



# "I Need an Escape Room": Issues of Privacy for Muslim Women

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**Abstract:** This article argues that privacy is essential for the personal boundaries of Muslim women who implement the hijab as part of their religious rules in terms of spatial practices within their environments. Visual aspects in relation to the concept of "seeing but not being seen" are fundamental in providing privacy. The "escape room" is a manifestation of spatial practices for privacy needs related to the presence of others who are not mahram in Islamic rules. Not only is the "escape room" a space (room) with dimensions of length, width, and height, but it also exists in the form of clothing. In this case study research, nine Muslim women respondents were observed and interviewed in depth and data relating to their clothes and their behavioral reactions in the presence of others in their dwellings were coded and analyzed. The study reveals that the privacy needs of Muslim women are strongly related to their religious beliefs and that to obtain this privacy these women create an "escape room."

**Keywords:** *Escape Room, Privacy, Muslim Women, Dwelling*

## Introduction

Everyone needs privacy, but the nature and extent of these needs cannot be generalized because each person's privacy needs are based on a number of considerations. Privacy is a selection attitude for controlling access to self and to groups, an aspect of which is information control (Altman 1975). Privacy can help individuals in association with characteristics such as personal identity (Altman 1977). Privacy is often interpreted as solitude, but it can also refer to a place for people (groups) to express feelings or anything of a special nature that they do not want others to know about or be involved in Holanan (1982). However, in some cases, privacy is particularly related to religious practices observed in everyday life.

This study focuses on the formation of privacy via spatial practices in Muslim dwellings, especially for Muslim women in their everyday lives. These religious practices are considerably varied, being influenced by the particular understanding of religion and by local culture. How to clothe oneself and how one visits others and kinship culture form the basis for differences in the implementation of everyday spatial practices. This study was conducted in Indonesia with the culture of the Indonesian people. Although most Indonesian people are Muslim, the understanding of Islamic sharia law in society experiences some differences as well as the implementation of the law. The definition of relatives or relatives in Indonesian society differs from the law of *mahram* in Islam (which regulates the law of relatives). Likewise, the customs of the Indonesian people who are *guyub* (*guyub* is a close brotherhood

in one bond in society) in society make their visiting habits different. As a result, the boundaries of private and public zones are biased in residential areas.

The need for privacy of Muslim women also varies. Muslim women who wear the *hijab* will have different spatial reactions in seeking privacy than those who do not. In some cases, the spatial reaction to an event creates an “escape room.”

An escape room is defined in this study as a private space for someone as a spatial reaction to an event involving the sudden presence of outsiders in a room. Such events are by their nature unpredictable. In Muslim dwellings, the need for an escape room is related to Islamic sharia, namely the rules relating to *mahram* (kinship), *aurat* (the body), and visitation. For a Muslim, the implementation of sharia law is related to their understanding of the practice of daily activities. *Hijab* women understand sharia law in relation to religious practices related to the daily space in their dwelling, and their need for privacy is different than that of Muslim women who are not *hijab*. This creates spatial practices and the formation of various boundaries in their dwellings.

This study aims to explain the escape room in Muslim dwellings. The research method used is a case study comprising observations and interviews. The first observation was of how each respondent was clothed, and this was followed by the collection of data regarding actions and reactions to the presence of a person in the home in relation to kinship relationships (*mahram* and non-*mahram*) and *aurat* (body) issues, gathered through observation and in-depth interviews. The study investigates nine respondents in six dwellings. In some cases, there were two respondents in one house. The study was undertaken in five dwellings in Jakarta and one in Surabaya, in Indonesia.

## Research Questions

The topic of this study is the need for privacy for Muslim women as reflected in the spatial practices followed in their homes. It focuses on how incidents of the presence of others cause the formation of space to which women can “escape”—in the form of taking refuge from view. Privacy is not only based on limited accessibility but also reflects ideas of limited visual information. In Muslim societies, especially for *hijab* women, privacy based on visuals becomes very important, because it involves religious practices in everyday life. The process of forming an escape room and the forms escape rooms take for Muslim women in their dwellings lie at the core of the questions answered in this study. This study is important in order to understand that privacy in Muslim dwellings (for *hijab* Muslim women) is very specifically based on Islamic laws (*mahram*, *aurat*, *hijab*, and visiting). Religious practices influence spatial practices to create boundaries in the formation of escape rooms.

## Aims and Method

The study aims to explain the importance of privacy for Muslim women in the spatial practices existing in their dwellings. For Muslim women, privacy is not only based on

physical boundaries but also reflects visual access. This visual aspect then underlies the formation of physical boundaries. Spatial preliminaries are based on religious practices, namely, the implementation of sharia rules (*mabram*, *aurat*, *hijab*, and visiting). The study also conceptually contributes to understanding privacy in the formation of space related to religious practices, especially in Muslim dwellings. The findings of the study contribute to the development of different meanings related to the idea of the "boundary" that can be implemented in architectural designs, especially for Muslim dwellings.

