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The Cultural Capacities of Indigenous Housing A Case Study of Native Housing in Central Baluchestan, Iran

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Abstract

A large number of houses all over Iran have an identity-less architecture that pays little if any attention to the architectural background of the region in which the houses are located, the needs and desires of the users, and even the sociocultural context of the abodes. The indigenous houses built in the central Baluchestan region have valuable cultural capacities. In this region, any type of housing model certainly has valuable and beneficial capacities, including cultural ones. Respect for elders, familial hierarchy, the possibility of multiple generations living in one house, etc. are among the cultural capacities of such houses, which are often neglected in modern designs. This study used a qualitative method consisting of library research and field surveys to identify the cultural capacities of indigenous housing in the central Baluchestan to improve the quality of modern housing models in the region and help enrich the identity of Iranian architecture. The findings of this study showed that cultural factors including customs, traditions, family and kinship ties have influenced the formation of indigenous houses in this area. They also suggested that using motifs and Colours according to the preferences and culture of the local people, proper interaction with neighbors, spatial flexibility based on the needs of the resident family, and harmony with the beliefs of the local people are among the most important cultural features and capacities of indigenous houses in this area.

Keywords: Capacity, Culture, Indigenous House, Baluchestan, Iran.

Article Type: Research Article

Introduction

Due to the long history of human settlement and the variety of living methods in Sistan and Baluchestan, different types of housing models can be seen throughout the province. These housing types have evolved based on the region's climatic conditions, culture, and common livelihood models. Little written information is available about the indigenous houses and the vernacular architecture of Baluchestan. Due to the vastness of the region, the dispersion of the settlements, and some other limitations including difficult roads, lack of security for researchers, etc., indigenous housing in Baluchestan has not received much scholarly attention. Since a major portion of Baluchestan's vernacular architecture is on the verge of being destroyed and lost, it is necessary to study, identify, and promote the capacities and capabilities of this architecture. The demolition of indigenous rural buildings in recent reconstruction and renovation projects on the one hand and the significance of recognizing the sustainable capacities and values of these buildings and utilizing them in new designs, on the other hand, have increased the need to document indigenous abodes (Raheb 2015: 3). Shortage or even lack of knowledge about the characteristics of indigenous housing in different areas during crises in which quick decisions must be made to accommodate people according to the risen circumstances creates problems for both designers and planners. Iran has experienced numerous tragic events including earthquakes, war, and flood but the housing plans that ensued these events were rather ineffective and burdened by multiple shortcomings. The houses constructed to shelter the war victims

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in western Iran, the flood victims in Sistan and Baluchestan as well as the earthquake victims in Bam and Sarpol-e Zahab did not prove successful in achieving their purpose. They were either built in improper locations or did not meet the cultural needs of the residents. Identification and study of the features and capacities of the vernacular architecture of each region can help officials construct abodes tailored to the needs and the cultural, social, and climatic conditions of that region, especially after crises such as floods, earthquakes, and even war. Such architecture would bring about comfort for the users and would engender a sense of belonging in the residents. In addition, it would help save time and money because living in simple spaces in which privacy is properly observed and which suit the needs of the residents of a region is more convenient for such residents than living in complex spaces built at high cost without any privacy. One of the general shortcomings of modern housing models in central Baluchestan is lacking identity which results from ignoring the architectural background of Iran. The capacities and values of Iran's traditional architecture have been forgotten and public trust and interest in such architecture have diminished. Reviewing the history of vernacular architecture and using past experiences can prove useful in reviving the identity of present-day and future designs. Naturally, not all the features of vernacular architecture can be implemented in present-day and future housing models because living conditions have completely changed over time. However, paying due attention to the cultural features and special qualities of indigenous houses in new designs can help designers create a suitable identity for modern abodes and revive the sense of belonging in the residents.

The questions of this research are: What cultural factors have influenced the formation of indigenous abodes in central Baluchestan? What are the cultural capacities of the indigenous housing of this area? This research is based on the hypothesis that the indigenous housing model formed in central Baluchestan has certain valuable cultural capacities that can be used to improve the quality of present-day and future housing models in the area. This study aimed to identify the capacities of indigenous abodes built in central Baluchestan to assess the possibility of using these capacities in the present-day and future housing models of the region.

History of Research

Until 1960, most studies on vernacular architectures revolved around personal interests and goals. But following the expansion of modern architectures and the emergence of shortcomings and problems in them, inquiry into vernacular architectures became widely popular (Sadeghipey 2012: 70). Theorists such as Christopher Alexander, Paul Oliver, Amos Rapoport, Hassan Fathy, etc. have conducted many studies about vernacular architectures. In Iran, Mohammad Karim Pirnia, Mohammad Mansour Falamaki, Gholamreza Akrami, and Mohsen Sartipour are among the researchers who have studied this field. The literature of vernacular architecture in the Baluchestan region includes the works of Mohammad Saeed Janeb Elahi who published several papers about the traditional housing of the Baluch, the role of the palm in the life of the Baluch, etc. during the sixties and seventies. Tabasi (2005) has also studied the characteristics of rural housing in Baluchestan. In her MA thesis, Malekzadeh (2017) studied the typology of indigenous housing in the southern regions of Baluchestan. Beik and Rastegar (2018) compared the native rural houses of Sistan and Baluchestan from the viewpoint of their physical structure with a cultural anthropological approach.

