SPACE, CULTURE, AND THE YOUTH IN IRAN
Space, Culture, and the Youth in Iran
Observing Norm Creation Processes at the Artists’ House

Behnoosh Payvar
To my parents
Ali & Mina
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Preface

This research is for all those who share the experience of simultaneity either in the same or other geographies, hoping to grow consciousness and understanding. Perhaps some reasons for undertaking this work lie in the past, the times with experience of little or no reach in the scope of effect. However, the present text and its contribution to meanings, if any, would be for the future with all possibilities.

The research was accomplished under the supervision of Professor Håkan Hydén at the Department of Sociology of Law, Faculty of Social Sciences, at Lund University and Professor Lutz Richter-Bernburg at the Department of Asian and Oriental Studies, Faculty of Humanities, at University of Tübingen. The notes on transliteration for Persian and Arabic names and words are referenced to the system used by Encyclopædia Iranica.

Behnoosh Payvar

Inquiry and purpose—The Artists’ House was established in Tehran in 2000 in order to strengthen different aspects of acts of art and to provide support for the artistic organization. Different art activities take place at the Artists’ House every day while it is a place for gathering of artists and different groups that share particular sociocultural characteristics. This text uses the example of the Artists’ House in order to provide an analytical description of the grounds for the formation of perceptions and values among the youth as well as norm creation processes in Tehran. To reach this aim, the inquiry followed these subsequent questions: Why do the young groups gather around the Artists’ House? Which processes are involved concerning the norms at this place? What are the perceptions and values among the young groups? Which factors are engaged in the formation of youths’ identities, perceptions, and values? In relation to the formation of youths’ perceptions and values, the particular aspects of security, hope, social justice, and equality are mainly considered.
The interrelation of the social and political changes with the youths’ perceptions, values, and norms is significant considering the young individuals as human resources that contribute to the future. Values and norms in a society indicate, rather guide, how people see and do things in relation to others in their day-to-day life. While the existing patterns receive impact, the new values and norms can appear at the time or after social changes. However, the emergence of new norms based on certain values, will, and motives can contribute to other changes in a society. Hence, reaching a better understanding of the processes through which the norms are created, and the content of those values and norms in one case, can help to explain the patterns of change or progress in that society.

This text explores the context of Artists’ House as an alternative space for the young groups and provides a description of the factors involved in the formation of perceptions and values among the youth as well as norm creation processes. The “youth” in this study refer to the boys and girls in Tehran born after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, coming from a variety of social contexts.

Background—The study of youth is a popular theme within academic discussions today, as they are seen as social actors that can receive a large impact by changes in society; however, they facilitate other social changes. The youth, being a category of population, are taken into account as a social and cultural construction. Inquiring the question of youth and promoting a better understanding toward their perceptions, values, and norms, a part from the contribution to the theoretical discussions in social sciences, is a valuable tool for planning and policymaking in one society. The youth in Iran and other parts of the world are experiencing rapid changes and a large variety of choices. This experience is more specific in the case of countries that have been through fundamental social changes, as Iran learned during the past decades. The growing importance of seeking independence, alterations in pedagogy, and opportunities in this area followed by changes in education and profession-related values, the new way for interaction of generations, the information technology, and its implications for the youth and their worlds, and the existence of new forms for construction and the expression of identity used by the youth are among the changes that indicate the importance and necessity of rethinking the status of the youth in Iranian society today (Zokaee, 2008). What is making the youth case more specific and complicated in Iran is the contradictions and differences that the youth are facing in their choices, goals, and perspectives. However, the contradictions are seen related to the restrictions and
system conditions in the youth life context as much as the increased opportunities and choices. The Iranian youth increasingly insist on their individuality, choice, and freedom of actions. The will among youths for having a different and independent life has implications for their identity while showing a divergence from the official normative system (Zokaee, 2008).

The processes addressed in this text take place in the context of a 35-year history since the foundation of the state authority changed in Iran after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists, which is a Shi’a Islamic concept and holds that Islam gives Islamic Jurists “illimitable guardianship” over those in need of it, had particular significance in the altered political system. The Guardianship should include all issues for which the Prophet of Islam and Shi’a Imams had responsibility, including governance of the country. The integration of religion, politics, and society in Iran proceeded by the drafting of laws and state policies based on Shi’a Islamic precepts. The implementation of the Islamic law, after 1979, created the ground for the enforcement of traditional structures. As the time passed and the technology progressed, religious rituals grew bigger and became modernized while many other social and cultural activities were banned and called “not Islamic.” Religion was integrated with all aspects of people’s everyday life and was not a personal matter anymore. The domination of traditional perceptions and interpretations as well as the Islamic law made a tremendous impact in the society; the role of women and men were affected and changed in their social, political, and economic life. Women and youths in particular are among the groups that have been in a vulnerable social position. The period between 1997 and 2005 refers to the presidency of Mohammad Khatami (Muḥammad Kātāmī), whose policies shifted the emphasis from religious national identity to an Iranian national identity. With President Khatami’s election came a subsequent relaxation of social rules that resulted in a more open social atmosphere and the youth began to question their surroundings.

The young generation, born after 1979, constitutes the majority of the population in Iran today. Their life context is largely affected by social and political changes; however, on the one hand, they deal with the social and formal legal norms of the society, and, on the other hand, they face the messages from the “outside world” that they receive mainly via Internet and media encouraging different values. Mass and micro-communications media today easily reach across national and cultural borders (Lull, 2000, p. 224). Internet is the most popular technology used by the youth and after that stands
satellite TV programs. The growing progress of technology and easy access to various means of communication is a trend that provides the youth with endless information and images. Statistics from 2009 indicate that the 44.5 percent of Internet users in Iran were between 20 and 29 years old and 50.4 percent were students. The youth, having access to the Internet and satellite TV channels, have been exposed to the information that provides them with an overview toward the existing contradictions, and also the similarities and differences between their home and the rest of the world. Meanwhile, although Iran had its own ways of adopting modernity and facing the globalization, however, seeing Iran as a theocratic state that is far from any form of a dynamic modern social and cultural life contradicts some part of the reality, as Semati (2008, p. 3) notes, it “masks the unique ways in which Iranian society has engaged modernity and the current wave of globalization, and how it has managed contradictory forces and tendencies,” which he calls a feature of life in Iran today. Khosravi (2003) refers to the section on “What the Third Generation Says,” where letters, poems, and features are published on the website nasle3 (the third generation), a forum for political and social debate about the situation of youths. He brings the following lines from this section about the third generation. “A generation who were newborn at the Revolution and today are the youth of this country. They became reluctantly involved in the Revolution. They had neither information on events nor power to affect them. After the Revolution this generation suffered from war, bombardment, sacrifice, martyrdom. This generation is puzzled. This generation has experienced social restrictions in childhood, in schools, and at universities. They have constantly been criticized. They revolt, they question and require answers. I am one of the third generation” (Khosravi, 2003, p. 168).