This research is a case study comprising nine respondents with initial criteria related to how to clothe Muslim women (from not wearing *hijab* to veiling with the *niqab*). The nine respondents were observed in their dwellings and interviewed in depth to investigate their spatial practices at home. The findings of the study are related to the formation of space via spatial practices that reflect religious practices in everyday life. Informant R's appearance of daily clothing is wearing a *hijab* with a veil; Informants I, E, T, K, Sk, and D also wear the *hijab* at home; Si wears the *hijab* when going out but not at home; M does not wear a *hijab*. The nine respondents were observed at their residences and interviewed in depth to investigate their spatial practices at home. The findings of the study are related to the formation of space through spatial practices that reflect religious practices in everyday life.

### Privacy–Boundaries as Spatial Practices in Muslim Dwellings

In exploring architecture that is a product of a particular religious culture or civilization, as in Islamic architecture, we must approach the subject using the appropriate religious paradigm (Grube 2002). Islamic culture, both implicitly and explicitly, as in the Quranic law, is the main determinant of the formation of domestic units in terms of setting out what is socially acceptable or unacceptable (Petherbridge 2002). In Islamic culture, men are active outside the home (public activities), whereas women are responsible for giving birth to and educating children and respecting and serving their husbands through their activities in the home. Islamic sharia regulates the roles of men and women and thus has implications for public/private space issues. Houses are considered as women's areas, in which they perform their domestic activities, whereas locations outside the home are meant for men's activities. This separation of roles creates the separation of spaces in the city and at home. The rules relating to the boundaries of space in Muslim dwellings are those that apply to *aurat*, *mabram*, *hijab*, and visiting. These four aspects are interrelated and are considered the basis for the formation of boundaries in Muslim dwellings.

Imam Ibn Qudamah (*rahimahullab*) stated that *mabram* includes all who are forbidden to marry because of *nasab*, that is, being children of the same nursing mother (Sabiq 2012). Imam Ibn Athir (*rahimahullab*) said that *mabram* denoted persons one is forever forbidden to marry, such as fathers, sons, uncles, and others (Sabiq 2012). Sheikh Sholeh Al-Fauzan said that husbands and wives are *mabram*, as well as all those who should not be married because of the *nasab* (*nasab* is descendants), such as fathers, sons and brothers, or from other causes, such as siblings or stepsons (Sabiq 2012). The rule of *mabram* has implications for whether a

woman can be seen without Muslim clothing or not (i.e., whether *aurat* are revealed or not). *Aurat* is a part of the body that should not be shown by men or women to others who are not *mahram*. The law relating to *aurat* is the *hijab*, which refers to barriers (either clothing or spatial dividers) (Basyarahil 2022). The body of a Muslim woman is guarded against being seen and, especially, from being touched. The rules governing covering of the body except the face and palms with clothing must be followed by adult Muslim women (Basyarahil 2022). When a woman leaves home, she must enclose the *aurat*, because her house is seen as a private space and the outdoors as public space. Shaykh Abdurrahman bin Nasir al-Sa'di said, “*Hijab* can be clothing that covers (the body) like a *hijab*: a scarf and the like” (Basyarahil 2022). The *hijab* is a form of clothing that functions as a barrier that can be used to protect oneself from people who are not *mahram*. M. Quraish Shihab (an *Ulama* from Indonesia. [*Ulama* are leaders or experts in the Islamic religion.]), in the interpretation of al-Misbah (2004), explains that the *hijab* is a Muslim woman’s clothing covering the body with a coconut cap. According to him, wearing the *hijab* is not an obligation for women but a recommendation because it is a custom and a cultural product. The differences in these scholars’ interpretations make the practice of dressing and the application of boundaries in daily spaces different (Shihab 2004).

Usually, women do not wear the *hijab* at home, because all members of the household are *mahram*. People who visit must get permission to do so from the occupants of the house, who have authority to receive or not receive guests. Guests are forbidden to look through barriers in a dwelling because of activities in the home that involve the privacy of the occupant of the house, as well as the house being an area in which women have the freedom to remove the veil. In architecture, this rule has implications for public–private space in dwellings and the materials used in building facades. The use of materials in accord with the principle of seeing but not being seen can impact on both design and material. Of the four women’s laws in Islam, the *hijab* greatly influences housing and public spaces for women.

The concept of public and private space in Islamic societies is different than that found in western countries. Generally, public space is male, whereas private space is associated with women. Space limitations for areas of interaction between non-*mahram* people both in the home and outside are imposed in Islamic culture (Mazumdar and Mazumdar 2001). Such space is not termed public–private space but is seen as an interaction space. Muslim women will be free to move in public spaces if *hijab* but are limited in certain activities. Difficulties related to dress codes are encountered by most Muslim women when they engage in public activities (Whitten and Thompson 2003), but with the *hijab* Muslim women are free to move about. *Hijab*, women, motion and space are all subjects of interest in architecture.

Public areas such as mosques, markets, roads, and all other outdoor areas are male domains. In Islamic culture, the domestic and the public are separated into private (female) and public (male) (Petherbridge 2002). In Islamic culture, the Qur’an and Hadith provide the guidelines for living arrangements that govern domestic and social life. It is privacy that separates women from the public. In the dwelling, a domestic area is the domain of women,

and men usually have their own room near the boundary area (the front of the dwelling or the zone separator). Separation of women is manifested physically in various forms in which women can see but are not seen (Petherbridge 2002).

