However, the social rules that define roles and statuses with regard to age and gender continue to exist. At the outer boundaries of domestic space, people maintain their social networks on the basis of mutual rights and obligations within as well as outside the kinship boundaries. Over time, along with demographic shifts, as this research demonstrates, the outer boundaries of domestic space have been extended to non-kins, giving rise to new sets of relationships. Religion remains

important to all aspects of rural social organisation, including domestic space. The arrangement of domestic space also includes some representational aspects of religion that continue to exist. Before presenting the ethnography, some important concepts from the anthropology of space are given here that provide the conceptual and analytical basis for this study.

### **Space and Socio-spatial Relationships: Some Anthropological Insights**

Space, along with time, is one of the most studied concepts in philosophy and the social sciences. There are various ways anthropologists have approached the notion of space in their analyses. Space may be generally defined, as in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, as a continuous, unbounded or unlimited extent in every direction, without reference to any matter that may be present. This kind of general definition is certainly far from an exhaustive set of meanings that can be attributed to the concept of space. Rapoport (1994) has explained that space is a three-dimensional, symmetrical and reversible notion, which humans perceive through the disposition of objects. The concept of space is thus rather broad and encompasses a lot of categories and typologies. With respect to territoriality and proximity, space can be categorised into various expressions from the individual's space to that of a community, city or country. The human body itself is a space and its perceptual and representational aspect gives rise to the notion of embodied space (Hugh-Jones, 1979; Johnson, 1988; Low, 2003). Space can be tangible such as physical, either geometric or non-geometric, intangible such as imagined and social. Space can be designed, includes ordering such as cultural space, and non-designed, such as the natural environment. It can also be expressed as an economic category related to value and exchange as well as behavioural and electronic spaces.

The cultural aspect of space manifests the cultural landscape, settlements, neighbourhoods, urban spaces, buildings and rooms, which then gives rise to the idea of social space (Crabtree, 2000; Hirsch & O'Hanlon, 1995; Pellow, 1996). Social spaces are shared between individuals and between communities. The shared aspects of space give rise to identities, based on various types of localities, extending the basis of a village, a city or a country; which may cause cohesion or generate conflict over their use (Bowman, 2011; Dandy & Van der Wal, 2011; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Nieto & Franzé, 1997; Watts, 1992). Social space thus reflects the rules and principles of social relations, networks and hierarchies. Various social and economic spaces in a culture unfold themselves in the form of gender, age, caste, wealth,

and other such notions of relatedness, otherness and hierarchy. Therefore, space, as Gilmore (1977: 437) has said, 'reifies social cleavages, limits mobility and intensifies cultural polarisation'. Linkages between places, through transportation, such as vehicles, or communication, such as mobile phones, also indicate the human activities along them, which have social, economic and political dimensions. Similarly, some aspects of space are sacred (mosques, temples) or profane (offices, airports) and may be associated with certain taboos (El Guindi, 2008: 129–30). Understanding the concepts of space in a culture provides information about how people perceive the universe and things ordered in it, which can be regarded as worldview, in other words (Pinxten et al., 1983: 8–38).

The appropriation of space by society turns it into place. It is easily understandable through Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) concept of 'habitus'. Bourdieu (1990: 53) suggested 'habitus' as a relationship between space and practice in explaining the complexity of socio-spatial relationships:

...systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.

These structures of a collective nature—habitus—generate and organise socio-spatial practice and representation. This does not mean that habitus determines, it rather delimits practice and representation at an individual as well as collective levels. The concept of habitus, while explaining individual and collective practices, also involves change through reviewing, selecting and transforming the previous elements of social life with new ones. Social practice expressed in (re)appropriation of space is thus dynamic and changing.

The construction, transformation and management of place are important subjects of anthropological analyses of space. Beyond any eco-centric view of what a place is, the experience of place is a social construct. There are two dimensions of understanding human-place relationships, suggesting that 'people make places and that places make people' (Gruenewald, 2003: 621). Humans perceive the existence of a place in relation to other places (Casey, 1996). For example, the distinction between a small town and a big city is made on their relative sizes, in addition to other characteristics. Place holds meanings for people in the

forms of countries, regions, houses, mosques, churches and so on. These places shape humans' experience of the world and construct their statuses, identities and affiliations with respect to fellow human beings (Feld & Basso, 1996b; Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). In other words: 'As people fashion places, so, too, do they fashion themselves' (Feld & Basso, 1996a: 11).