According to the Statistics Center of Iran (SCI) the number of youths was 2,792,215 in the age group between 20–24 and 2,111,585 in the age group 25–29 in 1976. The same figures for the year 2011 was 8,414,497 and 8,672,654 in the same age groups, respectively. The total population is announced 33,708,744 in 1976 and 75,149,669 in 2011. While in 1976 49.9 percent of youths between 20 and 24 years old (65.6% men, 35.3% women) were literate, this percentage grew to 95.9 percent of youths in the same age group with 96.2 percent men and 95.5 percent women. This percentage for the literacy rate was 41.7 percent in the age group 25–29 (57.5% men, 27.2% women) in 1976, which increased to 94.9 of this age group in 2011 with 95.3 percent men and 94.5 percent women. Whereas a
large number of youths only are engaged in studies, employment is an important primary issue for many groups of youths. The statistics show that the number of employed workforce in the age group of 20–24 was about 2,248,000 in 2011, while this number was about 3,596,000 for the age group 25–29.

Mohamad-Javad Nateghpour (2004), comparing the Iranian society during the Qajar period and the present time, as well as before and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, notes that one of the most important factors in creating social problems has been related to the area of dissemination of information in Iran, “The Iranian governments in the noted periods, due to various reasons including political and security issues, have denied releasing complete information to the public.” Nateghpour (2004) points to the research results done after 1950, asserting the fact that the malfunction of mass media in dissemination of information to the society causes the increase and institutionalization of social problems in the country. Further, he points out that the research emphasizes the role of media in bringing change to the society and the malfunction in information dissemination is caused by the power of the governments that provide the main source of financial resources specifically for the television programs and the content of the press.

The identification of value structures in a society is significant for prediction of the social changes. The values based on their content and considering the present conditions in the society at the time, find their position in the normative structures. However, if the content of the presented values offer choices that the individuals evaluate and find better, more convincing or even beneficial, those values would be adopted and lead the changes in the society at large.

Placing the Setting—The story of Artist’ House, in this text, is placed in a setting that invites several theoretical aspects to compose one frame of analysis. The main theoretical aspects include: ideas on place, space, and time by referring to Doreen Massey’s viewpoint; the Herbert Blumer’s discussions on symbolic interactionism; the Norm Model based on Håkan Hydén’s discussions; the value theory by Shalom H. Schwartz; and considerations on modern era, communications, and identity by Anthony Giddens and Manuel Castells.

Place, Space, and Time—Many scholars have presented discussions on space and time; among others in the present text, the examples are noted from arguments made by Anthony Giddens and Doreen Massey. In fact, the ideas of Massey are observed to be highly relevant with the principles that Giddens puts forward in this relation. However, Massey uses the concepts of place, space, and time
to illustrate certain points that are matters of a more recent present; hence, her arguments in the following form the general theoretical framework of the text considering these concepts. Some points that Massey brings up in the course of her arguments, although still relevant, are broader than the scope of this study and, therefore, not elaborated in relation to the case of Artists’ House. However, those points are mentioned in this part as the analytical discussions of the study are framed in the light of awareness toward those concerns.

The link of interaction between people, places, and their environment is a crucial fact of everyday life. The human spatial interaction including virtual contacts, and media-related communication, use of mobile phones, travel, and tourism are features of current social life, and in fact, people use time and place differently in the course of rapid development of technologies that transcend space, vast opportunities, and access, besides extended social networks.

The way space is seen in this study is summarized in the following assertion made by Massey (2005). Massey asserts, “[W]e recognize space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny.” Moreover, she adds that “we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the coexistence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity; without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space. If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. Multiplicity and space as co-constitutive.” Further Massey notes, “[W]e recognize space as always under construction” and defines the reason stressing that the space is a product of “relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Moreover, it worth taking into consideration that, today, every question on geography can involve the concept of globalization. This is while globalization (see Massey, 2005, p. 5) is a process that is linked to the concepts of place and time at our time. “Space” in the way of telling things is “an expanse we travel across,” and, although it may seem obvious according to Massey, “the way we imagine space has effects.” We can conceive space “as in voyages of discovery, as something to be crossed and maybe conquered,” and there are implications for this way of understanding space: “Implicitly, it equates space with the land and sea, with the earth which stretches out around us.
It also makes space seem like a surface; continuous and given... It is an unthought cosmology, in the gentlest sense of that term, but it carries with it social and political effects.” And hence, imagining space in this way can “lead us to conceive of other places, people, cultures simply as phenomena ‘on’ this surface. It is not an innocent maneuver, for by this means they are deprived of histories” (Massey, 2005, p. 4).

Meanwhile, there is “place.” Massey in For Space asserts, “[I]n the context of a world which is, indeed, increasingly interconnected the notion of place (usually evoked as ‘local place’) has come to have totemic resonance. Its symbolic value is endlessly mobilized in political argument. For some it is the sphere of the everyday, of real and valued practices, the geographical source of meaning, vital to hold on to as ‘the global’ spins its ever more powerful and alienating webs. For others, a ‘retreat to place’ represents a protective pulling-up of drawbridges and building of walls against the new invasions.” In Massey’s text, place is the “locus of denial, of attempted withdrawal from invasion/difference,” and it is a “politically conservative haven, an essentializing (and in the end unviable) basis for a response; one that fails to address the real forces at work.” Further, Massey states that place can play an ambiguous role as mentioning “Horror at local exclusivities sits uneasily against support for the vulnerable struggling to defend their patch.” Moreover, Massey refers to some shared assumptions that put “place” as “closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as ‘home,’ a secure retreat; of space as somehow originarily regionalized, as always-already divided up.” And more than that again, she states, “They institute, implicitly but held within the very discourses that they mobilize, a counter position, sometimes even a hostility, certainly an implicit imagination of different theoretical ‘levels’ (of the abstract versus the everyday, and so forth), between space on the one hand and place on the other” (Massey, 2005, p. 5).

The inherent spatiality of the world presents challenges that engages the human beings in making imagination of space as a surface on which we are placed, the turning of space into time, and the separation of local place from the space out there (Massey, 2005). It is part of Massey’s argument that the spatial is political; however, she rather thinks that the spatial in a particular way can be a ground for formulation of certain political questions, contribute to political arguments, be an essential element in “the imaginative structure which enables in the first place an opening up to the very sphere of the political... it is possible to elucidate from each a slightly different aspect of the potential range of connections between the imagination of the spatial and
the imagination of the political” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Spatiality can also be integral to the constitution of identities, including political subjectivities. Spatial identities, for example places and nations, can equally be reconceptualized in relational terms. “If no space/place is a coherent seamless authenticity then one issue which is raised is the question of its internal negotiation. And if identities, both specifically spatial and otherwise, are indeed constructed relationally then that poses the question of the geography of those relations of construction. It raises questions of the politics of those geographies and of our relationship to and responsibility for them; and it raises conversely and perhaps less expectedly, the potential geographies of our social responsibility” (Massey, 2005, p. 10).