The meaning of privacy and boundaries in the perspective of Arab women is influenced by household rules embodied in spatial interior patterns as a reflection of social patterns (Al Khateeb 2015). The privacy needs of occupants in Arab society are related to culture and religious law and are manifested in the creation of boundaries between public and private spaces. Privacy is not solely about separating visually between spaces but is also based on kinship. In addition to visuals, other sensory elements are taken into consideration in the formation of private spaces. Religion regulates the position of the body in the private area or public area and the position of women's and men's spaces in terms of how women clothe themselves (Shanneik 2012). The female body is itself a symbol of authorization and territory (Shanneik 2012), and society, culture, and beliefs/religion therefore affect design in architecture.

Division of space based on gender reflects accessibility, functions, and activities, creating men's space (public) and women's space (private) within the dwelling. Women need control to identify the presence of others (guests). The importance of gender identity is related to the use of space in dwellings. The concept of "protected women" leads to the implementation of different boundaries in spatial practices and inside–outside interpretations (Al Khateeb 2015), and family life is expressly divided between public and private in Islamic culture (Petherbridge 2002). For this purpose, physical boundaries such as walls, windows, doors, and transitional spaces are created.



Figure 1: Privacy Layers in Traditional Muslim Dwellings

Source: Bahammam 1987 in Othman 2016

Bahammam describes privacy in Muslim dwellings as layered from the outermost layer, household privacy, through female privacy and family privacy to individual privacy (Figure 1). These privacy layers are related to someone's status, namely, whether they are outsiders,

male guests, family, relatives, or oneself. Bahamman did not elaborate on the rules for implementing *mabram* in the practice of clothing (*hijab*) for Muslim women in dwelling areas, which significantly affects spatial practices.

The entrance to the Muslim dwelling is usually indirect, created by a turning or by providing a barrier (boundary) between circulation rooms so that people passing them do not necessarily look into the house (in terms of view boundaries).

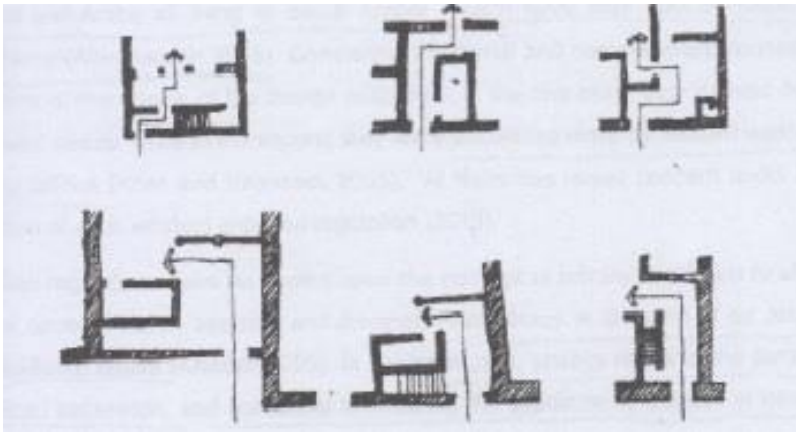


Figure 2: Indirect Access to the Entrance to the House

Source: Bahamman 1984 in Al Khateeb 2015

This indirect form of access is a design policy involving events, time, and space (Figure 2). Accessibility by experiencing this “pause” can be used for detection and decision-making by actors to fulfill the privacy needs of the householder.

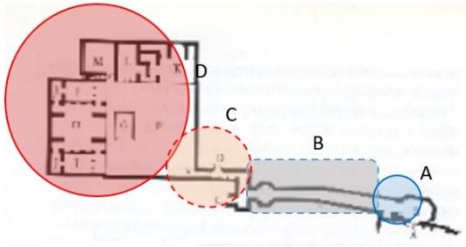
On entering the Muslim house, guests pass through a door, then cross a corridor, and then enter another room. There is also more than one access door in Muslim homes, reflecting gender use, in that the main entry is for men and another door for women and servants. The door is thus not only used for access but also symbolizes the separation between private and public.

