

Intervention in Rural Community Building under the Advantageous Resources of Colleges and Universities

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Abstract:

The concept of community building originated from community planning in England to cope with the problem of disorderly urbanization brought about by industrialization [1]. Japan extended the town-building movement inspired by British community planning, which is the earliest practical movement of community building. China's community building started late, and most of the research and practice is concentrated in the city, after entering the 20th century, with the increase in the rate of urbanization, more and more villages are faced with social problems such as "hollow villages" and "elderly villages", and the demand for community building in the countryside is becoming more and more urgent.

Keywords:

Community Building, Villager Participation, Rural Culture

1. Progress of community building theory research at domestic and foreign countries

1.1. Foreign Research

Lucia Aquilino (2021) proposes that the countryside should stimulate industrial cooperation and maintain the vitality of the community through the promotion of tourism; Ifrah Mahamud Magan (2021) utilizes the phenomenological method and proposes that faith and cultural infrastructure is the core of community building for the minority community through interviewing the residents of Somali gathering community in Chicago. Ryo Yamazaki (2019) states that what is more important than spatial design in community building programs is linking people to each other.

A community building approach based on the architectural discipline and the scope of physical space. M.M. Fouad (2020) conducted a simulation of real community space through digital technology like Design Builder and Energy Plus software to explore a sustainable, zero-energy community building and operation approach. [1]

1.2. Domestic Research

At present, domestic research around community building is mainly carried out in three areas: the basic theory of community building, the practice of building and the method of building. [2]

The basic theory of community building: social capital and public participation. Tang Jie (2017) elaborated that the key to community building lies in the accumulation of social capital by introducing the concept of community capital; Zhang Tingting (2015) pointed out that the residents' sense of responsibility and identity come from the cultivation of government subjects. Luo Jiade (2012) believes that community building is government-induced, private initiative, NGO help, is community self-organization, self-governance, and self-development, to help solve the problems of social welfare, economic development, and social harmony.

Practices of community building: life intervention type, art intervention type, post-disaster reconstruction type, heritage preservation type, etc. Huang Ruimao (2013) believes that community building is a social movement and a common social experience; Zhao Ronghui (2016) points out that community building by artistic intervention is generally an intervention in community development from the perspectives of cultural and historical reconstruction and culture and art. Community building methods: presenting the complexity and versatility of. Pang Guoyu (2016) proposed a model of NGO intervention in urban community building from the perspectives of "event object" and "process depth".

1.3. Literature review

In summary, first, most of the foreign research content from the past based on the physical space of the community to economics, sociology and other disciplines from the perspective of community building, while most scholars in China are still focusing on the direction of the physical space of the community building; second, most of the current domestic research on community building is focused on the urban community, and few scholars are involved in the field of research on the method of community building in rural areas; Third, there is a lack of research on rural community building methods and modes from the perspective of the participating subjects, and the research on rural community building methods and modes involving the superior resources of universities is still in a blank state.

2. Yuejiagou Village, Baqiao District, Xi'an City, China

2.1. Basic information of Yuejiagou Village

Yuejiagou Village is located in Hongqing Street Office, Baqiao District, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, 20 kilometers from the core area of Xi'an. The village is situated at the foot of Mount Li, in the semi-sloping plateau area of Hongqing District (i.e., Figure 1), with a favorable ecological environment. It is bordered by Baihualing Village to the east, Hujiagou Village to the south, Qinghua Factory to the west, and Aerospace No. 4 Hospital to the north. Yuejiagou Village is long from east to west, short from north to south, high in the east and low in the west, with more slopes. There are seven villagers' groups in the village, with a cultivated area of more than 1,500 acres, 896 households in the village, and a permanent population of about 2016 people.

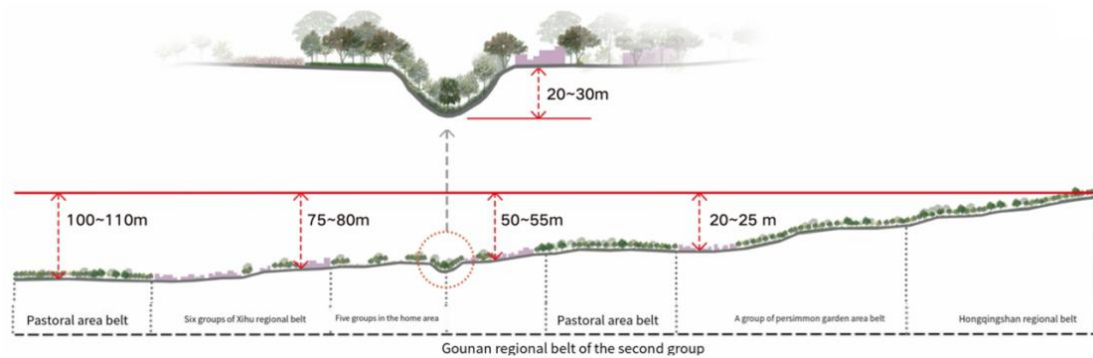


Figure 1. Landscape pattern of Yuejiagou Village (drawn by Zhang GaoMing).