**Interactions and interactionism**—Symbolic interactionism is one of the oldest traditions in American sociology, and its intellectual origins are mainly based on ideas of George Herbert Mead in nineteenth century, and also, among other scholars who contributed to the foundation of this approach, the tradition of urban ethnography directed by Robert E. Park at the University of Chicago in the 1920s (Banakar and Travers, 2002). There are two forms or levels of social interaction in human society according to Blumer defining Mead’s ideas. One is “the conversation of gestures,” which is recognized as “non-symbolic interaction,” and the other is “the use of significant symbols” that is seen as “symbolic interaction.” Non-symbolic interaction “takes place when one responds directly to the action of another without interpreting that action” while symbolic interaction “involves interpretation of the action” (Blumer, 1986, p. 8). Blumer (1986) asserts that the term “symbolic interactionism” came into use as a label for a distinct approach to the study of human group life and human conduct. Blumer develops the approach of symbolic interactionism relying on thoughts of George Herbert Mead; however, he extends his own ideas regarding the matters that were implicit in the thoughts of Mead and other scholars. This text has used Blumer’s developed version of symbolic interactionism in order to analyze the processes that engage the young groups that gather at the Artists’ House.

According to Blumer (1986), Symbolic Interactionism rests on three premises. First, human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them. Such things include everything that the human being may note in his world—physical objects, such as trees or chairs; other human beings, such as a mother or a store clerk; categories of human beings, such as friends or enemies; institutions, as a school or a government; guiding ideals, such as individual independence or honesty; activities of others, such as their
commands or requests; and such situations as an individual encounters in his daily life. Blumer introduces the second premise as the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. And the third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. The approach of Symbolic Interactionism is grounded on basic ideas or “root images,” as Blumer (1986) calls them, which represent the way in which Symbolic Interactionism views human society and conduct. The root images refer to and portray the nature of human groups or societies, social interaction, objects, the human being as an actor, human action, and the interconnection of the lines of action.

The “human group” is seen as consisting of human beings who are engaging in action. The action consists of the “multitudinous activities that the individuals perform in their life as they encounter one another and as they deal with the succession of situations confronting them” (Blumer, 1986, p. 6). The action may take place by single individuals, as collective, or individuals as representatives of some organization or group of others. The human being is seen in this approach as an organism that possess “self,” that not only responds to others on the nonsymbolic level but as one that makes indications to others and interprets their indications. This means that a human being can be an object of his own action. Blumer (1986, p. 12) asserts, “Thus, he can recognize himself, for instance, as being a man, young in age, a student, in debt, trying to become a doctor, coming from an undistinguished family and so forth. In all such instances he is an object to himself; and he acts toward himself and guides himself in his actions toward others on the basis of the kind of object he is to himself.” The “self” as an object emerges from the process of social interaction in which other people are defining a person to himself. The fact that the human being is seen to possess a “self” is significant as in this way he is able to interact with himself. The interaction of the human being with his self is social and a form of communication with “the person addressing himself as a person and responding thereto…self interaction exist fundamentally as a process of making indications to oneself. This process is in play continuously during one’s waking life, as one notes and considers one or another matter, or observes this or that happening. Indeed, for the human being to be conscious or aware of anything is equivalent to his indicating the thing to himself—he is identifying it as a given kind of object and considering its relevance or importance to his line of action” (Blumer, 1986, p. 13).
The human being is seen in Symbolic Interactionism approach as “social” in a profound sense. This approach views human being as an organism that engages in social interaction with itself by making indications to itself and responding to such indications. Being engaged in self-interaction, the human being stands in a different relation to his environment compared to other traditional views. Instead of being merely an organism that responds to the play of factors on or through it, the human being has to deal with what it notes. “It meets what it so notes by engaging in a process of self-indication in which it makes an object of what it notes, gives it a meaning, and uses the meaning as the basis for directing its action. Its behavior with regard to what it notes is not a response called forth by the presentation of what it notes but instead is an action that arises out of the interpretation made through the process of self-indication” (Blumer, 1986, p. 14). In this view, the human being who is engaging in self-interaction is an acting organism rather than a mere responding organism. Human being as an acting organism forms the lines of action on the basis of what it takes into account. Moreover, in the view of Symbolic Interactionism, Blumer emphasizes that it is necessary to recognize that “the activity of human beings consists of meeting a flow of situations in which they have to act and that their action is built on the basis of what they note, how they assess and interpret what they note, and what kind of projected lines of action they map out” (Blumer, 1986, p. 16). The factors such as motives, need-dispositions, role requirements, social expectations and social rules, or the expression of these factors, are the matters the human actor takes into account in mapping his line action.

Hechter and Opp (2001) elaborate on question of “How do individuals determine how to interpret and send signals?” by mentioning that one challenge for scholars taking this approach is to develop general predictive theories regarding the “relation between behavior and meaning.” They argue that “[i]ndividuals are thought to pay attention to the signals they send by engaging in certain behaviors as well as to the meaning of the actions of others. Thus students who study experience instrumental consequences—they increase the likelihood that they will get good grades; but they also are sending messages about themselves—in some settings, that they are ambitious and disciplined, and in other situations, that they are boring and antisocial. The message that one sends through studying, drinking alcohol, or carrying a gun can vary depending on who one is with and where the interaction occurs. Behavior thus has symbolic as well as instrumental consequences. The question is, how do symbols or meanings come to
be attached to particular actions?” (2001, p. 12). However, Hechter and Opp (2001) note that this question does not lend itself to an easy answer since much work of this type lacks empirically testable propositions. “Research is often descriptive, explaining particular norms at specified times and places. This specificity, in fact, frequently is seen as desirable. In principle, more general theories regarding the content of meaning and value could be developed. Similarly generalizations regarding the processes through which individuals attach meaning to their environment could be proposed” (Hechter and Opp, 2001, p. 12). In addition, “Work by Randall Collins (Collins and Hanneman, 1998) provides one example of an attempt to develop a general, abstract theory. He builds on the work of Erving Goffman and Emile Durkheim to propose an argument regarding the way in which actions, events, and so forth become associated with meaning. Like others, he suggests that the salience of an act matters, but he also emphasizes the importance of emotional stimulus. Over time, as interaction continues, symbols of group membership develop” (Hechter and Opp, 2001, p. 12). In the meantime, “the situations in which selves are created and in which conduct is formed are embedded in a larger framework of people, groups, organizations, social classes, institutions, and society as a whole. These larger unites, many of which are removed in time and distance from the immediate situation, nevertheless have a significant influence on what people do” (Hewitt, 2007, p. 180).