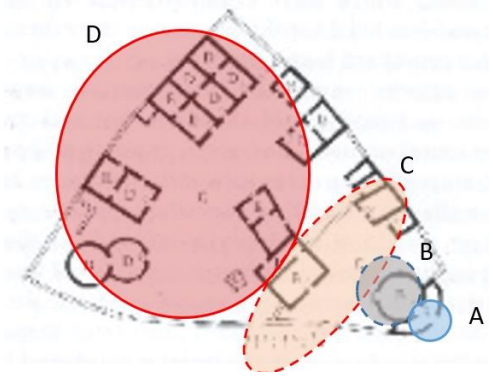
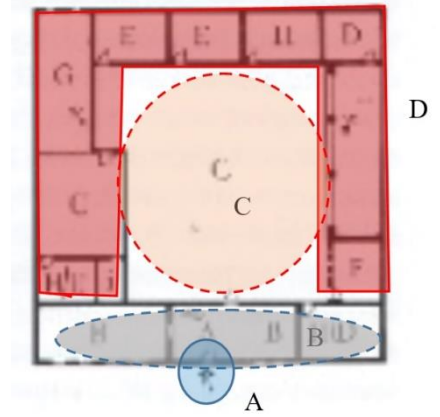
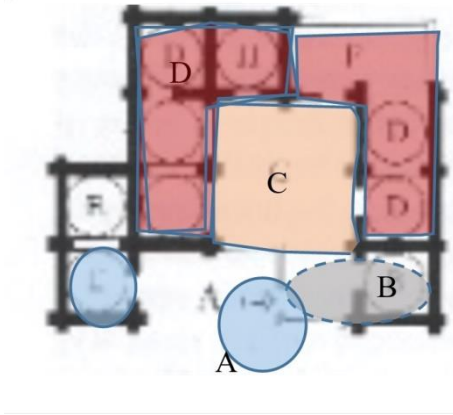
The entrance is a protection from the possibility of things within the home being seen from outside. This is related to the function of occupancy as a private space and the dominance in it of women in Islamic culture. Women must be protected, and the concept of “seeing but not being seen” must apply, so the role of the door becomes important in terms of its position, design, and material.

Not everyone may pass through the door. As well as its relationship to gender, the door is also connected with time. In Islamic rules, visitors are arranged in both time and place, particularly for the three times at which guests must ask for permission, namely, before dawn, midday, and after the evening. Permission to pass through the door is interpreted not only in physical terms but also in terms of seeing what entities lie beyond the door. This is regulated in the prohibition of “peeping” in indirect directions into the house. These rules

are implemented in Arabic dwellings via opening design, indirect means of access, and the distribution of access based on gender.

In Islamic dwellings, the male area is separated from the women's areas, the reception room being a male (male guest) room. Male guests may not meet women in the living room, hall, or lobby of a dwelling. The gender identification of guests will have implications for visiting activities and boundaries in spatial practice. The presence of "gender" doors, lobbies, halls, corridors, and inner courts is a manifestation of Islamic culture based on religious rules.

	<i>Arabic House</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
1	 <p>House in Isfahan (Petherbridge 2002, 196)</p>	<p>This plan of a house in Isfahan (Petherbridge 2002, 196) shows the boundaries in spatial practice based on gender. The men's entrance is separated from the female entrance. The flow of space also follows the presence of people based on gender. The order of areas is as follows: male guest entrance (A) (the outermost position and far from the core of the house); long corridors (as circulation toward the core of the house but a long room, so that there is a time lag that affects access to the core of the house) (B). This time lag affects the readiness of people in the core rooms of the house (mostly women). The women's entrance is located near the inner space (C). Inside the house is a female domain space (D) that limits the guests/men present in the house and where women retain their privacy. The comfort/freedom of movement and activities of women in the inner space is limited by walls with few openings or windows that connect to the outside and long corridors connected to the living room, which may contain males/outside as guests).</p>

<p>2</p>	 <p>Home in Zaria, Nigeria, West Africa (Petherbridge 2002, 200)</p>	<p>In this dwelling, a transitional space separates the main entrance from the inner space (A). This means the inner space cannot be seen by guests, as it is intended for women. There are boundaries in the form of transitional spaces separating male space and female space (B, C). Thus, there is separation between public space (designated for men) and private/inner space (for women) (D).</p>
<p>3</p>	 <p>House in Qustul, Nubia (Petherbridge 2002, 200)</p>	<p>In this dwelling, the main entrance is for male guests (A). A transitional space has solid wall boundaries that separate it from the courtyard as part of inner space designated for women (B). Borders in the form of walls divide the areas of men (guests/outside) and women. The courtyard is a space for women (C). Bedrooms, kitchens, and spaces for women's activities are located inside and are closed off from the outside (D).</p>
<p>4</p>	 <p>House in Souf, Algeria (Petherbridge 2002, 200)</p>	<p>In this dwelling, the main entrance is for men (A). There is a male reception room separate from the female area (B). The courtyard is a female and family area for activities and leisure (C). Family rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, including areas of inner space, are separate from the male area and guests so that women's privacy can be created (D).</p>