Certain norms, values, and principles are associated with places, for instance, regarding their use and ownership. These notions of use and ownership create boundaries and the corresponding rules demarcating between the spaces. People maintain and negotiate their relationships within the limitations of social boundaries (Barth, 1969; Cohen, 2000; Dickey, 2000; Munro & Madigan, 1999: 116; Stolcke, 1995). Immediate household boundaries in the form of neighbourhood are vital to the household and community organisation (Henig, 2012). Therefore, the outer boundaries of the house are as important as inner space or inner boundaries. The boundaries of the house are maintained through norms and values associated with gender, age, religion, economics and so on.

The notion of transgression can better explain the rules and principles associated with space and social boundaries as discussed by a geographer, Cresswell (1996), who associated two meanings with place, which is a category of space: geographic or physical and social. Place in the geographic sense indicates the locale or location. Social place or space highlights 'expectation about behaviour that relates a position in a social structure to action in space' (Cresswell, 1996: 3). This notion of place refers to someone being in their 'proper place' in relation to others, based upon social and cultural norms. For example, in some cultural contexts, women are considered 'in place' when they are in the private sphere and 'out of place' when they are in the public sphere. 'Out of place' is a place transgression and, therefore, can be regarded a deviant behaviour against social norms. However, certain cultural norms, such as gendered boundaries, are negotiated and re-defined in some situations (Abid, 2009; Lyon, 2010).

While studying change, anthropology compares one culture with another in either a historical sense or a dialogue between cultures and sub-cultures (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992: 7). In other words, studying social or cultural change is in fact analysing and comparing any modifications in space over time (Ingold, 1993). Physical infrastructure, or tangible space, provides evidence of social change at a very concrete and observable level. For instance, a

natural landscape is transformed into a built-environment due to urbanisation. Alternatively, any change in tangible space will most probably alter social structures and human relations. The use of place can be changed over time resulting in a transformation of one social space into another one. For instance, the demographic situation of a city over years will re-shape its physical layout due to change in its population size and availability of modern facilities. Domestic space is linked with economic conditions, religion, cultural norms and ecology. Therefore, it can be studied with respect to ecological, structuralist, symbolic, phenomenological or architectural perspectives (Blu, 1996; Korosec-Serfaty, 1985; Oliver, 1987; Rapoport, 1969). As Pader (1993: 132) has shown, domestic space provides a basis for developing perceptions and interactions; therefore, change in the ways of using domestic space will transform social interactions along with changing life style.

### **Ethnographic Setting**

This article is based on a larger case study of a village, Jhokwala, in the southern part of Pakistani Punjab, in Lodhran District. Ethnographic fieldwork in the village was carried out in 2010 (Mughal, 2014b) and the information is based on participant observation, interviews, surveys and informal discussions. The region, referred to as Janoobi or Southern Punjab, occupies a distinct identity within Punjab based on the Saraiki language, but shows cultural diversity in its own way (Langah, 2011; Rahman, 1995). Jhokwala can be divided into two settlements based on linguistic and spatial categories. While *local* Saraikis live on one side, Rajputs live on the other. These Rajputs are Muslim migrants from India who came to Pakistan after partition in 1947.<sup>1</sup> People who migrated from India after Partition are collectively called *muhajirs* in Pakistan to distinguish them from *locals* who were living there already.<sup>2</sup> The Rajputs settled in the village as they were allotted land there because of the 1959 land reforms (Rahman, 1997; Siddiqi, 2012). They speak what is perceived as a Haryanvi dialect of Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, which is understood and spoken by Saraikis, too.<sup>3</sup> It would be misleading to assume that the relationship between these two groups is limited because they speak different languages or belong to different *biraderis* (kinship circles).<sup>4</sup> While Rajputs in the village can be regarded as a single *biraderi*, among the Saraiki-speaking population, there are a few prominent *biraderis* such as Klasra, Bhattis, Nais and Mochis. All *biraderis* in the village have ever-growing social relationships with each other as residents of the same village, as friends or neighbours. However, these *biraderis* also maintain certain social and physical boundaries among each other. This helps

people to maintain familial relationships in their private spaces and extended social relationships in public spaces. Further, as found throughout Pakistan (Ahmad, 1977; Cheema, 2012), people interact with each other in shared social spaces such as the mosque and the market more freely without the constraints of social boundaries.

Reflecting demographic trends in the country as a whole, there has been a considerable growth in the population of these rural areas in Lodhran. Therefore, most of the changes aforementioned regarding Pakistan's rural areas are valid for Jhokwala too. The village is located at the Lodhran–Jalalpur road near a highway junction, Adda Parmat, which is about 10 kilometres from Lodhran city. This easy access to roads has further accelerated the pace of social change in the area under study.