Blumer (1986, p. 10) argues that “[a]n object is anything that can be indicated, anything that is pointed to or referred to—a cloud, a book, a legislature, a banker, a religious doctrine, a ghost, and so forth.” Further, Blumer asserts that the objects can be classified into (a) physical objects, such as chairs, trees, or bicycles; (b) social objects such as students, priests, a president, a mother, or a friend; and (c) abstract objects, such as moral principles, philosophical doctrines, or ideas such as justice, exploitation, or compassion (1986, p. 10).

Norms—A simple definition of a norm as defined by Hydén (2008) is that it guides human actions or behavior. Concerning the role of norms in the implementation process Hydén (2008) argues that as a starting point, a law cannot be expected to have any sustainable effect, if it does not correspond to the norms that exist in a society from before. The reason for this argument as he asserts is that the “law comes from above while norms grow from below.” Based on the Hydén-Wickenberg norm model, the norm concept consists of three dimensions or three sets of factors: First is that “norms are an expression of a will” as if when someone “wants to do something”
and can be seen in the situation to be “following a norm expressing this will.” Hydén recognizes “will” as the first basic component or dimension, of a norm. However, he asserts that it is not enough that “a person wants to do something. He or she has also to have the knowledge and competence to carry out what he or she purposes.” The second dimension of the norm concept according to Hydén is “knowledge together with cognition.” In fact, the way one “understands and comprehends the context of a situation” has effects on the way in which one “acts and the normative standpoint that one consequently takes up.” Hydén argues that “differences in opinions, even within legal decision-making emanate more often from the question of how the situation, a person, or whatever, has been understood in cognitive terms, than from the judgments made based on pure value standpoints.” And the third dimension of a norm based on Hydén’s definition is related to “the system-conditions characterizing the context of the society in which the action and consequently the norm occur.” According to Hydén “one has also to have actual possibilities to undertake what one wants to do, in order for a norm to develop,” and “it is not enough that an individual wants to do something and that she/he has cognitively adequate knowledge on how to go about it.” Hydén argues that the first two dimensions are related to subjective factors among actors, while he notes that the “third set of factors is related to objective factors, i.e., they are not at the actors’ disposal” (Hydén, 2008, p. 153).

Norm Model demonstrates the three dimensions of the norm-concept. Applying the basic reasoning behind the graph of Norm Model to the implementation processes, Hydén (2008) argues, “In order to exemplify the kind of considerations which have to be taken into account, I will have to present it in general terms. Starting with the will component, I will show how this norm-model can be used to understand and explain the particular normative circumstances under which legal rules operate. The first question will be if we can presuppose that a country which has ratified a convention or enacted a law also agrees with the will-component of that specific law. In other words, can we, as a starting point for this analysis, assume that the State Party has the will to really implement the Convention and the law?” (Hydén, 2008, p. 154). Elaborating on this question Hydén (2008) asserts, “Of course, this is not necessarily an either or question, for, a State Party might agree with some parts of the Convention, while disagreeing with others, without having made any reservations when possible. However, we have reason to believe that some State Parties have ratified Human Rights conventions, such as the CRC,
just to show ‘a human face’ without any intentions of paying any real attention to the plight of children.” Moreover, Hydén asserts, “Jianfu Chen mentions the lack of political will from the Chinese governments at all levels as one major problem to overcome in relation to the implementation of IP protection laws in China” and further he argues that the “will-component is related to the political system; therefore, laws are often subject to compromise.” In fact, according to Hydén, “it is feasible that a law may lack complete support. There may be many political reasons for making a law, such as to pacify one’s opposition or to show awareness in relation to a specific question, which do not necessarily entail commitment to implementation of the law . . . Sometimes laws are passed for domestic political reasons, such as when the government rushes out with a law after a major catastrophe . . . Law many times comes into being after something more or less dramatic ‘has happened in society’” (Hydén, 2008, p. 154).

In relation to the “will” component, Hydén brings further aspects to the argument. “Often resistance comes from the surrounding environment in which the law is to be implemented. The normative context in which the law is to be implemented can also enable the legal norm to come into being.” Hydén recognizes a legal norm as being “merely a social norm or other norm adopted to the legal system and there by stabilized and formalized.” He further argues, “Law is therefore many times introduced when certain norms in society are weakened for one reason or another. Through its coupling to a legal machinery of enforcement, the legal norm can be safeguarded in another way than when it belongs to a self-regulated area. But implementation and enforcement has its own price in terms of economic incitements (carrot), enforcement agencies (carrying the stick) or public authorities (preaching a sermon). In this perspective, a legal norm can be said to be only as strong as the underlying norm or norms already operating in society” (Hydén, 2008, p. 155).

Hydén (2008) refers to an example in relation to the struggle that a legal norm has to undertake when implemented, by referring to the study by Johan Lagerkvist, the chapter on the regulation of Internet cafés, as Internet access points, that were popular in the late 1990s in China, “As Lagerkvist points out, the regulation of Chinese cyberspace today, such as online news sites, bulletin Board systems (BBS), and blogs, has its forerunner in the regulation of the physical meeting places called Internet Cafés, or wangba, in Chinese” (p. 156). In this case, although obtaining a business license was required for the Internet cafés, the illegal Internet cafés came into being. Hydén asserts that the first rule targeting the Internet café industry was issued in
1998, and a third regulation was introduced after the Internet café fire in Beijing 2002, which was “crucial for the regulation of the whole net café industry in China. Article 23 of that law entails a lot of requirements as regards the detailed registration, monitoring and accounting for of patrons’ surfing habits.” Further Hydén in relation to implementation adds, “It is not difficult to understand that this, referred to Lagerkvist as ‘the party-state norm,’ would encounter problems, when it comes to implementation. In addition to the owners and users of the Internet cafes, the voices of liberal academics and lawmakers, who represented youth, formed what can be called a subaltern norm to the law.” However, in order to dominate the normative scene, the “subaltern norm was not strong enough” against the “norms of the party-state and the parental norm,” and the “the implementation proved to be fairly easy, since one strong driving force for harsher regulation came from the parents of children spending much time in the net cafes. This parental norm backed up the legal regulation and made it more legitimate in society and thereby easier to implement” (Hydén, 2008, p. 156).

Hydén (2008) argues that in order to implement a certain kind of legislation professional knowledge within the field is necessary and calls the knowledge aspect of the norm as “something which mainly relates to professional knowledge.” For example, he refers to “regulation of the health sector” that requires “medical knowledge,” and also, pedagogic skills that are “crucial within the education system.” Hydén refers to Marina Svensson’s study and the implementation of the Cultural Relics Law and adds, “In order to safeguard cultural heritages, the implementation agency has to have knowledge within the field. It is not only a question of skill. Norms are formed also by cognitive aspects. The attitude or world-view among those public servants and public authorities in charge of a certain task is fundamental for the understanding of the implementation of that specific law, something which is shown in the way cultural heritage sometimes is treated in practice, according to Marina Svensson’s study” (Hydén, 2008, p. 156).