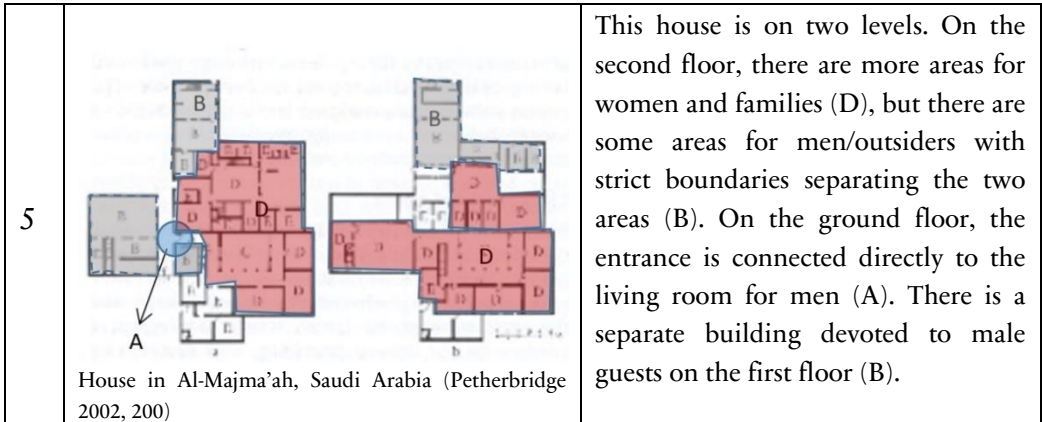


Figure 3: Some Houses in the Middle East, Illustrating the Concept of Separation of Male and Female Areas

Gender-based boundaries are very clearly applied in Arabic dwellings (Figure 3). Rigid physical boundaries are clearly imposed, but nonphysical boundaries are also present. The use of a rigid wall between male and female areas, both on the first and second floors, and the use of transitional space as a boundary are actions creating privacy within a dwelling. The indirect circulation/accessibility design is a design relating to boundaries in spatial practices in dwellings. These boundaries have implications for within-dwelling privacy. The existence of “space between” and strict gender divide and placement of entrances influences the presence/absence of an escape room. In Arab houses where strict rules for spatial allocation related to gender, door placement, openings, and public understanding of visiting regulations are enforced, there will be no need for an escape room.

Indonesian society, with its different understanding of the rules of openness, kinship, clothing rules, and visitation habits, creates spatial practices that are different than those found in Arab culture. The design of housing in Indonesia differs from the concept of design in Saudi Arabia. Some Indonesians do not follow the *mahram* law, so “familiarity” in some societies loosens the rules of accessibility in housing. This understanding of sharia law in the community environment has implications for spatial practices in dwellings that influence the presence or absence of escape rooms.

## Findings and Discussion

### An Escape Room for the Privacy Needs of Hijab Muslim Women

Expressions of feelings and actions taken reflect reactions to events in Muslim women’s lives. The sudden presence of people who are not *mahram* is treated as a shameful event if Muslim women reveal their *aurat* (body). Shame, anger, wanting to take refuge, withdrawal, and escape are all feelings and actions experienced by *hijab* Muslim women. In such situations, Muslim women want to immediately cover their bodies (*aurat*) with clothing or find a space that can be used to save themselves from being seen. *Aurat* is a part of the body that must be

covered, and the feeling of a Muslim woman in terms of *hijab* when she reveals *aurat* is similar to someone seeing her naked.

The following women are Muslims who wear the *hijab* every day at home when there are guests present who are not *mahram*. Rani (I- ...) wears the *hijab* with the *niqab* (veil), whereas Iin and Dewi wear the *hijab* without a *niqab*. These Muslim women have boundary needs in their practices at home that differ from those of women who do not wear the *hijab*. This situation has implications for their spatial practices in everyday life.

Sometimes my father forgets that I have *hijab*, so suddenly enters with guests ... without informing the occupants of the house. One time I was in the living room. I didn't know about the presence of the guest and so I shouted and ran to the nearest room. However, sometimes my condition—lack of the *hijab*—is already visible (and may be seen by that person). However, I continued to run in reaction to put on the *hijab* or to run to the nearest room. I am very angry if the situation is like that. In conditions and situations like that, I crawl towards the nearest space (boundaries between the living room and family room in the form of transparent cabinets/glass on the top and wood/solid at the bottom). I do this so that I am not visible to guests in the room. I always run into the home or a room. However, if I'm behind the house, I go to the bathroom, and then I call my son to get my *mukena* (prayer dress). So, he already knows about this. (Rani 2018)

The respondent felt shame and anger because of the sudden presence of people (non-*mahram*) in her home, in front of whom she felt “naked.” Such feelings make us want to run, take refuge, and hide from the view of others. This respondent lives at home with her father, mother, and son. The father is Javanese and follows traditional Javanese customs (the traditional Javanese kinship system differs from the Islamic sharia, so the implementation of rules is not as strict). If the respondent is not wearing the *hijab* (because they are indoors), the sudden presence of another person (guest) prompts the respondent take action to satisfy the criterion of “seeing but not being seen.” However, if the respondent is already wearing a long dress but does not have her head and face covered, she would take action to find her head and face cover, which would have been left prepared in a specific place.