Research Methodology

A qualitative method consisting of field survey and library research was used in this study. In addition, a descriptive-analytical methodology was utilized to complete the process. The required data were collected from historical documents, available descriptions, architectural photographs and plans, field study, and on-site exploratory tour.

Definitions of Concepts

Concepts such as Habitat, House and settlement, Vernacular architecture and indigenous houses, and culture need to be defined in this research, and the definitions of these concepts are discussed in this section

Habitat

Habitat can be considered as a set of natural, cultural and social conditions existing in a region (Jafari and Mahdavipour 2013: 55). The Persian equivalent for the term habitat, which is boum, has multiple meanings in the Baluchi language, including a type of ferry, owl, canvas, species,

diaper, the specific time of climatic changes, trench, den, dawn break and hope (Jahandideh 2017: 378). The most important meaning of boum, however, is an island. The three main components of a habitat are (1) human (art, culture, and beliefs), (2) nature (natural materials, climate, and environment), and (3) current conditions (Torshabi 2022: 23).

House and Settlement

A house is a multi-dimensional space formed by a combination of several factors (Rapaport 1969: 28). Settlement means the act of settling down and beginning to live with comfort and safety. Humans fulfil their basic needs in their houses, such as staying safe from the elements and having security. They also seek comfort, privacy, a sense of belonging, and desirable environments for their families when they establish houses. The five main characteristics of a house are centrality, continuity, privacy, self-expression, and social relationships. A house is where a meaningful connection between humans and the environment is established to form an identity and sense of belonging (Norberg Schulz 1996: 422).

Vernacular Architecture and Indigenous Houses

Vernacular architecture is not separate from its surroundings; it involves the environment, indigenous materials, and construction traditions (Mohd Ali 1983: 120). Indigenous houses are well-suited for the residents and compatible with the environment (Nazer 2013: 4). Vernacular architecture is the skill of primitive builders to deal with climatic problems and their ability to use minimum resources to create maximum comfort (Bekele Jetie 2019: 1). Vernacular architecture is formed over time according to the needs and desires of the local people of a region and their technical and financial capacity. Such architecture is in harmony with nature and uses ecological materials. The vernacular architecture of each region has grown and improved over the years and the ideas can prove invaluable for inspiration and refined use in present-day and future designs. The active goal of indigenous housing is to create an environment compatible with the way of life of the local people (Rapoport 2013: 82).

Culture

Culture refers to the institutions, arts, customs, traditions, techniques, literature, beliefs, and common ways of life of people who bear similarities in their behaviours, ideology, economics, religion, and technologies (Ziari 2003: 96–97). Culture is an epistemological entity that partially makes up the identity and values of a nation. It includes traditions, beliefs, and customs that are reflected in a society (Nasr 2017:19). Nowadays, the term culture refers to all the thoughts, behaviours, and values of a group. It regulates the human life and identity. One of the components of culture is ethnicity. Each ethnic group or culture often has its distinct characteristics including accent, customs, and even physical features. Cultural identities are influenced by various factors such as aesthetics, beliefs, relationships, skills, families, and history. These factors contribute to the development and enrichment of identities (Shaari 2015: 59).

Indigenous Houses in Baluchestan

There are different types of houses in Sistan and Baluchestan, which provide valuable information about the local knowledge of architecture and housing. Black tents, mudbrick houses, wooden houses, brick houses, etc. are among these establishments which are constructed in different shapes using different types of materials. Many words mean house or residential complex in the Baluchestan region, including Ges, Koti, cat, kotok, godam, lari, log, plas, davar, halk, raj and kapar. In addition, the terms kot, madi, koll, lahar, and hemeh are used to refer to a house in the Baluchi literature (Mahmoudzehi 2013: 106–110).

Types of Indigenous Houses in Central Baluchestan

There are three general types of houses in central Baluchestan. The first type is kapar (Figure. 1), a lightweight structure with a special design unique to this region. The second type is gerd toop (Figure. 2), a house with a circular body and a domed roof. The third type is baan (Figure. 3), a heavyweight house constructed with clay and stone.

Spaces Inside Indigenous Houses in Central Baluchestan

The various spaces of the indigenous houses built in central Baluchestan are divided into three groups: living spaces, livelihood spaces, and service spaces. The living spaces include rooms, guest rooms, kitchens, courtyards, and porches. The livelihood spaces include stables, gardens, and chicken

houses. The service spaces include entries, storages, bathrooms, water sources, and ovens (Malekzadeh 2017: 96). The most important spaces are rooms, guest rooms, porches, courtyards, kitchens (locally known as Choldan) and the immediate vicinity around the house.

Room

Pirnia proposes that the room constitutes the whole house (Bemanian and Amini 2017: 81). The indigenous houses built in central Baluchestan may have one or multiple rooms (Figure. 4). Usually, several activities are going on in a single room. A room is an enclosed space that provides privacy and is used to establish group relations (Arasteh 2017: 214).