Turning finally to the possibilities of normative changes in relation to the third dimension of norms Hydén notes, “System conditions are the most important intervening factors of all, in relation to norm-formation and the implementation of law, especially given the fact that political and economic factors and also social structures could become obstacles or possibilities in the implementation process. Among these both the economic system and political ideologies can be mentioned as predominating system conditions . . . The horizontal
perspective is about understanding the legal system as consisting of different parts. Law is related to different sectors of society and it upholds certain functions depending on what role the law plays” (Hydén, 2008, p. 156). Further, Hydén (2008) points out four different sectors of society that affect law and give it its special character as civil society, the market, the political/administrative system, and the so-called mixed economy or the welfare state.

Hydén and Svensson (2008) regarding the norm concept assert that it is necessary apart from linguistics, also to use semiotics, the study of signs or sign systems from the Greek “semeion,” meaning sign, as a starting point. They argue that the most obvious and also the most conventional area of study is spoken and written language, but in contrast to semantics, from a semiotic viewpoint the definition is broader and may include pictures, traffic signals, wrestling, symptoms of illness, and so on. Hydén and Svensson (2008) pointing to modern semiotics as an independent discipline refer to Peirce’s studies of the relationship between different signs (1991) and Saussure’s studies of the “social lives” of signs (2006). Hydén and Svensson (2008) declare that at the heart of Norm Model lies a norm concept that by its very definition incorporates these separate dimensions. According to Hydén and Svensson (2008) there are three essential attributes identified for the norm concept: “The first essential attribute is tied to the ‘ought’ dimension of the norm and simply dictates that norms constitute imperatives (directions for action); the second essential attribute is bound to the ‘is’ dimension and stipulates that norms are socially reproduced and thus can be studied empirically. The third essential attribute is that the norm actually comes from the individual’s perception of the expectations of her social environment—which means that norms are dependent on various cognitive processes.” (Svensson and Larsson, 2009). Meanwhile, Hydén and Svensson (2008) refer to Émile Durkheim’s idea about norms, or in reality social facts, as things in the sense that they can be viewed through their signs. They assert that a sign consists of two parts as the word/picture and the concept/idea and mention the word “tree” as the example, “The word and what you see in front of you when you read the word combine to form one sign. The two parts do not exist independently but only exist together. However, it is the relationship between them that create a meaning” (Hydén and Svensson, 2008, p. 135). Therefore, Hydén and Svensson (2008) declare that for the norm concept, the word is “norm” and the concept is “instruction”; and hence, the first ontological essence of norms is that norms are behavioral instructions or imperatives. “This essence can unquestioningly be accepted
within the framework of Kelsen’s ‘legal’ norms. He views the legal system as a system of ‘oughts,’ and it is for Kelsen as if norms become norms exactly because they are action instructive. But this is also an essence that is acceptable from a socio-scientific and sociological perspective” (p. 135). Hydén and Svensson (2008) argue that norms are intersubjective in character and perceived and experienced similarly by the people subjected to them. Moreover, norms exist in a social context and the longevity of our experiences of them makes us confirm their existence. According to Hydén and Svensson (2008), this gives us the second essence of the norm concept, namely that norms are socially reproduced. The difference between physical objects and norms, as Hydén and Svensson (2008) define, is that the latter exist as linguistic and semiotic signs and can only be perceived in terms of their effects. “The branch of cognitive science called situated cognition views thought processes as a type of dynamic system where the brain controls the body’s interactivity with the surrounding world. In situated cognition there is a basic distinction between signals that describe reality and signals that describe human opinions. In both cases the result may be that the individual experiences these signals as an expectation to act in a certain manner” (Hydén and Svensson, 2008, p. 136). Therefore, the third essence of norms is introduced as norms are the individual’s understanding of surrounding expectations regarding their own behavior.

In addition to the essence-oriented attributes of norms, Hydén and Svensson (2008) introduce the accidental attributes as equally important. Analyzing the accidental norm attributes is necessary in order to categorize the norms and, for example, provide a description of what separates legal norms from social norms. “At Lund University, the work within SoL17 of understanding norms and implementing analyses has often taken a standpoint from a norm model focusing on three fundamental areas within which accidental attributes are found: (a) the cognitive context in which the norm is active; (b) the system conditions that apply to the relevant situation; and (c) the values associated with the imperative. The result becomes a description of the environment from which the norm originates and a deepened knowledge about the norms’ driving forces” (Hydén and Svensson, 2008, p. 137). Durkheim’s classical theories on social coercion and social facts “comprise an important source of inspiration—partly because they deal with creating social changes through law and other norms, but also because they so distinctly state norms as being empirical entities (norms as ‘things’) which can be studied scientifically” (Svensson and Larsson, 2009, p. 23).
Values—In order to analyze the formation of norms, or how individuals do as they do, in the context of Artist’ House, the study elaborates and gives an analysis on the bases that the actions of individuals are formed. In this relation, Schwartz value theory can be used as a tool to explain the systematic associations of behavior, attitude, and personality variables by demonstrating the structure of values relations. The higher order types of value structures in Schwartz model are used, by scholars, to predict behavior and attitudes. In this study, we observe that the official culture utilizes all available tools, for example, media, to form the set of values and norms that do not fit into the same category as the set of values that the satellite TV channels and Internet promote and encourage among the youth. The quality of the mentioned differences concerning value systems can be explained by using the modified quasi-circumplex model of Schwartz value theory. Schwartz and Boehnke (2004)\(^{18}\) refers to the past 45 years in a steady stream of papers that propose a circumplex structure as the best way of presenting personality and affect by referring to Fabrigar, Visser, and Browne (1997\(^{19}\); Tracey, 2000\(^{20}\)). “That is, they postulate that personality or affect variables lie on the circumference of a circle, and the strength of association between variables decreases as the distance between variables on the circle increases” (Schwartz, 2004, p. 230).