Before discussing the use and management of domestic space in the village, it is important to note some local terminologies regarding space and place, which will help to understand and rationalise the socio-spatial organisation in the context of the house. Social distance is maintained at individual as well as collective levels in Jhokwala. For example, the notion of *biraderi* is constructed at a collective level, relating to *ja* or *jaga*, which literally means space or place, both in a social and physical sense. It mainly represents individual aspects of space, as indicated in some local expressions. For example in Saraiki, 'reserve the place for me' (*medi ja mal rakheen*) or in Haryanvi Urdu, 'give me some place to sit' (*mannay baithan ki jaga de*), represent physical notions of space in some cultural contexts. Similarly, expressions like 'your place is in my heart' (*tuadi ja maiday dil wich hay*) and 'who else can take the place of a mother?' (*maan ki jaga kon le sakay?*) show the social aspects of space in Saraiki and Urdu, respectively.

There are also some expressions of space which represent social hierarchies. Two particular cultural expressions, *muqaam* and *auqaat* are important in this context. *Muqaam* is the status given to someone because of that person's good role, character or one's relationship with someone in a positive sense. For example, the place (*ja*) in someone's heart in the earlier example is due to that person's *muqaam* as a mother, father, brother, friend, religious personality, political leader, or a beloved. *Auqaat* is one's status due to one's capacity to do something. It is normally used in some derogatory sense. For example, poor (*ghareeb*) means that one owns less wealth in relative terms. Therefore, *auqaat* is one's capacity to buy in comparison with someone who cannot buy. The use of the term *auqaat* is, however, not

limited to economic comparisons only. If a man is physically weak and tries to fight with someone stronger than him, then the opponent may say: ‘You simply do not have *auqaat* [to fight with me]’ (*teri auqaat hi nahi*). This means that the stronger person assumes so much difference in physical strength that he thinks of no comparison. *Muqaam* and *auqaat* thus reflect social rules associated in creating ‘social distance’ at individual levels (Kuper, 2003: 251).

## ***Ghar***

The common Saraiki and Urdu term for *ghar* is an equivalent to home in English and is used in both singular and plural. People in Jhokwala also use the term *ghar* with respect to its residents. For example, *maida* or *mera ghar* and *Bhattiyan de ghar* or *Bhattiyon ke ghar* refer to my home and the home(s) of the Bhattis, respectively. The rationale behind such usage of the local terms is because *ghar* differs from *makaan*, which is also used for ‘house’. But *makaan* is a building, even if it has no residents living in it, which was constructed to be a *ghar*. Therefore, the term *ghar* encompasses a sense of physical as well as social and interpersonal space, representing the geographic, social, economic, religious, moral and security considerations in cultural contexts.

The family pattern is experiencing a shift from joint to nuclear because of population growth and as we shall see, consequent changes in the physical layout of the village are observed. Parents have often divided their large houses into smaller ones to accommodate the wives and children of their sons. I came across many such situations during fieldwork when a person told me he was living in a separate home. By contrast, his father or brother told me they lived together. One such example was Abdul Haleem,<sup>5</sup> who said that he was living with his parents and two brothers in the same house. After some days, I met his brother who told me only he was living with his parents, while his brother was living in the house next to theirs. Upon asking, he clarified that his brother was married and had two children. Therefore, two years ago the family constructed a small wall with a large gap in it. They still share the kitchen but these are now two different houses. Hence, household boundaries and family patterns are changing at the same time and may be perceived by certain individuals in different ways.

‘Sharing’ is the key aspect of family and household organisation in human cultures (Yanagisako, 1979: 162). *Ghar* in Jhokwala is an intimate space shared by a group of people who are related by blood or by conjugal relationships. According to elderly people, there used to be huts or rooms made of bricks, baked as well as unbaked, sharing of common yards, accommodating several families living in a joint household-like situation 30–50 years ago:

There were no walls, just rooms. If we went into one house then we could come out of the other one. This was when I was a child. Those were pure times and there were modesty and honesty. There were no thieves. We did not have precious things either. Everyone’s *izzat* [respect; honour] was safe.<sup>6</sup> People were respectful and honest. We never thought of constructing big walls. People had respect for everyone and no one had bad intentions for others. Every household was like one’s own household. If our women were alone [and we were working outside the house], we were not afraid of being looted. (Khuda Bukhsh, 75)