I listen to people's voices. From the voice, I can find out who is present (*mahram* or non-*mahram*). If I don't recognise the male voice, I automatically cover the *aurat* with *hijab* prepared for my use. Usually, if trousers and sweaters, I put them in the front room. If it's a veil, I put it near here (on a chair). If the guest wants to access the house or another room (part of the house) then I must be informed first and then I wear a *hijab*. After everything is ready, then guests may come in. (Iin 2018)

I identify by voice. If the voice is identified as a male, then I run. Usually, I immediately run to my room to get my clothes (*hijab*). If the non-*mahram* guest is only here for a while and has nothing to do with me, then I hide. (Iin 2018)

This respondent lives in a house with her husband, mother, and two young children. Her sister and husband often visit the home. Although in Indonesian tradition a brother-in-law is a family member, in Islamic sharia he is not *mahram*. This visiting family follows sharia law, so when they visit they give a signal via their voices and the children (who are not adults) entering the house first. This gives a signal to *hijab* female inhabitants to get ready to wear their *hijab*. However, if guests do not understand the sharia, the respondent has to run into an enclosed room, according to the "seeing but not being seen" requirement. If they are wearing a long dress, then their reaction to this sudden event is to put on a *hijab* head covering that is kept in a specific place.

Often, if guests present and knock outside, then my husband meets them. This is because if the husband goes to the door, he doesn't need much time, whereas if my daughter or I attend, it takes much time. We have to wear *hijab* to meet them. (Dewi 2018)

If there are non-*mahram* present suddenly and they are in the garage, then I quickly run to the front room to hide and in the room are already available *hijab* clothes. (Dewi 2018)

This respondent lives at home with her husband, child, father, mother, and brother. Sometimes, her sister and husband visit and stay at the house, and the husband is not *mahram*. The respondents and other family members understand and follow sharia law, but their father still wears shorts (which do not cover the *aurat*).

Their house has been designed according to the concept of family zones (second floor) and guests/public (first floor). Sharia guest rules are applied in this family. Auditory and visual cues indicate the presence of people. Viewing the presence of people without being seen (guest detection) is done from a room next to the front living room. This space is also used as a place of escape/protection from the view of others if a sudden guest presence occurs. The room (closed) meets the criterion of "seeing but not being seen," and in it complete clothing/*hijab* have been prepared. When an unwanted event occurs, women not wearing the *hijab* enter this room, put it on, and leave the room veiled.

As detailed in the preceding descriptions, this study found that Muslim women's privacy needs differ from those that prevail in more general concepts of privacy, as a part of religious practice in everyday life. The concept of "seeing but not being seen" is the basis for providing the privacy of Muslim women, and so visual boundaries are important.

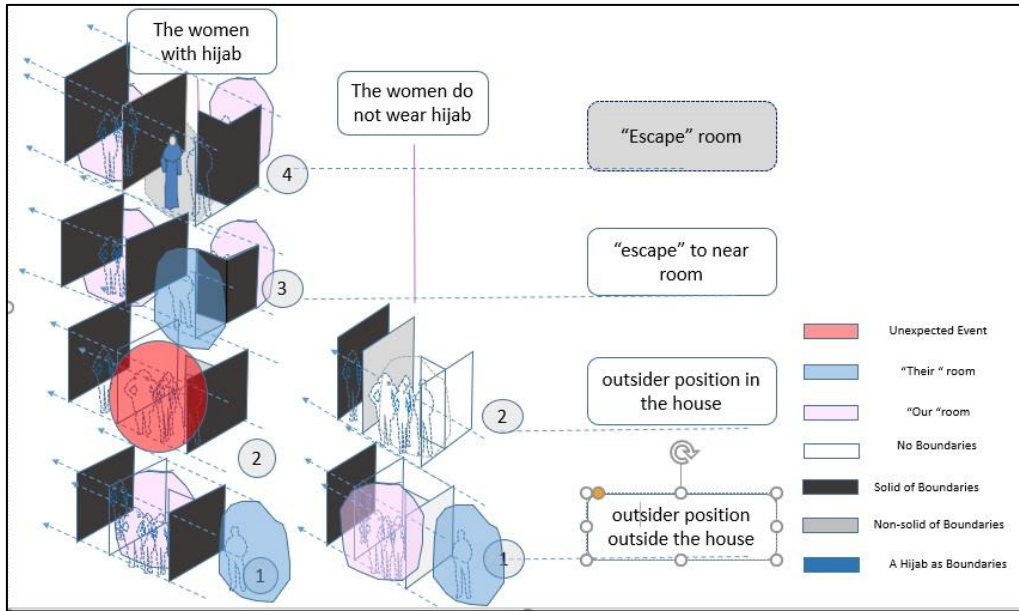


Figure 4: Guest Interaction Processes in Spatial Practices with Boundaries to Create an Escape Room

Figure 4 presents the processes of interaction between guests and occupants. In this process, there are various people (as guest actors) who have very diverse levels of understanding of privacy. In the data, they are classified as guests who are *mahram* and non-*mahram* and those who understand and do not understand the rules of Islam (*mahram*, visiting, *aurat*, and *hijab*).

The stages of visiting and “space events” are described. First, guests register their presence by knocking/ringing (sensory via touch). Then they give a marker by sound as a sign of presence (saying “assalamualaikum,” etc.). Sound can be used in guest identification (familiar/nonfamiliar, *mahram*/non-*mahram*). These events occur outside the fence/boundary of the dwelling. The next step is the inhabitants’ reactions to the voice signs of the other people present. The inhabitants hear and peep to see who is there.