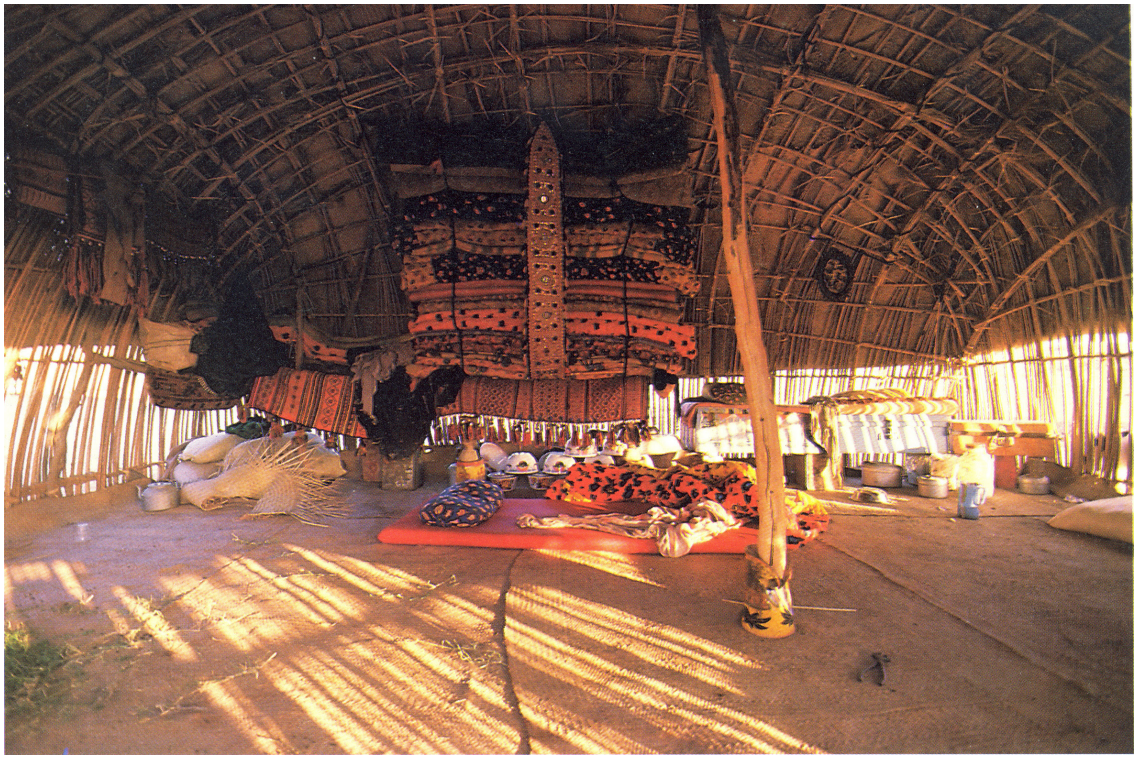


Figure. 1: *Kapar, (After: Kasraeian and Arshi 2001: 70)*

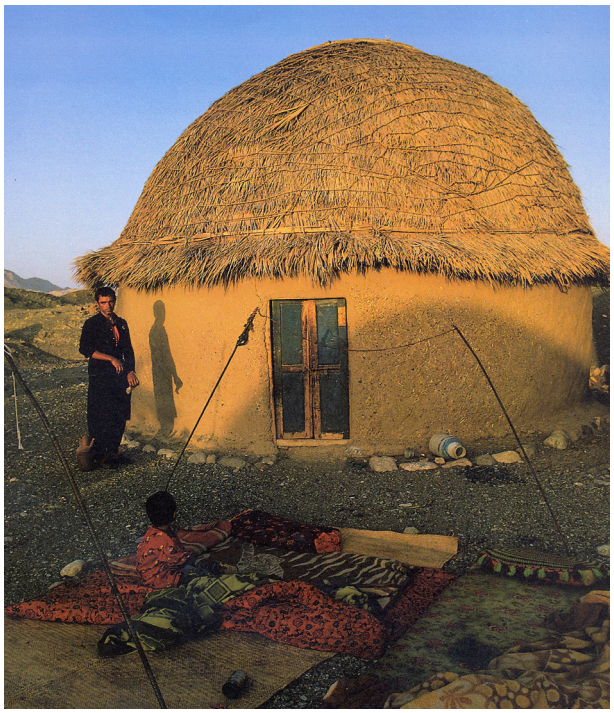


Figure. 2: *Gerd toop (After: Kasraeian and Arshi 2001: 54)*

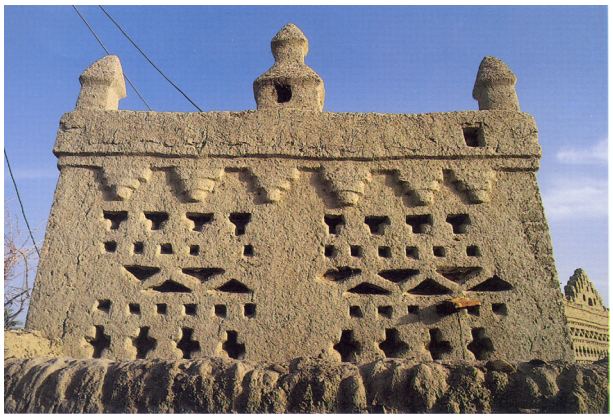


Figure. 3: *Baan (After: Kasraeian and Arshi 2001: 78)*



Figure. 4: *The room has a hypothetical grid that divides the space for different uses*

Living Room (inn)

The living room is one of the most important spaces of the indigenous houses of this area. The residents refer to the living room as an inn. It is often independent of the other living spaces. The guest room is usually the best space in terms of furniture, decoration, access, view, and light (Figure. 5).