2.2. Basic information of Yuejiagou Village

By visiting and researching, men in the village account for 67%, a larger proportion, about 2,180 people; women account for 33%, about 1,073 people. Among the seven village groups, there are about 610 people in Group 1, 430 people in Group 2, 397 people in Group 3, 541 people in Group 4, 365 people in Group 5, 518 people in Group 6, and 392 people in Group 7. Among them, there are 520 teenagers, 2114 young adults and 619 old people, with a reasonable age composition. Because Yuejiagou Village is close to downtown Xi'an and in the Chanba Development Zone, the remaining people account for 44% of the total population of the village, and the remaining 56% are migrant workers, of which 16% are from outside the province. People are engaged in farming as an important industry, supplemented by small mixed fruits with special characteristics.

3. Community building practices in Yuejiagou Village, Baqiao District, Xi'an City, China.

3.1. Project Background

The project is based on the Xi'an Eurasia University's school-level research project "Exploring the methods and modes of community building in villages under the intervention of universities' superior resources - Taking Fufeng County Nonglin Village as an Example," Project No. 2021XJSK21, with a total of four faculty members and six students taking part in the project's research, visits, design, and study work.

Unlike the regular rural landscape enhancement projects, this project pays more attention to the role value and participation of the residents in the construction of the village. By digging into the cultural elements of Yuejiagou Village and the rural scenes in the villagers' memories, the living habits of the villagers were integrated into the design of the spatial scenes (i.e., Figure 2). At the same time, a villagers' participation mechanism is established, and in the design process, based on the local construction conditions, a production manual is formulated that villagers can collaborate in, so as to increase the participation of residents in the transformation of their own living space, and to reduce the risk of later maintenance and at the same time moderately increase the income of the residents.

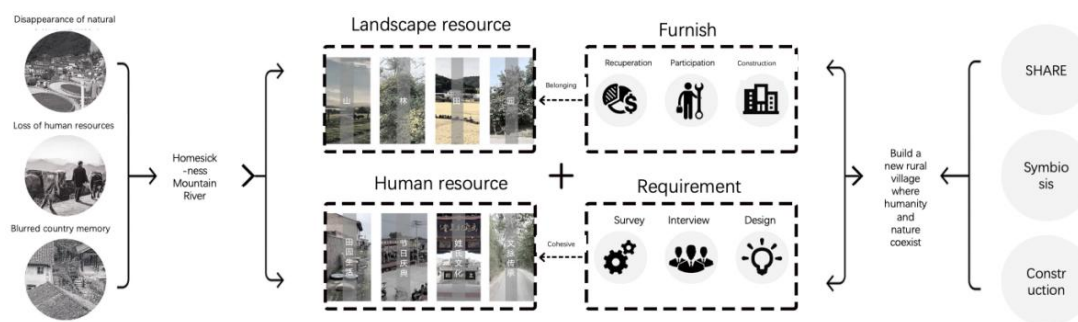


Figure 2. Building Strategies (drawn by Li Jiarong).

3.2. Research on Cultural Lineage and Life Scene

3.2.1. Surname Culture

Through visiting the villagers, it is found that Yuejiagou Village has a deep connection with the culture of family name. First of all, the name “Yuejiagou” comes from Yue Fei’s clan member Yue Changlin. Legend has it that Yue Fei was killed, Yue Changlin fled to this place, because there is a deep ditch, he will follow the trend to both sides of the slope to repair the kiln, named Yuejiagou, and according to historical records, its descendants then changed their surnames to avoid the persecution of Qin Hui. In the Ming Hong years, Yuejiagou village relying on the clan name and geographic environment of the different initial formation of Persimmon Garden, Ditch South, Ren Dong, Ditch North, Yu Jia, West Hu, Temple Ditch seven branches and development to date. Among them, Wang is the main surname of Persimmon Garden, Hu is the main surname of Ditch South, Ditch North and West Hu, Yu is the main surname of Yu Jia, Yang, Chen and Ren are the main surnames of Ren Dong, and Zhao is the main surname of Temple Ditch (i.e., Figure 3).



Figure 3. Scene design rely on villagers’ common memories and living habits (team design).

3.2.2. Railroad Culture

After the reform and opening policy, part of the sloping land in Yuejiagou Village was leveled, and the mode of production changed from pure traditional agriculture to a combination of industry and agriculture, with the textile parts processing industry becoming the leading industry in the village. The railroad, which was used for industrial transportation in the past, has now changed its identity and has become a place for the villagers to take a rest in the fields and communicate with each other. For the old railroad, the team proposes the transformation strategy of preserving the memory of the site and updating the function of the site (i.e., Figure 4).