The next reaction can be (1) ignore or (2) answer greetings to enable identification by occupants (i.e., familiar/unknown, *mahram*/non-*mahram*). These events take place in the house. The next step is that if the guest is known and welcome, they will be accepted, but the inhabitant wears the *hijab* (the event is taking place inside the house). If the guest is *mahram* and understands sharia, then they enter (the event is taking place inside the house). If they are not *mahrams*, they just enter the living room. If guests do not understand the rules of Islam and go directly into the house, Muslim women residents will be confused and react by needing to “escape” so as not to be seen by non-*mahram* guests, who do not understand sharia rules. Muslim women will escape to the nearest room to avoid the view of the non-*mahram*

person. If this event is common in the guest room or family room or dining room, then the "escape room" is a nearby space, meeting the "seeing but not being seen" concept.

The "escape room" concept is the reason Muslim women wear the *hijab* both inside and outside the home so that they can follow *mabram*, visiting, and *aurat* rules in their everyday spatial practices. An actual escape room only occurs in Muslim dwellings with residential criteria based on culturally different understanding of Islamic rules, such as in Indonesian society. Indonesian culture, with its familial understanding that is different than that found in the Middle East, creates different boundaries in spatial practices.

The sudden presence of guests without permission to enter is a common occurrence in Indonesian society. Familiarity and brotherhood lead to the behavior of "going into someone else's house without permission." For Muslim women wearing the *hijab*, community behavior like this causes problems. Differences of understanding and implementation in the daily practices of people often result in violations of privacy for *hijab* Muslim women. For such women, body/*aurat* is the focus of privacy. *Aurat* can only be seen by people who are allowed to look according to Islamic sharia law, and the revealing of *aurat* will create shame and guilt in Muslim women wearing the *hijab*. This is what distinguishes the notion of privacy that applies generally from privacy as it is experienced by Muslim women wearing the *hijab*. The *hijab* is not only the clothing that covers the body as a boundary but is also found in religious and spatial practices followed in everyday life.

In the Middle East, rigid boundaries between women's and men's areas and the separation of entrances create private zones for women explicitly through design. This strict separation means that the privacy needs of Muslim women are guaranteed spatially. The existence of a transitional space that connects or separates the interior area of the house (private) and the outside (public) is essential for the Muslim women in a dwelling to achieve their desired level of privacy. Even the existence of a corridor or foyer room as a transitional space using the concept of time (or "intervals," to borrow Heidegger's term) provides a "time delay" for residents to create self-boundaries if the outsider/guest is present in an internal/private room.

Here, time and events are significant in determining the creation of the boundary reactions carried out by actors to meet their privacy needs and, as such, cannot be separated. In architecture, this dimension is an ongoing discussion. Tschumi describes architecture and events as a blend of time and space. The implementation of design in Arab homes provides transitional and corridor areas as translations of the time that is so important in one's reactions in creating boundaries (Figure 5).

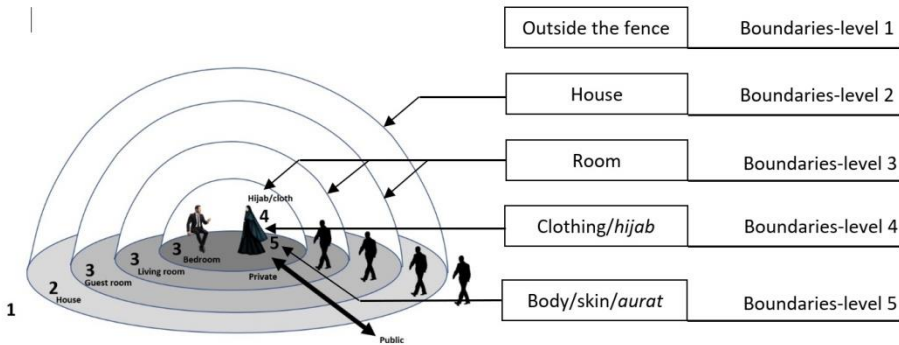


Figure 5: Boundaries/Levels and the Environment of *Hijab* Muslim Women in Muslim Dwellings

The foregoing diagram shows boundary levels, from the outermost areas to the deepest level, namely, the body. Level 1 boundaries are those created by a fence around a property. Before a visit, guests/outside are positioned outside the fence at boundary level 1. The next boundary is the scope of the house, namely, its walls. Doors, windows, and openings that accompany these indeed use the principle of “seeing but not being visible.” The next level is the room. Although there are no outsiders present in the room, Muslim women have their privacy. *Hijab* clothes provide the next boundary in spatial practice related to the presence of outsiders (non-*mahram*). As long as there are outsiders, the *hijab* clothing acts as a Muslim female’s boundary surrounding her body. It can be interpreted that the presence of an outsider signifies whether somewhere is a private or public place. This study provides a critique of Bahamman in Othman (2016), who posits that traditional Muslim homes provide the privacy layers required.

The privacy layers suggested in the present study are in the form of privacy boundaries between actors. These layers refer to outsiders in the area of the residence; privacy within the boundaries of home in relation to male guest actors (meaning male guests who are accepted); the privacy of women with other females; the family privacy layer with family actors and close relatives; and the individual privacy layer in terms of personal privacy.