Courtyard

In some of the rural areas of Baluchestan, the courtyard is not an enclosed space; rather, it is an open space shared among a few neighbors where activities are customarily performed around the buildings (Figure. 6). In older villages, however, courtyards are enclosed spaces with certain



Figure. 5: *The most important spaces of the indigenous houses (After: Malekzadeh 2017: 19).*

elements such as a sleeping porch (kale), garden, and wooden canopy (kapar). These components play an important role in the aesthetics of courtyards (Malekzadeh 2017: 161).

Kitchen

The kitchen is often a fireplace inside the living room. It is built in the space where women sit and a vertical chimney provides the required ventilation (Figure. 8).



Figure. 6: *Many activities are done in the yard or surrounding area*

Terrace

The special climatic conditions of the region necessitates the use of semi-open and roofed spaces. If affordable, the local people build roofed spaces such as terraces in front of their houses to use them at certain times of the day when climatic conditions are favorable (Figure. 7). Daily activities such as needleworking, tea drinking, etc. are a common sight in these spaces. Since the other spaces of the house can be accessed via the terrace, it acts as an expansion to the other spaces.

Influential Factors in the Formation of Indigenous Houses in Central Baluchestan

Several factors have influenced the formation of indigenous houses in central Baluchestan, including family needs, culture (religious beliefs, traditions, social values, lifestyles, familial and kinship ties), nature (climate, geography, and local materials), and economy (livelihood and economic capacity).



Figure. 7: *The porch is one of the important spaces in the native housing of this area*



Figure. 8: *Fireplaces can be studied in terms of variety, form, aesthetic features, efficiency, and resistance (After:Malekzadeh 2017: 191).*

Cultural Capacities of Indigenous Houses in Central Baluchestan

Indigenous housing in central Baluchestan has been formed based on the culture and identity of the Baluch people. These houses are the physical reflection of the life aspects of these people (needs, beliefs, values, family, and social interactions). Cultural characteristics and social relationships have been particularly influential in the establishment of these houses and have led to the creation of numerous cultural capacities and values. Since these houses were meant to fulfil the specific sociocultural needs of the Baluch people, their cultural capacities can be reconstructed and used in the present-day and future abodes of the region to improve their identity and create a sense of belonging in the residents. The use of simple geometric shapes, various cheerful colours inspired by handicrafts for interior and exterior decoration, the sanctity of the inner space, the hierarchical position of the residents, family structure, spatial flexibility, respect for privacy, social relationships, respect for guests, complexity and simplicity at the same time, etc. are among the most important cultural capacities of the houses in central Baluchestan (Figure. 9).

Architecture of Indigenous Houses as a Conscious Choice and Product of Collective Wisdom

Indigenous art is the outcome of wise and conscious choices picked from among a limited number of desirable options (Rapoport 2013: 28). Indigenous knowledge develops with each new generation of people to their needs and lifestyle. This knowledge becomes institutionalized in society via oral teachings and intergeneration transfer of information. Indigenous knowledge carries with it creativity, identity, inspiration, interaction, and innovation (Shaari 2015: 58). From the managerial point of view, indigenous housing is governed by the collective wisdom of indigenous residents and relies on the empirical knowledge gained via the interaction between nature and mankind. Indigenous people's knowledge of existence, expanded through interaction and experience, passes on to future generations and becomes more complete (Akrami 2010: 28). The architecture of indigenous houses is a product of collective wisdom which, unlike individual thought, never makes mistakes. Similarly, the indigenous houses built on the coastal areas of central Baluchestan have formed over time and based on the collective wisdom of the local people of this region. Some of the native residents of the Baluchestan region have chosen kapar as their desired abode via many years of testing and experience; this choice is conscious because kapar has proven to be the most appropriate house type for them based on their lifestyle.