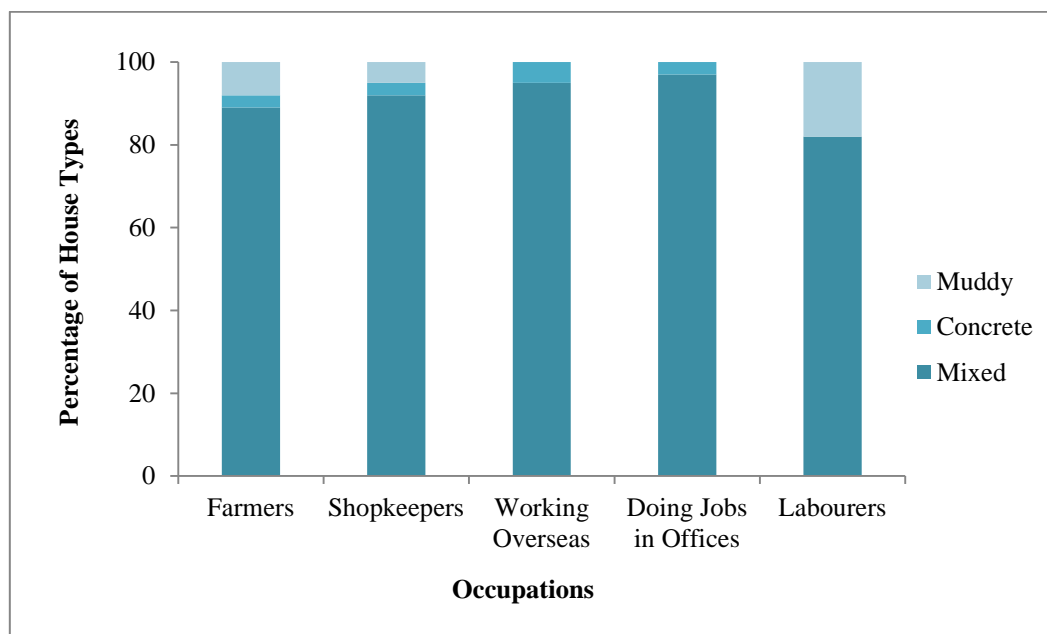
With the passage of time, some families in these extended households started to construct walls around their yards. According to Ghulam Hussain, a man in his 60s, this sharing of boundaries was common until the mid-1980s. Only a plain area outside the rooms marked the distinction between different houses, and trees served as *purdah* (veil). In those days, houses were separated from each other not by walls but through the distance between rooms. People maintained their privacy, to the extent it was desired, by respecting social boundaries. Such notion of respect among families in an extended household setting still exists in many Pakistani villages, even though walls have been constructed in order to separate the dwellings of different families (Lyon, 2004: 74). All families who lived in these extended household settings in Jhokwala belonged to one *biraderi*. Therefore, there were different extended households for different *biraderis*, so that the houses of Paolis were separated from those of Mochis.

Even today, though there are no such extended households, the houses of the same *biraderi* are located close to each other. Their sense of sharing a common *biraderi* and living spatially closer to each other gives rise to various rights and obligations. For example, if someone dies in the village, people from within the *biraderi* will provide a meal for three days to the family of the deceased.

## The Inner Boundaries and Management of Domestic Space

A typical house consists of two or more rooms, a kitchen, a courtyard, a toilet and a bathroom. Some houses have a concrete structure made of baked bricks, whereas most use a mix of mud and concrete. The concrete houses are coated, fully or partially, with cement from either inside or outside, or both. A small number of houses are made of mud. Although there is an association between socio-economic status and the structure of a house, this is not a defining feature of socio-economic differentiation. Not many houses in the village are fully concrete structures and nearly all the concrete houses were recently built. On the one hand, the construction of these new houses indicates the improved economic conditions as a result of better economic opportunities, including overseas employment. On the other hand, this shows that while traditionally the house was a shared unit within a *biraderi*, it now reflects one's economic attainment and independent living from one's *biraderi*. However, most houses of a *biraderi* not only show closeness in distance but also in their structure. Figure 1 shows a relationship between house types and various occupations to highlight that most houses in Jhokwala follow the same structure.