Schwartz (2004) claims that he presented the first direct, quantitative evaluation of the postulated circumplex structure of values. He believes that, prior to his method, the previous methods for the assessments of the structure of basic human values relied on subjective judgments of plots produced by a multidimensional scaling approach. In critic of those methods, Schwartz (2004, p. 231) writes, “Factor/principal components analysis and multidimensional scaling (MDS) are the methods commonly used to test circumplex structures, but they are usually inadequate to provide statistical tests. Neither offers a simple, quantifiable method to formally assess the extent to which the observed data possess a circumplex structure (for detailed critiques of three methods, see Fabrigar et al., 1997 or Tracey, 2000). Instead, researchers typically reach conclusions by making two subjective judgments of the observed plot of relations among variables. First, they assess how well this plot appears to conform to a particular pattern. Then they assess the extent to which the order of the variables around the circle appears to correspond to the order in the theory.” Multidimensional scaling, smallest space analysis in particular, represents value items as points in a multidimensional space. The distances between the points represent the observed correlations between the
value items as accurately as possible small distances between the value items as accurately as possible. Small distances between the points represent positive correlations and large distances represent small, zero, or negative correlations (Schwartz et al., 2008).21

The structure of dynamic relations among the ten values that value theory explains is its most important feature, according to Schwartz (2004). In his value theory, Schwartz clarifies the structure of value relations and elaborates on the patterns of these associations. In his analysis, Schwartz refers to the studies in 19 countries (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001)22 and declares that the results reveal systematic associations of many behavior, attitude, and personality variables with priorities for these values. There are 10 motivationally distinct types of values that according to Schwartz (1992)23 are likely to be recognized within and across cultures. These value types are: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. “It postulates that actions expressive of any value have practical, psychological, and social consequences that may conflict or be compatible with the pursuit of other values. For example, actions that express hedonism values are likely to conflict with those that express tradition values and vice versa, and acting on self-direction values is likely to conflict with maintaining conformity values and vice versa. On the other hand, hedonism values are compatible with self-direction values, and tradition values are compatible with conformity values” (Schwartz, 2004). The ten motivationally distinct types of values in the theory of basic human values are derived from three universal requirements of the human condition, that are, needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interactions, and survival and welfare needs of groups. The theory maintains “groups and individuals represent these requirements cognitively, as specific values about which they communicate in order to coordinate with others in pursuing the goals that are important to them. The 10 values are the content aspect of the theory” (Schwartz, 2004). The theory was assessed in over 200 samples in more than 60 countries from every inhabited continent (representative national samples, school teachers, university students, adolescents, samples of workers in specific occupations). Schwartz (2004, pp. 232 and 233) elaborates that “researchers examined two-dimensional projections of the relations among value items, using MDS or Similarity Structure Analysis (SSA; Borg and Shye, 1993; Guttman, 1968). They concluded that the data largely support (a) the distinctiveness of the ten values, (b) the idea that these values are comprehensive of the major, motivationally distinctive types of values, and (c) the ordering
of values postulated by the circumplex structure. These conclusions were based on visual inspection of the spatial plots, guided by priori criteria. They revealed that, in the vast majority of samples, the items that operationalize each value occupied a distinct region in the space, with no substantial empty spaces between regions. Moreover, the order of these distinct regions around the circle generally approximated the theorized order (Fontain, 1999; Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001; Schwartz and Sagiv, 1995).

In the illustration he presents, we observe that tradition is at the same polar angle with conformity around the circle, but tradition is situated outside conformity and out of the circle. Schwartz (2004) explains that tradition is situated out of the circle, because it is more peripheral compared to other values like conformity values that are more central. The fact that, the tradition values are situated out of the circle makes the shape of Schwartz theoretical model a non-circle. The location of tradition values outside of conformity at the same polar angle in the circle was decided due to the fact that this position was “a better visual fit to the plots of data in the available samples” (Schwartz, 2004, p. 235). According to Schwartz (2004), the theoretical explanation for locating conformity and tradition at the same polar angle in the circle is that they share the same broad motivational goal—subordinating self in favor of socially imposed expectations. What distinguishes them is that “conformity values entail subordination to persons with whom one is in frequent interaction—parents, teachers, and bosses. Tradition values entail subordination to more abstract objects—religious and cultural customs and ideas” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 40). Schwartz (2004, p. 235) argues, “Conformity values emphasize restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses that might upset or harm others and violate their expectations. Tradition values emphasize respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas of one’s culture or religion.” The locations of the values, concerning being peripheral or central in a circle, reflect the differences between constructs in the degree of abstractness, closeness to the self, or prevalence in everyday interaction (Levy, 1985). Schwartz (2004) asserts that, on all three counts, tradition values are more likely to be located in the peripheral position than conformity values. In addition, the “more peripheral the location of a value, the less positive its correlations with the values on the opposite side of the circle. Hence, the peripheral location of tradition would signify that it is less compatible than conformity with hedonism and stimulation values” (Schwartz, 2004, p. 235). The achievement and power values both “focus on social esteem. However, achievement values
refer more to striving to demonstrate competence in everyday inter-
action . . . Whereas power values refer more to the abstract outcomes 
of action in the form of status in the social structure . . . achievement 
values refer to the striving of the individual . . . Whereas power val-
ues also refer to the hierarchical organization of relations in soci-
ety” (Schwartz, 1992, pp. 40–41). Moreover, the results confirm the 
claim that values form a motivational continuum.

Schwartz (2004) argues that the “claim of a motivational con-
tinuum is especially important for relating value priorities to other 
variables. It implies that these relations take the shape of a sinusoidal 
curve that follows the order of the values around the circle (Schwartz, 
1992). The theory postulates a circular arrangement of the ten val-
ues, not of the items. For items, it postulates that each item correlates 
more highly with the set of items that measure the same value than 
with the set of items that measure a different value. Thus, in techni-
cal terms, the theory assumes that the items in the value survey form 
ten latent factors and only the factors relate to one another in a cir-
cular manner.” Schwartz and Boehnke (2004) tested the predicted 
structure by applying confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to new data 
from different cultural groups with two sets of 23 samples from 27 
countries (N = 10, 857). They demonstrated that a model with ten 
lateral variables, placed in the predicted circular order, matches the 
data well. Moreover, their presentation supported the overall ade-
quacy of the value model across samples and countries. As a result, 
the CFAs, in both mentioned data sets, confirm the ten basic values 
as well as a modified quasi-circumplex rather than a simple circum-
plex structure.

Schwartz (1992, p. 43), based on the Similarity Structure Analysis 
(SSA) in the first 40 samples, presented a summarized way of view-
ing the value structures. He showed how the relationships among the 
values can be viewed in terms of a two-dimensional structure com-
posed of four higher-order value types. The higher-order types of 
values, according to Schwartz, are called openness to change, con-
servation, self-enhancement, and self-transcendence. The higher-
order type, openness to change, merges the values of stimulation and 
self-direction. This higher-order type makes a “bipolar dimension” 
(Schwartz, 2004) with conservation that is another higher-order type. 
Conservation combines the conformity, security, and tradition val-
ues. The values that are selected in the higher-order type openness to 
change promote ‘openness’; in other words, “the extent to which these 
values motivate people to follow their own emotional and intellec-
tual interests in unpredictable and uncertain directions . . . The other
sets of values, in the higher-order type conservation deal with the ‘conservation’ encourage individuals ‘to preserve the status quo and the certainty it provides’” (Schwartz, 2004). The third higher-order type, self-enhancement, includes values of power and achievement. Self-enhancement makes a bipolar dimension with self-transcendence, which combines universalism and benevolence values. According to Schwartz (2004, p. 236), “This dimension arrays values in terms of the extent to which they motivate people to enhance their own personal interests even at the expense of others (self-enhancement) versus to transcend selfish concerns and promote the welfare of others, close and distant and of nature (self-transcendence). Hedonism values share some elements of both openness and self-enhancement. Consequently, hedonism is located between these two higher-order types.”