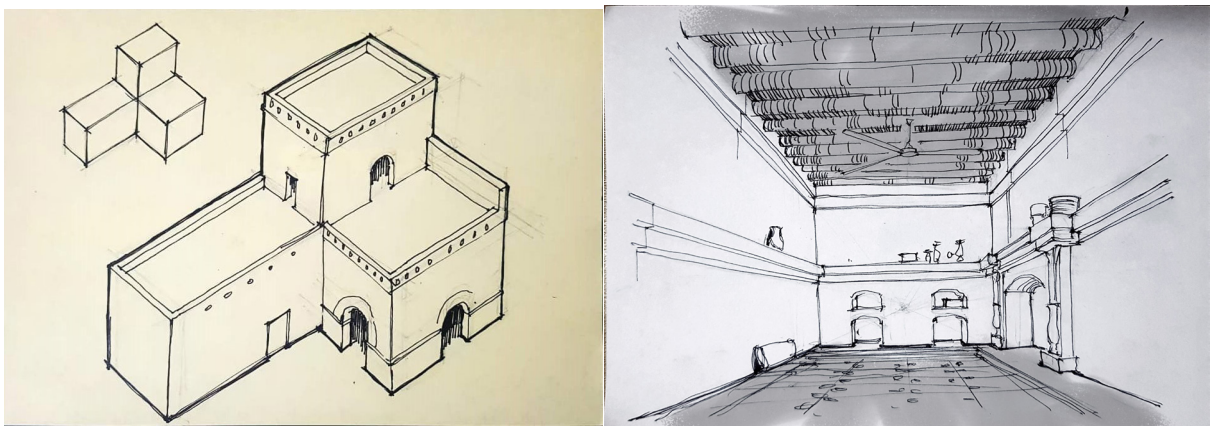


Figure. 9: *Communication with nature and compliance with proportions. (Right) Among the capabilities of the interior space, we can mention proportions and human scale, rhythm, flexibility, etc.(Left) Among the features of the outdoor space, we can mention the connection with nature, valuable decorations, the use of local materials, etc.*

Communication with Nature in Indigenous Housing of Baluchestan

Man is a part of the nature, so his life, his attire, and his residence are also affected by nature. Man's presence in nature means closeness to God and his essence (Zarghami *et al*. 2016: 23). Living in Baluchestan is associated with refraining from overusing and rather protecting the nature (paying attention to the earth, things, creatures, and people). Native housing in Baluchestan is considered an integral part of the nature. This coordination can be seen both in the visual communication and the spatial and functional communication. So in some types of housing in this area, it is hardly possible to separate the boundaries of housing and the nature. It can be said that native housing is a part of the nature. (Figure. 10).

Using the Baluchi Art in Indigenous Houses in Central Baluchestan: Decoration and its Effect on the Identity of Indigenous Houses

One of the cultural features of the houses in central Baluchestan is the use of cheerful colours and simple geometric forms inspired by Baluchi handicrafts in the decoration of the houses. This has given a unique identity to these houses. In architectural decoration, each shape or component derives its value from communal beliefs (Bemanian and Amini 2017:65). The shapes used in the façade of indigenous Baluchi houses are completely geometric. Straight lines, circles, triangles, squares, crosses, etc. are common sights. The designs are simple and basic but they have a strong visual composition. Visual elements such as balance, repetition, symmetry, rhythm, and even movement



Figure. 10: *Connection with nature (Right) Nature is part of the local housing of this area. (Left) Nature is the best teacher and source of inspiration for native people.*

have a great impact on the formation of decorative patterns in these façades. While motifs in the Baluchi art are geometric and seem very primitive, their effect on the human mind is so strong that not only surpasses that of any realistic representation of objects, but also fascinates and compels the viewer to ponder their meaning (Figure.11) (Nazari *et al*. 2015: 116). The use of colour creates a sense of cheerfulness and relaxation (Naderi Gorzaldini 2016: 225). Local colours are a source of differentiation of cultural identities (Figure.12) (Johnny 2017: 14). The motifs and colours used in the Baluchi art carry messages from the culture and the life of the residents. These messages include concepts such as enlightenment, growth, fertility, blessing, unity, empathy, cooperation, assistance, respect for the Creator, respect for the nature, respect for elders, respect for guests, perseverance, patience, resilience, endeavor, joy, vitality, hope, asking the Creator for help, humility, avoiding futility and extravagance as well as simplicity of life. Inspired by nature, the Baluchi artist simplifies natural phenomena such as water, mountains, plains, sky, earth, humans, plants, trees, flowers, butterflies, day and night, the sun, the moon, stars, seasons, main directions, animals, bird, etc. to express his/her thoughts and feelings in the form of motifs and colours.



Figure. 11: *Simple geometric patterns inspired by handicrafts are used in the façade of indigenous houses in central Baluchestan. (Left) Designs on the door . (Right) Patterns on the facade of the house*

Complexity and Simplicity of Indigenous Houses in Central Baluchestan

The architecture of the indigenous houses of Baluchestan is simple and oriented toward quietude but very complex in its unpretentiousness at the same time. The simplicity of this architecture is visual but its complexity is perceptual. It is perceptible only by the eyes that have in-depth vision (Akrami 2010: 27). Simplicity is one of the main characteristics of the lifestyle and houses of the Baluch people. Despite the simplicity of the houses, there is a type of complexity that may not be observable at first glance. Someone who is not familiar with the architecture and culture of the region may judge everything to be simple, from decorations, relations, different spaces, and their relations, and even how family members sit around to have food. However, a deeper understanding of the culture, beliefs, and architecture of the Baluch reveals the diverse and complex aspects of their lifestyle. The motifs and colours in the decorations are directly inspired by the beliefs and values of the Baluch people and have their complexity, principles, and rules. In general, the indigenous houses built in central Baluchestan have mysteries and complexities that may not be initially visible (Figure.13).