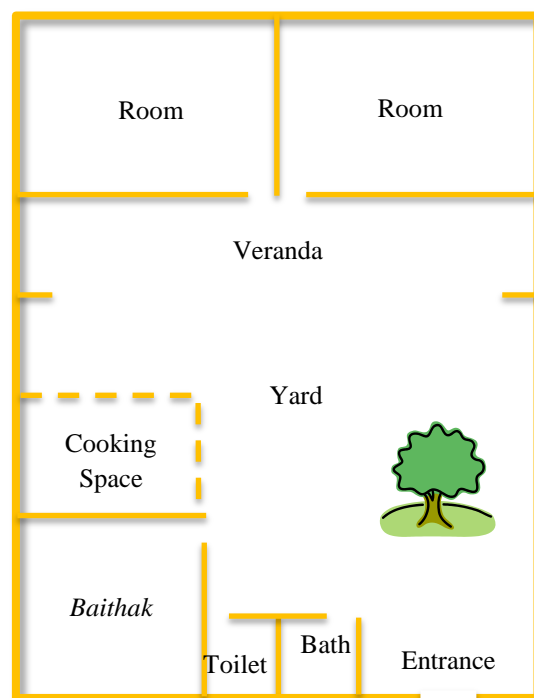
Figure 1: House Types and Occupations



Source: Author's fieldwork survey

Some houses also have one or two trees in the courtyard. An average five to ten *marla* house is usually occupied by five to six individuals.<sup>7</sup> In general, most houses in Jhokwala, built two decades ago, have features similar to elsewhere in rural Punjab (Eglar, 1960: 23–7). Houses built within the last 10 years have iron gates, while the older ones have wooden doors. All room doors in every house are wooden. A house can be divided into two portions, front and back. In front, there is a yard (*seh'n*), the gate, a bathroom (*ghussal khaana*), toilet and sometimes a guest room (*baithak*). The other rooms are located at the rear end of the yard. Houses built in the last 10–15 years have a veranda between the rooms and the yard. The trend of having dedicated rooms for sleeping, entertainment and studying is increasing in modern Pakistani houses. However, in villages like Jhokwala, rooms serve multiple purposes, such as storage, rest and sex. Rooms are not used solely as bedrooms in the Western sense. Kitchens are relatively smaller or not present at all. Either way, utensils are kept in cupboards in the rooms where people sleep, eat or watch television. A typical plan of the house in the village is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A Typical Plan of the *Ghar*, Drawn by Author



Traditional beds, known as *manjha*, *khat* or *chaarpais*, are kept in the rooms, veranda and courtyard. During the summer season, the whole family sleeps in the courtyard at night on these *chaarpais*. The beds are placed in such a way that their foot side is not directed towards Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Muslims all over the world offer their prayers facing the Ka'aba in Mecca. The direction to Ka'aba is known as *qibla*. People do not sleep in a position in which their left side is on the *qibla* direction, as it is not considered appropriate for some religious reasons. Therefore, beds are normally placed in such a way that their heads are directed towards either north or west. The foot sides of the beds of children or younger people are never directed towards the beds of their parents or grandparents because of their *muqaam*. *Chaarpais* not only serve the purpose of beds but are also used as chairs, dining tables and for many other purposes. Not everyone has chairs in their homes. In many houses, chairs are kept only in the *baithak*. The bedsheets and covering on the shelves normally have flowers of bright colours on them. Since these flowers are associated with female dress pattern in the cultural context of Pakistan, such a decoration thus clearly shows that women are responsible for cleaning and decorating the house. Similarly, cooking is the women's responsibility. Some new houses now also have a separate dedicated small room for the kitchen. However, in many old houses, there is no dedicated room to be used as a kitchen. Instead, a corner of the yard has a traditional stove (*chulha*), usually under a tree. This place is located far from the rooms to avoid smoke going into them. Wood serves as fuel but buffalo or cow dung-cake is also used as a common fuel for household consumption here, as it is used by the rural poor in Punjab as well as throughout South Asia (Dove, 1993). New or expensive utensils are displayed on a shelf, known as *safeel*, on the wall in the room that runs across the entire length of the wall.

Refrigerators and other household appliances are kept in a shaded area in front of the rooms, called veranda (*bar'amda*) or alternatively in one of the rooms. Women meet their female guests either in a room or the courtyard, depending upon the weather and the presence of men at home. If the female guest is not a relative and *purdah* is to be observed, the meeting between women takes place in an area of the house where men are not present. Alternatively, men leave the room or courtyard to provide them privacy. Women who run small businesses from home like poultry keeping and tailoring do not normally have any specific room or space reserved for their businesses. They make temporal divisions of their domestic space between household activities (*ghardaari*) to save some money through additional labour or running a small home-based business. This additional labour for saving is called *porhiya*.

Sewing machines and related material are kept in the same room where family members sleep and eat. Many female guests are in fact clients who buy the household women's products.

An electric water pump is fitted in the yard near the bathroom. In many homes, a hand pump (*nalka*) is used and is fitted in the bathroom. The bathroom is normally covered, but many are still without a roof. The toilet is separate from the bathroom. Both bathroom and toilet are situated along the outer wall, making it easier to clean them and to flush sewerage out into the street. Toilets are new additions in the homes; the older generation used the fields as open toilets and crops provided privacy. According to descriptions given by elders, there were no toilets some 30 years ago. In such a situation, the timing of going into the fields was different for men and women in order to conserve *purdah*. This temporal and spatial arrangement for privacy without any dwelling was in fact recognition of physical as well as social boundaries. The absence of toilets within domestic spaces in South Asia was partially due to cultural notions related to purity (Douglas, 1966). Although in big cities, toilets and bathrooms are now overwhelmingly attached to bedrooms, toilets are still marginal spaces, as far removed from living quarters as possible in rural areas.