In this particular set of four higher-order types, it is expected that the adjacent values within the higher-order types to be “more strongly associated with one another substantively and empirically than they are with the adjacent values from other higher-order types” (Schwartz, 2004, p. 237). For example, universalism and benevolence values, belonging to self-transcendence higher-order type, are more highly intercorrelated than universalism is with self-directions. Self-direction is also adjacent to universalism but in the openness higher-order type. The hedonism is located between stimulation and achievement values in the theory of value structure, because hedonism values share elements of openness and self-enhancement. Schwartz (2004) mentions that, in order to model this, they increased the correlations of hedonism with the values in these higher-order types by .025, half the increase between the values within each higher-order type. The correlation of hedonism with achievement and stimulation was of .705 and with self-direction and power of .505. Hence, hedonism does not correlate equally with its adjacent values. The interest of self is the emphasis that hedonism values share with power and achievement values. Hedonism values share their emphasis on openness to change with stimulation and self-direction values. However, hedonism is not equally close to self-enhancement and openness; according to estimations presented in Schwartz (2004), it is clearly closer to openness although it correlates significantly with both. This idea suggests that, “for most people, hedonism values focus more on freely experiencing pleasure and less on pursuing pleasure competitively” (Schwartz, 2004, p. 252). Meanwhile, “all 10 bounded regions postulated by the theory are present and are ordered around the circle exactly as theorized” (Schwartz et al., 2008, p. 354). According to the examinations of Schwartz et al. (2008), the two-dimensional Schwartz value theory
forms and adequate and robust point of reference for studying structural equivalence of the values domain across cultures.

In line with this analysis of congruity and conflict, “a basic assumption of the value theory is that the values domain can best be conceptualized as a motivational continuum in which there is a gradual shift in meaning as one moves from one value to those adjacent to it” (Schwartz et al., 2008, p. 347). Schwartz (2006) proposed an alternative way to conceptualize the same two-dimensional structure. In one perspective, the values are grouped into those that regulate the expression of personal characteristics and interests that are person-focused: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and power versus those that regulate relations with others and effects on them which are social-focused: universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. At the same time, Schwartz groups the values, from another perspective, into those that express anxiety-free self-expansion, labeling as growth values: self-direction, universalism, benevolence, stimulation, and hedonism versus those that express anxiety-based self-protection, called protection values: security, power achievement, conformity, and tradition. The value theory holds that the values domain is a motivational continuum, “both two-dimensional representations are exchangeable and compatible with the original formulation of the value theory” (Schwartz et al., 2008, p. 347).

Previous analyses of the average correlations between value items across a large number of cultural samples have shown that a circular two-dimensional representation provided a good fit (e.g., Schwartz, 1992, 2006; Schwartz and Sagiv, 1995). Moreover, “Ten bounded regions were distinguished, with each bounded region representing a value. Moreover, these 10 regions were ordered in the circular order predicted by the theory. One deviation from the circular order often emerged: Tradition was situated at the outer side of conformity between security and benevolence rather than forming a segment between conformity and benevolence” (Schwartz et al., 2008, p. 348).

Modern Era, Communications and Identity—The theoretical discussions on modernity, self-identity, communication and power, network society, and communication technologies among other arguments made by Anthony Giddens and Manuel Castells are used in this study. The Giddens thoughts discussed in Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age (1991), The Consequences of Modernity (1990), Capitalism and Modern Social Theory (1971), and The Constitution of Society (1984) are central to the relevant analytical discussions of this text. Besides, ideas of Castells concerning the new technologies and society are most relevant to explain

**Methods**—The data for this study was collected through interviews, group discussions, informal conversations, participant observations and observation of different aspects of the youths’ life in natural contexts. Moreover, samples of materials expressing social, economic and cultural conditions such as statistics on this topic, documentary sources, books, and other published materials, examples of literature and art works created after the revolution were reviewed and taken into account. Also, discussions with key informants, relevant scholars and officials added material to the periphery and background knowledge of this research. However, other sources of data for this study were the laws and related regulations implemented by the Islamic Republic in Iran. Several samples were selected among the youth groups that gather around the Artists’ House on a regular basis, considering the criteria of gender, age, family base, social class and life economic condition. The observations and participant observations were the main methods to understand the aspects of the interactions. The assessing of existing works and related literature, extracting their useful concepts, and combining them in new ways to produce a synthetic conceptualization, as Turner (1988) mentions, took place from the early stages of the present study. The collected materials were analyzed considering the context of everyday life in Tehran, the disciplined official culture, law, and the role of domestic media versus satellite TV channels and Internet.

The respondents at the Artists’ House were young individuals who were present at the place, while group discussions were held only with the youth that were members of the groups around the House. The questions were structured; however, the interviews were open for further discussions when the interviewee wished to share more on related questions. The number of young individuals participating in the interviews and group discussions was more than 43. However, there were more informal conversations.

The fieldwork started by making general observations in Tehran, for example, the cinemas, libraries, schools, universities, shopping
centers, parks, restaurants and coffee shops, cultural houses, and mountains as part of the public sphere. The interviews were not limited to the Artists’ House in the beginning. At this stage, there were around 20 semi-structured interviews that were made with young individuals of different age groups and social backgrounds in different parts of Tehran. The material collected from these interviews, which had a wider scope than the Artists’ House, was useful to assess the objectives of the study and was later used as background knowledge. The fieldwork continued with looking for relevant studies and published works searching main national and governmental libraries in the ministries and related research organizations. Also, meeting researchers, experts, and officials and asking their views on the topic was another phase of the fieldwork. Every possibility was taken during the fieldwork, in order to make general observations of the cinema, national domestic TV programs, radio channels and official websites. Moreover, the favorite Satellite Channels and use of Internet by the youth was observed at a general perspective. Having made the decision to focus on the Artists’ House and the youth that gather at this place regularly, the fieldwork and interviews, mainly at the Artists’ House, started in December 2008. The youth that were members of the groups, gathering around the house, were friendly and comparatively open. They willingly took part in the conversations, discussions and interviews and expressed their ideas and viewpoints independently. Due to ethical aspects of the research, the names of the interviewees are changed in the present text.

Framework of Study and Analysis—This research is an empirical case study and focuses on the young groups that gather at and around the Artists’ House every day. This case is chosen as a sample due to several reasons: First, the distinguished sociocultural characteristics of the Artists’ House and the space around the House. Second, the young groups, as samples of the youths in the city of Tehran, are definable and share similar characteristics in terms of age, interests, and tendencies.