Privacy and Boundaries in Indigenous Houses in Central Baluchestan

The inner space of a house is the privacy of the individuals who live in it (Bemanian and Amini 2017: 72). Honoring guests is very important in the indigenous houses of Baluchestan. In addition, the Baluch care a lot about respecting privacy. In the rural areas of Baluchestan, there is no clearly defined physical boundary between residential units. Rather, the different functions of the houses create certain spaces around them, and these spaces and functions, in turn, form privacies for the residents. While such privacy is not physically defined, it is



Figure. 12: *The interior decoration of indigenous houses in central Baluchestan.*
(Left) (After: Kasraian and Arshi 2001: 78)
(Right)(After:by Author)



Figure. 13: *Simplicity and at the same time complexity in the size and appearance of the house*

recognizable by all residents. Certain spaces such as bathrooms, faucets, bread ovens, livestock pens, chicken houses, and warehouses collectively form the boundaries of these indigenous houses. In Baluchestan, especially in the central parts, privacy and the separation of private and public space is highly important. Therefore, access to the guest room (locally referred to as inn) and the connection between this room and other spaces such as bathrooms and faucets have minimum overlap with the other areas of the house so that guests feel more comfortable and the family members can better provide services to them (Figure. 14).

Participation and Cooperation of Family Members and Neighbors in Constructing Indigenous Houses and the Relationship of Houses and Neighbors

All family members participate as much as they can in the construction of indigenous houses in Baluchestan. Children and adults contribute to the planning and construction process to the best of their ability depending on their physical condition. Everyone commits to building their house together. By so doing, building a house becomes a good memory for the whole family throughout their life. The participation and cooperation of all family members in the planning and construction of their house create a sense of belonging in them and every member sees his/her role in the construction process as essential. Cooperation is one of the main characteristics of the traditional society of Baluchestan. This cooperation includes everything from participation in celebrations to activities such as building houses. Neighbors tend to interact and socialize well with one another in Baluchestan; although the degree of this interaction may vary in the different parts of the region and the different house types. They visit each other, help one another with cooking, cleaning pens, etc., and use their tools and facilities to fulfil the needs of their neighbors

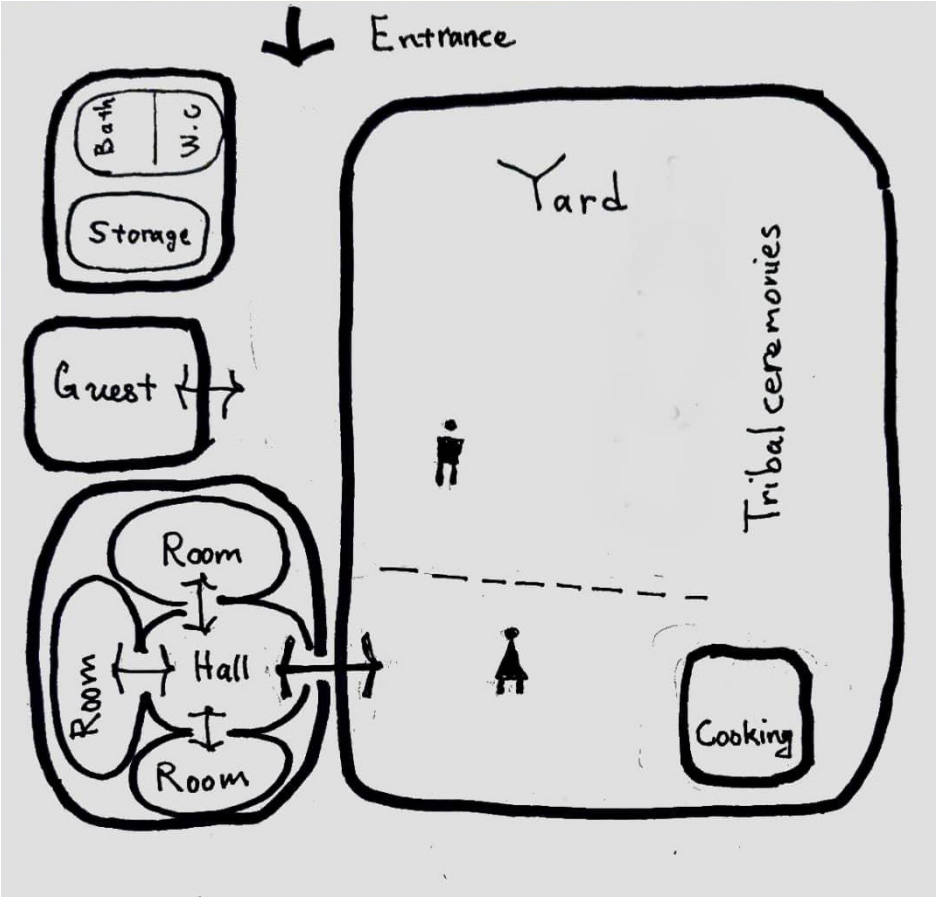


Figure. 14: *In the native housing of this area, the privacy of guests, family women, and men is customarily defined for their well-being and comfort, and each of them has their privacy.*

who may lack such means. Some adjacent houses even have access to one another from inside (Figure .15).