Bahamman does not differentiate between what is meant by the family in Islamic law and the general understanding of family. Islamic law regulates the family in terms of *mahram* and non-*mahram* members. Criticism of Bahamman’s work also pertains to female guests occupying the layers after male guests, whereas in Islamic societies governed by Islamic law in the practice of space, men and women are in the same position based on *mahram* law. Bahamman does not consider the law of *mahram*, *aurat*, and visiting in his discussion of spatial practices in dwellings.

This study finds that actors and events (in space–time) are related to religious practices. This event accounts for the provision of an escape room as a practice space for Muslim women (*hijab*) in their residence. On the basis of this study, it can be said that the need for an escape room occurs when:

1. Boundaries level 1 and 2, namely, the wall of the house and the fence, may not be rigid or firm. For example, the fence is not always closed and locked. This condition causes people/guests who feel familiar to immediately enter without first asking for the homeowner's permission.
2. The boundaries are transparent or easily visible from the outside, so outsiders can see or peek at the interior of the house.
3. Outsiders or guests do not understand the rules of visiting so that the person feels familiar and enters the house without the occupants' permission.
4. The female occupants are not wearing the *hijab* (wearing clothes that cover their *aurat/body*).

Escape rooms are not required if:

1. Guests/outsideers understand Islamic rules about visiting.
2. Guests give a voice signal to identify themselves to the occupants.
3. Guests pause between their arrival and entry into the house when greetings from the occupants permit entry, or, as a signal, have a child enter first so that the female inhabitants are ready with their *hijab* clothes as their self-boundaries.
4. Houses are designed with transitional and distribution spaces and clear boundaries between private space (women) and public space (men).

If *hijab* Muslim women do need an escape room, then the requirements that must be met are as follows:

1. Easy access
2. Close to the event locus
3. Closed: the element of space
4. Suitable facilities in the room
5. The principle of "seeing but not being seen"

From the foregoing analysis, this study found two types of escape rooms: the *hijab* (clothing) and actual physical rooms. Both are present depending on the events that take place. Escape room types as a manifestation of privacy needs in spatial practice therefore include the following:

1. *Hijab* clothes—a veil as an "escape room"
2. The closest room as an escape room
3. A special room located at the front of the house as an escape room

Their house has been designed with the concept of separation of family zones (second floor) and guests/public (first floor). Sharia guest rules are applied in this family. Sound and visual cues indicate the presence of people. Viewing the presence of people without being seen (guest detection) is done from a room next to the front living room. This space is also

used as a place of escape/protection from the view of others if a sudden guest presence occurs. The room (closed) meets the criterion of “seeing but not being seen,” and in it complete clothing/*hijab* have been prepared. When an unwanted event occurs, women not wearing the *hijab* enter this room, put on the *hijab*, and leave the room veiled.

As detailed in the preceding descriptions, this study found that Muslim women’s privacy needs differ from those that apply in more general concepts of privacy, as a part of religious practice in everyday life. The concept of “seeing but not being seen” is the basis for providing the privacy of Muslim women, and so visual boundaries are important.

## Conclusion

An escape room functions, for Muslim *hijab* women, as a place to escape into, away from the view of others (non-*mahram* in Islamic sharia rules) because of incidental conditions and situations in their dwellings. Escape rooms are only present as a reaction to the presence of outsiders/guests in Muslim dwellings who are identified as non-*mahram*. The idea of an escape room is similarly present in the classification of occupants in *hijab* clothes both outside and inside the home, by following Islamic rules concerning *aurat*, *mahram*, and visiting. For residents not classified as *hijab*, there is no need for an escape room and so there is no such provision. The escape room can be in the form of a three-dimensionally understood space (length, width, height) but can also be formed by *hijab* clothes (clothing as a shape of space covering the body).

This study found that events, space, and time create differences in the presence of escape rooms for Muslim women. The existence of an escape room is attributable to the presence of other people (non-*mahram* in sharia) and to cultural factors.

There will not be an escape room if the residential design has explicitly separated the private zone (women) and the public zone (male) and if strict rules about visiting according to Islamic laws are followed. This strict separation between zones means Muslim women do not need to “escape” to preserve the privacy of their bodies. Privacy is an essential requirement for Muslim women to allow them to carry out their religious practices in spatial terms. Freedom, comfort, and security in activities in the home are guaranteed by the existence of strict boundaries that protect it from the outside environment.

Middle Eastern culture is different than Indonesian culture in terms of rules of visiting, families, and design of dwellings. In the Middle East, dwellings are designed with gender separation of entrances, transitional spaces, and the separation of private–public zones. In addition to these design factors, Middle Eastern culture has strict rules for visiting, namely, that guests must get permission from inhabitants to enter and that *mahram* and non-*mahram* identification must be enabled. In Indonesia, visiting habits that involve entering without permission are commonplace, particularly when the visitor considers themselves family, and this situation makes escape rooms necessary.



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## Informed Consent

The author has obtained informed consent from all participants.

## Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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