This work is engaged in analysis of the collected material using a qualitative method. Discourse analysis is applied for conducted interviews, group discussions, speeches, and published materials. The results of data collected by observations are analyzed and compared to other materials, for example, statistics on the topic. Analysis took place in three stages: First stage was to interpret and analyze the relevant secondary sources and literature as well as the statistics and quantitative data on aspects of youth perceptions and values, for example the National Survey, that were relevant to the focus...
of present research. At the second stage, the data collected from the interviews, observations and other primary materials were analyzed. Finally, the results of the phase 1 and 2 were compared. Moreover, the study used several theories in order to explain different aspects of the main questions. However, discussions regarding the interactions taking place and relevant theories have a main role in the analysis in order to make a clear picture of the patterns and processes taking place. Moreover, the study’s concrete questions are related to the relevant knowledge, secondary literature dealing with aspects of similar phenomena (as noted in chapter 2), in order to make it possible to draw some more general conclusions and reflections about norm-creating processes in society. In relation to the interaction, there are several aspects that are engaged in the present study. Interpersonal and social interaction that includes interaction of young groups/individuals with each other and society; the mass media related interactions, and the interaction of youth with the place, that is, the city as a whole and the Artists’ House. The interaction of the youth with the social and abstract objects, for example, law, religion, culture, tradition and history, in the context of their lives, is another category that takes part in the process of construction of meanings and values in the mind of young individuals. The study proposes that as a result of these interactions meanings are constructed, and values are formed based on the constructed meanings. Consequently the norms are being generated on the bases of meanings and values that encourage certain motives leading to a particular “will” for the individual, and also a base for certain actions.

**Relevant Research**—The most relevant publications to the present text, among other research and published works, are *Jame‘-shenasi-ye javanan-e Iran* (jame‘-šenāsī-ye javānān-e Irān) (*Sociology of Iranian Youth*) written by Mohammad Saeed Zokaee (2008), and *The Third Generation: The Islamic Order of Things and Cultural Defiance among the Young of Tehran* written by Shahram Khosravi (2003). Shahram Khosravi wrote his Ph.D. dissertation entitled *The Third Generation: The Islamic Order of Things and Cultural Defiance among the Young of Tehran* at the Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, in 2003. *The Third Generation* is an urban anthropology; however, it provides a relevant background for the present study concerning two main issues. First, it addresses the questions of the youth in contemporary Tehran, and second, within its relevant discipline, it involves analytical descriptions of the place and the youths’ everyday life. In the present study, there is an objective view toward the analytical descriptions presented in *The Third Generation*, and
the references are used without judgments or orientations. Khosravi mentions two goals for his book. “First, to explore the cultural contexts out of which the Islamic order of things has emerged and on the basis of which an oppressive cultural politics has been imposed upon young people. Second, to provide an ethnographical description of the practices of everyday life, with which young Tehranis demonstrate defiance against the official culture and construct their own culture” (Khosravi, 2003, p. 13). This dissertation is about the situation of young people in Iran under the Islamic order of things, and it concerns the battle over the right to identity, as Khosravi (2003) notes. Khosravi refers to the state’s effort to construct a hegemonic identity for the young people, and also the pervasive struggle by the youth to resist this subject position imposed on them from above. How young Tehranis struggle for subjectivity—in the sense of individual autonomy, and also the generational divide in Iran between those who made the Revolution happen and those who reject it, are among the discussed themes in his study. There are also questions regarding changes of lifestyle and social order inquired in regard to the youth life. Khosravi describes these issues, relations, and struggle of the youths and authorities, and its manifestation in spatial relations by presenting the case study of Golestan (Golestān) Shopping Center in Tehran. Based on ethnography, his study looks at the resistance of the young Tehranis as constituting creative and transformative projects rather than merely being actions of opposition. “Not all members of a generation react to an event in the same way, but what makes a group a generation is its connection to that event and to shared historical and social experiences” (Khosravi, 2003, p. 7).

Mohammad Saeed Zokaee in the year 2008, published Jame‘-shenasi-ye javanan-e Iran (Sociology of Iranian Youth) in Tehran. In different chapters of Sociology of Iranian Youth, Zokaee discusses aspects of the experience of youth, the condition or quality of being young, and relevant theoretical grounds from a sociological perspective. Sociology of Iranian Youth addresses a number of theoretical discussions in sociology and discuss them specifically in relation to the youth in Iran. It is in Persian-language and was published inside Iran. The relevance and significance of this book for the present study is due to its specific sociological discussions, and the analysis it presents regarding the case of the Iranian youth. Although, it touches upon a wide range of theoretical discussions in relation to the youth, Zokaee’s work raises questions, particularly on the youth in Iran, which are in line with some parts of the analysis in this text.
The meaning and concept of youth in the Iranian society with a review of classic, modern, and postmodern views on the youth and their position in the contemporary society are noted in the *Sociology of Iranian Youth*. Also, the concepts of the youth culture and subculture are discussed as key concepts in sociology of youth. Moreover, the experience of the transition period for the youth and the relevant signs of this change are elaborated in relation to the youth, their needs and situation. The significance of *seeking independence* for the youth life, and the challenges that the youths confront in this relation, are other issues mentioned by Zokaee. Besides, the experience of citizenship among the youth, considering their participation and tendencies, is another issue raised by Zokaee, compared to the experience of other countries. Furthermore, the significance of body, appearance and fitness is discussed as a significant issue in the youth culture and lifestyle. Also, some points regarding education and occupation-related values as well as the process of globalization, modern identity, young immigrants, and media are mentioned and discussed in his text.

**Present study** differs from the two abovementioned relevant studies mainly in the purpose as it provides an analytical description of the grounds for the formation of perceptions and values among the youth in Tehran as well as norm creation processes by using the example of the Artists’ House, and also partly in the method of research and analysis. Hence, although the present research shares common area of study with the two mentioned studies, it has a different focus and points of departure in analysis which complements the other studies in this area. *The Third Generation* provides an input to the present study as Khosravi explores the cultural contexts relevant to the emergence of Islamic order of things, and relations of the cultural politics and young people, as well as description of everyday life practices. However, the present research had a different focus and goals which results complement the descriptions and analysis made in *The Third Generation*. Meanwhile, the results of the present study confirm the general analysis made in *Jame‘shenasi-ye javanan-e Iran (Sociology of Iranian Youth)* and present additional analysis and aspects regarding the processes taking place in Iranian youths’ life context referring to the case of Artists’ House. The difference between *Sociology of Iranian Youth* and the present study is in the focus and goals as well as the fact that *Sociology of Iranian Youth* explores many features of youth’s life in general while the present study explores a specific case being aware of the local and global simultaneous processes taking place in relation to the case study.