Emphasis on Entry and Invitation

The entry of a house is the threshold for both entering the house and the outside world (Bemanian and Amini 2017: 56). Entries are the most important

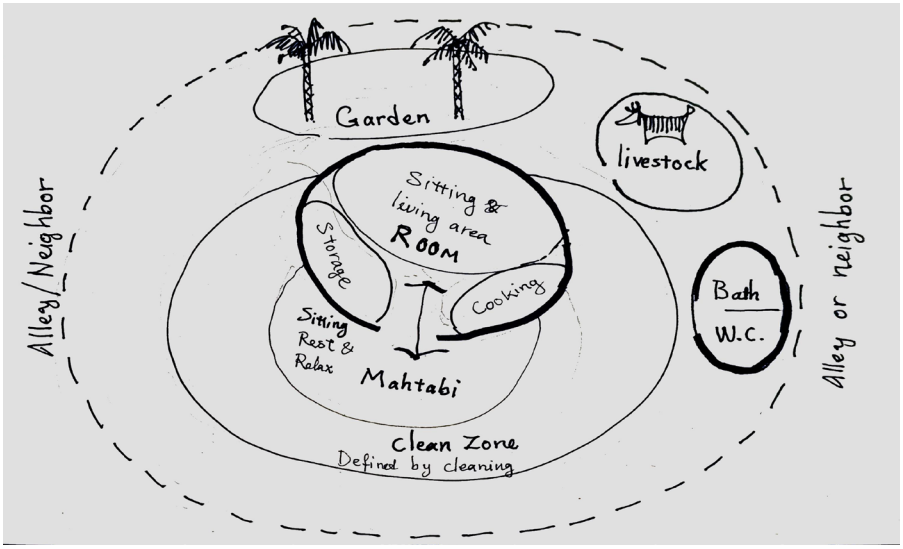


Figure. 15: *In the native housing of this area, activities such as cleaning, and raising poultry and livestock, and spaces such as gardens, toilets, animal pens, etc., define the boundary of the neighborhood. It can be said that neighbors have a significant impact on the formation of native housing.*

part of the outer walls of a house. In the different areas of Baluchestan, different degrees of attention to and emphasis on entries can be observed. Depending on the history and type of a house as well as the materials used in its construction, the emphasis on the entry can vary. But there is always emphasis on entries in all house types including kapar, gerd toop, and baan. Such emphasis may be expressed by the specific form of the entry or the choice of colours and materials of the wall (Figure. 16).

Adaptability (Adaptation to New Conditions)

The built environment is a set of adaptations that human beings create using geographical and cultural environments (Lang 2016: 93). Adaptability refers to the capacity of space to adapt to new conditions as required by the family members and encompasses all internal changes such as personality, structure, microelements and composition (Einifar 2003: 70). All across the world, houses develop over time and adapt to the relatively stable natural features



Figure. 16: *Emphasis on the entry using simple door frames tailored to the culture of the Baluch people.(up)*
(After: Malekzadeh 2017: 155)

(climate, topography, available materials, etc.); as they develop, houses rapidly change sociocultural conditions and economic situations (Estaji 2017: 38). One of the characteristics of the indigenous houses in Baluchestan is the lack of fixed furniture in the indoor spaces. While the arrangement of a few elements (including the space in which food is prepared, the space in which dishes and utensils are kept, and the space in which bedrolls are placed) are fixed, the other parts of an indigenous Baluchi house lack fixed furniture. As a result, it is possible to perform various activities such as entertaining guests, sitting around, having food, watching TV, and sleeping in different places within the house (Figure. 17).

Analysis of Findings

In short, the valuable cultural capabilities of native housing in Baluchestan, which can be adapted to today and future housing, can be presented as described in Table 1.

Table. 1: *Cultural capabilities of native housing in central Baluchestan*

	Description of cultural competence	**Cultural ability**
1	Conscious and the product of collective wisdom	The formation of native housing over time is conscious and a result of the collective wisdom of the local people.
2	Cooperation, participation and social relations	People's cooperation in work is one of the valuable characteristics and customs of the Baluch people, which can be seen in the formation of native housing in this area.
3	Peaceful coexistence	Native housing accommodates at least three generations (grandfather, father, and grandchildren).
4	Respect the guest	The reception space is the most important space due to the guests' place in the local culture, in terms of quality, variety of decorations, amount of light, visibility, and dimensions.
5	Household participation	The participation and consensus of all family members in the construction of native housing causes more economic and social stability and, more importantly, it creates a sense of self-sufficiency and self-confidence.
6	Participation of neighbors	In this area, neighbors and families often actively participate in the construction of native housing, and native housing is built with the lowest labor cost.
7	Neighbor interaction	Participation in some spaces and services, such as yards, gardens, ovens, animal pens, water taps, etc. in the neighboring units has caused more interaction and communication between neighbors.
8	The possibility of holding special events	The native housing of this area has the capacity to hold the Diwan ceremony, which is part of the local culture. The presence of large spaces around the house, like the yard of the house, makes it possible to hold ceremonies.
9	Coordination in housing and clothing	Pretending to look beautiful and be seen is conventional in their clothes and the appearance of their houses and it is visible.
10	The sanctity of housing in the local culture	The orientation of the house towards the Qibla, respect for nature, respect for the people of the house, respect for guests and neighbors, the presence of special decorations with various and beautiful colours and patterns on the facade and interior of the house, all indicate the respect and value of housing in the local culture.
11	Invitation	Inviting or emphasizing the entrance with a special form or choosing different colours and materials in this part of the wall.
12	Simplicity at the same time complexity	The native housing, while being simple, has mysteries and complications that are less visible at first glance.
13	Residents' sense of belonging	Permanent ownership, peace and security, respect for guests or family members, respect for women, elders, and guests, etc. have created a sense of belonging in the native housing of this area.
14	Confidentiality and respect for privacy	Observance of privacy, which is not physical but mental, and exists and is clear and recognizable for all residents.
15	Adaptability	Due to the lack of specific furniture in the space, there is versatility in the native housing.