Only men use the *baithak*, which means male guests may sit there. *Baithaks* are normally well decorated and the walls may have various pictures, of saints like Khwaja Ghulam Farid, politicians, cricketers and movie or television actors. Verses of the Qur'an are framed on the walls in the rooms as well as in the *baithak*, which often serves as a living room or bedroom for men when there is no guest.

The emotional attachment one develops with one's home is also due to the emotional bonding between its dwellers (Altman & Low, 1992; Cieraad, 1999). Such social relationships and emotional bonding turn a *makaan* into a *ghar* in Jhokwala. Rao Waleed, one of my friends in Jhokwala, is studying in Multan. He stays there, as it is not possible to travel between Multan and Lodhran every day, but he visits his home fortnightly. He told me he communicated with his family over the telephone almost every day, despite having many friends in his college in Multan, because 'there is no substitute for home' (*ghar tou ghar hota hai*). It is this central position of home in the social organisation of the house through which people interact with their family, *biraderi* and the village.

I discussed with many people in Jhokwala what they thought about their ideal house. For them, an ideal house is one where its members live happily, care for each other and there is respect for everyone's *muqaam*. However, just as the media, education and economic change influence social relationships, attitudes towards domestic space are also subject to change. The 'ideal home' for the older generation was those extended households where people shared their joys and sorrows with their *biraderi*. There were less physical and social boundaries between relatives. They describe the house in the past as simple, but glorify it with notions of morality and relatedness. On the contrary, the younger generation envisages a house with modern-day facilities and fewer residents.

### **The Outer Boundaries of *Ghar*: *Mohallah* and *Hamsaya***

Social relationships are developed and managed in the inner as well as outer boundaries of *ghar*. The outer boundaries of *ghar* may be the immediate encounter with the neighbourhood or the wider context of national and global influences on household organisation. On the external side of the house in Jhokwala, there are normally two gates: one is the main entrance while the other is a door for the *baithak*. A few years ago, the streets still had open drains running parallel on both sides of a wide street or as a central tube in smaller ones. An NGO launched a project on sewerage arrangements in Jhokwala in 2008. Almost all main drains are now covered and the waste is disposed of in the fields through a large pump. The road and most streets run in east–west direction. Therefore, mostly houses have their doors on either the north or south side. However, the houses in main streets, which are constructed in north-south direction, have gates on the western side. The location of a house has economic as well as social implications in Jhokwala. Houses located on the road or in the main street are worth more for economic purposes and become *mauqaydi zameen*, land of opportunity, or land with high commercial value. In this situation, a portion of the house is often turned into a shop, if required and as appropriate. There are a few shops in the streets, which are in fact a re-appropriation of *baithaks* into shops and serve both purposes.

According to Khuda Bukhsh, 75, who spent his childhood in Jhokwala, and Hanif Ahmed, 90, the entire Muslim population of Jhokwala used to live on the southern side of the road until the late 1950s. There used to be a well just around the place where the Noori Mosque now is. This land on the northern side, earlier owned and occupied by Hindus, was allotted to the Rajputs when they came to Pakistan after Partition.

Now these two settlements represent the two different language and social groups in Jhokwala. A few houses and shops belonging to Rajputs are also located on the southern side of the road. However, there is no Rajput family residing within the interior part of the southern settlement. The tea stalls are on the northern side of the road; they mainly serve the labourers in the local factory. Residents of Jhokwala also come to these stalls, usually in the evening when the factory labourers have left. There are a couple of barbershops on either side of the road. A few houses of Punjabi speaking families are also there in the northern settlement. However, these are separate from the houses of Rajputs. These Punjabi speaking families were allotted land in Jhokwala when they settled there later in the 1980s.<sup>8</sup>

Saraikis and Rajputs whose houses are located on the road have closer day-to-day interaction. By contrast, those living in the interior part of the settlements have more interaction within themselves than with those living on the opposite side of the road. The house of Rao Tahir, one of my friends in the community who runs a private school in the village, is located on the southern side of the road, although he is a Rajput. He has frequent interaction with Saraikis and many Saraiki children study in his school. The parents of these children also meet him regularly. According to Tahir, there used to be some minor conflicts between *locals* and *muhajirs* in Kalluwala, a nearby village, when his family lived there. However, there has never been any conflict between these groups in Jhokwala at a collective level. I asked the same question about *local–muhajir* relationship from Khuda Bukhsh, 75. He replied by quoting a folktale in which a father asked his married daughter if her in-laws treated her well. She replied that since she was good, everyone treated her well. According to Khuda Bukhsh, if one is good, other people cannot treat one badly. He further explained that even if there might have been any incidences of conflicts between individuals from two groups, people did not normally consider it as ‘tension’ between *locals* and *muhajirs*. During my fieldwork, I did not come across any violent conflict between the two groups. Just like the spatial separation between Saraikis and Rajputs, people from the same *biraderi* have their homes close to each other. For example, all the houses of Paolis are close to each other. Similarly, the houses of all the Klasras are located close to each other. I asked Nazir Ahmed if Klasras consider Nais and Paolis as *kammis* (labourers of low status). He said that they do not practise any caste system, and uncles and nephews of the same family fight more than people belonging to different occupations do:

