



Explanation of the Role of Social Interactions in Gathering Centers and Rural texture in Khuzestan

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Abstract

Recognition in the texture of the village in terms of sustainable and effective concepts in its life, is an issue that will play an effective role in the decision-making process, design and executive operations. In recent years , the new approaches of the Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution and its focus to the valuable rural texture, attention to the issue of collective participation of residents in executive activities. The present paper is based on the field observations of the authors and library studies and as part of the initial core of the formation of modern approaches in the field of rural development deputy in Khuzestan to the category of collective rituals and social interactions in the villages of Khuzestan and address to the neglect of collective rituals, its manifestations in four titles: "similarity to urban elements", "capitalist attitude versus attitude of subsistence ", "no sense of belonging to the texture" and "dependence of collective activities in the city "has proposed. The paper studies the villages of Khuzestan and categorizes the texture of villages in the face of social interactions in four levels; and it suggests that these interactions affect all levels of the texture, and although each one has a sphere of influence, the range of repetition of interactions will affect the importance and impact of each level.

Keywords: collective rituals, village texture, Collective memories, social interactions, Khuzestan.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Rural villages in Iran have experienced various conditions during the contemporary period. The physical texture of these villages, as a manifestation of such conditions, can effectively illustrate the process of these changes. In rural communities, the lack of procedures and sometimes absence of structured guidelines, protocols, and organized principles for interventions in the rural texture has given planners and designers the liberty to apply urban regulations and standards, testing in rural areas what they had previously experienced in cities. Therefore, despite extensive costs in the development of rural housing and infrastructure, many villagers have shown a tendency to simulate urban construction patterns. Wide streets, soulless sidewalks, faceless façades, and materials and forms incompatible with the environment are among the outcomes of these samples. The aim of this paper is to examine the following questions: What impact does collective memories of residents have on their participation in the improvement of valuable rural texture? And in the rural settlements of Khuzestan, which spaces can be identified as the environment for communal rituals and social interactions?

Data and Method

The present paper uses a mixed-method of descriptive-analytical and survey methods. The survey studies were based on observations and assessments conducted within the framework of modern approaches and valuable rural texture projects, and they are supported by written and library studies. The study population includes all rural settlements with valuable historical texture in Khuzestan Province. These villages have been analysed with a focus on social interactions and categorized accordingly within relevant classifications.

Results and Discussion

The rural texture of Khuzestan has many noteworthy aspects in relation to social interactions and communal rituals. A key point in these studies of the physical structure of Khuzestan's villages is the spatial allocation dedicated to social and ritual interactions among villagers. So, the presence of such interactions within the existing spatial framework is a distinctive feature of the rural texture in Khuzestan. Centres of gathering and social interaction in Khuzestan's villages, based on the type of activity, sphere of influence, and the extent to its can generally be categorized into four main groups:

- (a) existing spaces serving as gathering points without the need for specific physical structures,
- (b) gathering spaces associated with village elders based on their social status,
- (c) public buildings within the village,
- (d) designated gathering places requiring specialized spatial.

Misguided views lacking a correct cognitive foundation that distort the physical identity of the village represent a major threat in which planners, designers, and even residents play a



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role in its formation in some way. What must be prioritized in this context is alignment with the natural course of village life both physically and socially. Plans that either oppose or ignore the village's identity are just as damaging to its texture and social interactions that submission to the desires of villagers. The primary responsibility of trustees, planners, and designers is to correctly identify the defining features and distinguishing characteristics of the rural texture. When addressing the valuable rural texture, the first step must be to identify those elements that bestow value upon it elements that hold meaning and memory for the residents. At its most superficial level, attention to valuable rural texture focuses solely on the physical structure and it is obvious that in a mere imitation of the village's previous texture is insufficient to expect resident participation. The attitude to space also shifts attention from the body to the empty space in the texture however, due to the need for residents' participation in execution and ongoing vitality of these spaces they often encounter issues such as public disapproval and the presence of opponents. A more effective and sustainable approach to engaging with rural physical texture involves acknowledging the residents' role as texture contacts although this perspective can significantly mitigate challenges but it introduces subjective attitudes and consequently, pluralism which can complicate the design process. The most fundamental and enduring layer in addressing the physical texture of villages lies in understanding collective rituals and social interactions which can lead to desirable participation based on sustainable values and collective memories of individuals in improvement the space and physical of the village .

Conclusion

Whereas Khuzestan's villages have communal rituals and extensive social interactions, so the valuable rural texture of this region cannot be classified solely based on its physical components. Instead, it must be examined in light of the meanings and values attributed to the texture by its residents and criteria used in evaluating or intervening in these textures should align harmoniously with these cultural and social values. The challenges facing Khuzestan's rural texture cannot be resolved through design alone; rather, organization based on communal rituals due to its alignment with the natural life of the village not only avoids resistance or sensitivity but it will also lead to the recognition, participation, and cooperation among the local people. This proper recognition must emerge at the early stages of rural texture studies. Identifying needs and determining priorities for rural development projects should not be driven by personal preferences or ethnic influences. On the other hand, due to the vast scope of responsibilities, the large volume of tasks, and the diversity of rural settlements, responsible institutions sometimes have no choice but to rely on local demands that the issue sometimes leads to the misdefinition of projects and the allocation of unnecessary funding. But a clear definition of the village's ritual spaces clarifies which areas of the rural texture should be prioritized. If the process of preparing rural master plans is informed by research, cognition, and representation of village social interactions, it can result in maps and patterns that highlight these interactions and gathering centers. This, in turn, enables the effective realization of valuable rural texture projects. It is clear, the integration of specific ritual sites with the physical structure of the village can enhance the effectiveness of these plans. It also helps to prevent conflicts and misguided prioritization in project execution, ultimately leading to better spatial outcomes. In other words, taking



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communal rituals into account not only guides designers in the right direction but it also justifies and encourages residents as the end users and caretakers of these spaces to participate during and after implementation. It is evident that people who know value, and practice their traditions and rituals will naturally view a space that reflects and reinforces these customs with respect and even reverence. This attitude significantly contributes to both conflict resolution during implementation and public cooperation in maintaining the project after completion.

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