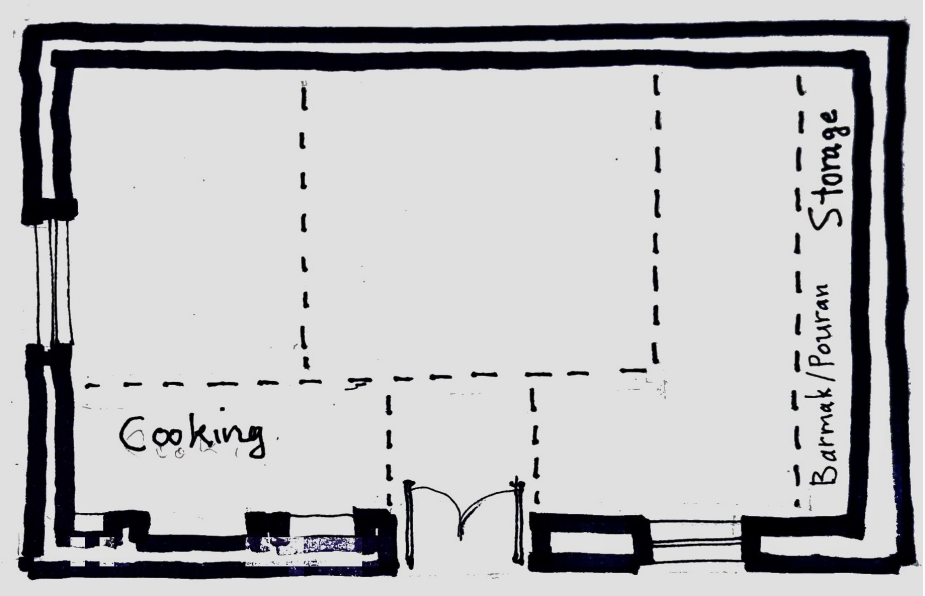


Figure. 17: *The absence of fixed furniture in the interior spaces allows it to be flexible, so different activities can be easily performed in a same space during the day and night.*

Conclusion

The indigenous houses built in the central Baluchestan region exhibit a wide range of variety, ranging from the simple kapar to stone and brick houses. These types of housing have been formed according to the needs and conditions of the local people. The residences of the people living in central Baluchestan are affected by multiple factors such as natural conditions (climate and geography), economy, and livelihood. The vernacular architecture has been shaped by the habitancy of these people. The identity of this vernacular architecture has been formed by said factors as the cornerstone and cultural factors (language, clothing, beliefs, art, and creativity) as the superstructure enriched by collective wisdom. The conscious view of these people to their lives and needs and their harmony with the surrounding natural environment, which is guided by collective wisdom, has led to the formation of various types of abodes in this region. Kapar, gerd toop as well as the stone and brick houses found in Baluchestan have unique characteristics and capacities that can be utilized at different times, such as those of crises. Certain components in their design can even be used in present-day construction projects. The indigenous housing is a physical reflection of the life aspects (needs, beliefs, values, family, and social interactions) of the people living in central Baluchestan. Cultural values and symbols as well as social relationships have had a great impact on the formation of housing in this region and have bestowed a special identity to the local houses. Since the different house types constructed in this area have been tailored to meet the needs of the local people and to be compatible with their cultural conditions, the cultural capacities of the vernacular architecture of this region can be used in present-day and future designs in Baluchestan. This can prove beneficial in improving the identity of the vernacular architecture of the area and fulfiling the needs of the residents. The most important cultural capacities of indigenous housing in central Baluchestan that can be used in the design of present-day and future houses of the region include the following: using motifs and colours in interior and exterior decorations by the local people's preferences and culture, using open and semi-open spaces to enhance residents' relationship with nature and perform special cultural activities, participation of all family members in different stages of construction, proper interaction with neighbors, simplicity and attention to culture and customs, respect for and attention to privacy and the dignity of women, the elderly and guests, changeability, adaptability and variability of the houses by the running needs of the resident families, and finally compatibility with the beliefs and values of the local people, and thus the formation of a sense of belonging and joy.

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