*Kammi* is from *kam* (work). The one who works is the friend of Allah according to the Qur'an. Mochi and Nai are occupations. These are not a caste. Caste was a Brahmin concept but we are all Muslims. We do not believe that. Anyone who earns a rightful (*halal*) living should be respected. (Nazir Ahmed, 52)

While awareness of status differences is certainly not absent, the interaction between various groups based on their relative closeness in the location of their houses is also important as neighbour (*hamsaya*) in Jhokwala. A neighbourhood is termed as *mohallah* in Pakistan mainly in urban areas, but people in Jhokwala also use this term for their side of the road when talking to somebody at Adda Parmat, for instance. However, when I visited Lodhran City with my friends from Jhokwala, they mentioned everyone from Jhokwala as their *mohallay-daar* (a person with whom one shares a *mohallah*; a neighbour) no matter which *biraderi* the person belonged to. There is a saying in Saraiki and Urdu that 'a neighbour is just like an offspring of your mother (*hamsaya ma jaya*).

People from the same *biraderi* usually refer to each other as their own (*apnay*). There is a common saying in Saraiki that *apna maar ke vee chaan te satainday* (*apna* puts you in the shadow [as a contrast to the heat of the sun in a warm climate] even after beating or killing). Among Saraikis, neighbours and friends can also become members of another *biraderi*, depending upon their closer physical and social proximity, while maintaining the exchange and reciprocal relationship with their own *biraderis*. For example, when providing a meal for the family of a deceased person, neighbours can also offer food even though they do not share a common ancestry with the bereaved family. Similarly, if one has moved to a different city or overseas one remains a member of one's *biraderi* not just by blood but through mutual exchange of rights and obligations also. For example, when those working overseas visit the village for holidays, they bring gifts for relatives like uncles and aunties and their children as well. During their holiday period, they participate in joys and sorrows, known as *ghami-khushi*, of their relatives. For example, families pay *salaami* (a cash gift) at the marriages of their relatives, friends and/or neighbours on behalf of members who have migrated overseas if they are not able to attend the ceremony in person. The Saraiki term *bhaaji-biraderi* (meal-[exchange] *biraderi*) can well explain such expansion of the *biraderi*'s boundaries to friends and neighbours. Therefore, the boundaries of a *biraderi* can at times be very blurred and are intertwined with kinship and social relationships. The extension of *bhaaji-biraderi* relationships to non-kins has been caused because of the geographic closeness between houses of different *biraderis*, among other reasons.

## Discussion and Conclusions

This field research found that *ghar* occupies a central position in socio-spatial relationships in Jhokwala and domestic space is managed through relations configured with respect to kinship, religion, economics, gender and generation. The management of domestic space is thus culturally informed, for example, through the practices of the *qibla* direction and *muqaam*. Technological, socio-economic and socio-political changes at the levels of community, country and the globe shape and influence the socio-spatial organisation of *ghar*. On the one hand, the structures of the houses in the village have changed over time in recent decades. The changing use and management of domestic space in the village shows how people are influenced by changing socio-economic conditions. Change in domestic space did not occur only in terms of decrease in the area available. The structure and decoration of the house and the management of domestic space has also been transformed over generations. Large muddy houses became smaller and concrete. There were open toilets some 30 years ago but now there are toilets inside the house. This change in domestic space in its inner and outer boundaries has also reshaped the physical layout of the village. Change in the physical layout of Jhokwala caused by, and as manifested in, change in the physical structure of domestic space is indicative of change in social relationships between neighbours and between and within *biraderis*. On the other hand, people used to live in extended households while now the families occupying a single house are smaller, often due to the division of property into multiple heirs, which has resulted in smaller houses.

The boundaries of a *biraderi* are not only defined biologically but also socially, involving the notions of reciprocity and exchange (Eglar, 1960; Donnan, 1988). Socio-economic changes have caused shifts in the socio-spatial organisation of *biraderis*. First, the *biraderis* in Jhokwala were earlier living in spatially distinct pockets. This kind of spatial arrangement must not be confused with the socio-spatial distance maintained by different Hindu castes, however (Dumont, 1970; Dupont, 2004; Hutton, 1946). It is already known through existing anthropological literature that the concept of *biraderi* as a social kinship group is distinct from caste in many ways (Ahmad, 1974, 1977; Donnan, 1988). The closer proximity of the houses of one *biraderi* points to the notions of reciprocity and exchange among relatives on a day-to-day basis. At the same time, this spatial organisation also helps maintaining privacy and *purdah* in the cultural context of Muslim social organisation. Within the socio-spatial nexus of a *biraderi*, they did not need any special arrangement for *purdah*. With a growing

population, these pockets have over time tended to become larger, especially in recent decades. An inadequate supply of land to accommodate this growing population became a major reason to bring these enclaves spatially closer to each other. Since there were some social distances between the *biraderis*, based on kinship, privacy and *purdah*, they started constructing walls around their households to maintain privacy. Second, the settling of *muhajirs* in Jhokwala enhanced this pace of constructing outer boundaries, in a social and physical sense. However, the inner boundaries within the dwellings of a *biraderi* have remained fluid and flexible. Third, after a growth in population, more reliance on cash-based economy and less reliance on collective engagement in certain occupations through the division of labour is observed, and family units within extended households started to become more autonomous in economic terms.

The closeness in terms of physical proximity becomes a strong reason to create a sense of community as expressed through relationships between neighbours. Along with demographic change, the outer boundaries of domestic space have also seen shifts. The intensity of interactions between neighbours of different *biraderis* has transcended the social boundaries based on kinship and new forms of social networks seem to emerge. Neighbours, while not being a formal member of a *biraderi*, are also a part of exchange and reciprocal relationships. However, this happens only when the status relationships between the people involved are fairly equal.

There is a growing literature regarding the maintenance of social networks and kinship circles by overseas migrant Pakistanis with their ancestral villages, through marriages as well as social and economic remittances (Bolognani & Lyon, 2011; Kalra, 2009; Shaw, 2000; Shaw & Charsley, 2006). This points to a 'time-space compression' as an effect of globalisation, which Pakistani villages are experiencing in a rapidly globalising world (Harvey, 1990). This article has also shown, though only in passing, that overseas migrant Pakistanis are still a part of the local social network and are an important factor behind changing the design and structure of domestic space. However, it still needs to be explored further how much remittances contribute to a change in social relationships in general and in relation to family structures.

Despite certain changes in the use and management of domestic space, some practices continue to exist, for example, the notion of *muqaam* is still practised in the socio-spatial relationships regarding respect for elders and women. A religiously informed management of domestic space is also indicative of continuity in the socio-spatial practices. There is plenty of evidence available to highlight women's contribution to the rural economy (Government of Pakistan, 2013). However, their economic contribution in the form of *porhiya* goes unrecognised in labour force participation surveys. The notion of *porhiya* for many women is associated with domestic space, making it a place where people struggle to maintain their living and survive in changing economic circumstances.

This article has shown that the relationship between the changing demographic features, urbanisation, industrialisation and domestic space makes clear that the house is an economic resource as well as being a social, residential and moral unit. The use and management of domestic space in rural Pakistan does not only highlight the centrality of kinship and religion in social organisation but also shows people's response to social change.

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## Notes

1. Ethnically Rajputs, these Muslims came from a variety of places, including Jammu, western Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. At the time of partition, Haryana did not yet exist as a separate state in India and was part of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) between 1948 and 1956. The Rajputs in Jhokwala migrated from what is now Bhiwani district in India.
2. Although coming from different ethnic groups, *muhajirs* are usually associated with the Urdu language and form a separate ethnic identity in the political context of Pakistan.

3. Both Saraiki and Urdu in Pakistani Punjab have a huge influence of Punjabi, with the effect that most local terms used here are shared by Punjabi, Saraiki and Urdu speakers. Given the large number of Saraiki participants in this study, and South Punjab being the home to Saraiki, most terms are from this language. Where both Saraiki and Urdu terms have been used in the article, the first one is Saraiki, unless specified otherwise.
4. In Pakistan, the terms *biraderi* and *qaum* (tribe) are used for kinship-based networks. However, these terms are not straightforward, could have multiple meanings and may encompass mutual rights and obligations associated with kinship (see Donnan, 1988; Lyon, 2004).
5. Some names are pseudonyms.
6. The concept of *izzat* includes many other notions of jealousy and competition at individual and collective level (Lyon, 2004).
7. A *marla* is a traditional local unit of land measurement, equal to 272.25 square feet or 1/160th of an acre.
8. Some *muhajir* families did not immediately start to cultivate the land they were allotted. They lived in other places such as Vehari and Arifwala, where they had been allotted lands on a temporary basis.

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