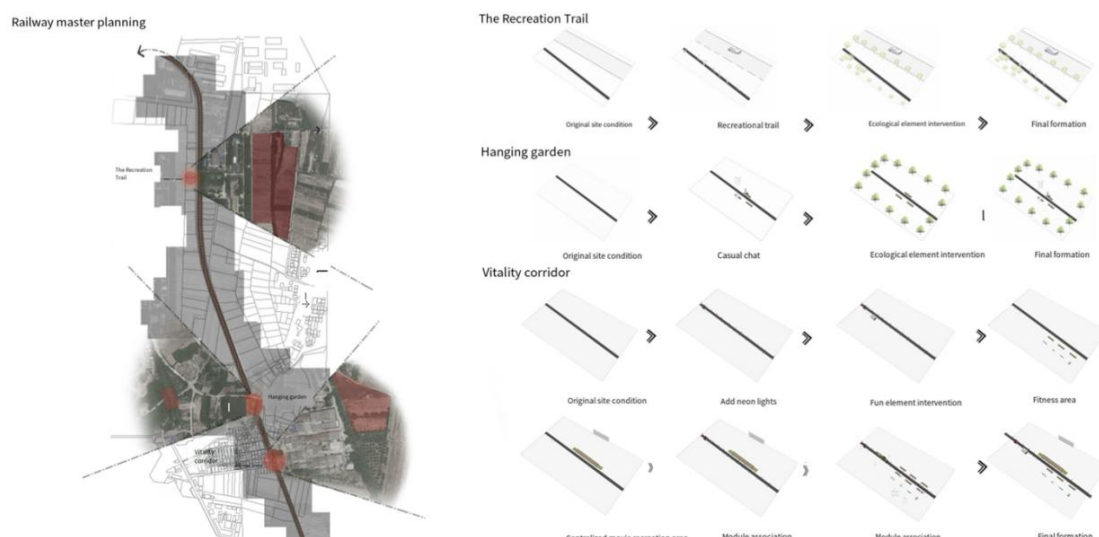


Figure 4. *Renewal strategy of the old railroad (drawn by Li Jiarong).*

3.2.3. Village Life

Rural life is different from city life. Rural community building should be based on the daily habits of villagers to explore and enhance their living scenes. In this process, the designer should not be the only “speaker”, but should go deep into the life of the villagers and understand their living habits and spatial needs. During the project, the core members of the team ate and lived with the villagers, and conducted interviews with more than 15 people, including the previous head of Yuejiagou, the current head of Yuejiagou village, the principal of Yuejiagou Primary School, and the representatives of the villagers, which led to the formation of more than 90-minute rural oral record video “Memory of the Countryside” (i.e., Figure 5). At the same time, the team conducted a field survey on the daily life behavior of the residents, classified and analyzed the villagers’ daily behaviors and the places where they occurred, and put forward the enhancement strategies based on the villagers’ memories and life scenes, which will provide support for the community building with the participation of the villagers in the future.



Figure 5. *Interviews with villagers and fieldwork (team shoot).*

3.3. Village community building mechanism with villagers' participation under the intervention of university resources

The core element of whether the rural community building can be carried out lies in the existence of effective villagers’ participation in the building mechanism as support. Traditional village construction projects are often led by the government, designers participate in the A and B parties, the advantage is that the project implementation efficiency, generally does not require a long time to complete the project research, design, landing and acceptance of the work, but such a single organizational structure

is often accompanied by a number of irreversible problems, such as the design of the villagers do not match the usage habits and the high cost of maintenance, the countryside Insufficient excavation of rural characteristics, etc. The mechanism of community building in villages under the intervention of universities, on the basis of the original duality of government and designers, adds experts and students from colleges and universities, villagers, and social volunteers to form a pluralistic and co-creative system of the rural community. In this regard, how to ensure the effective participation of villagers needs to be clarified in the process of community building in villages, such as the inclusion of “project discussion”, “villagers’ discussion” and so on. The mechanism should ensure smooth communication between villagers and government representatives, designers, volunteers, enterprises, etc. At the same time, villagers should be encouraged to actively participate in the whole process of research, design, implementation and maintenance through the establishment of the mechanism.

3.4. Self-constructed manual for villagers

In order to ensure that the villagers actively participate in the landing of the project, the team conducts research with the village government, experts and social organizations, and designs the Self-Build Manual in line with the local construction process, which covers the villagers’ home gardens, retaining walls, fences, etc., It encourages villagers to participate in village creation activities, and helps villagers to establish a sense of “ownership” to reduce the maintenance costs in the later stages of the project. Taking the self-built fence as an example (i.e., Figure 6), villagers who are willing to participate can receive part of the special funds from the village committee for the construction of the entry garden fence in front of their house. Participating villagers need to complete the installation according to the style requirements and construction details in the Self-Build Manual, and the special fee received includes the cost of materials, labor, and later maintenance costs.

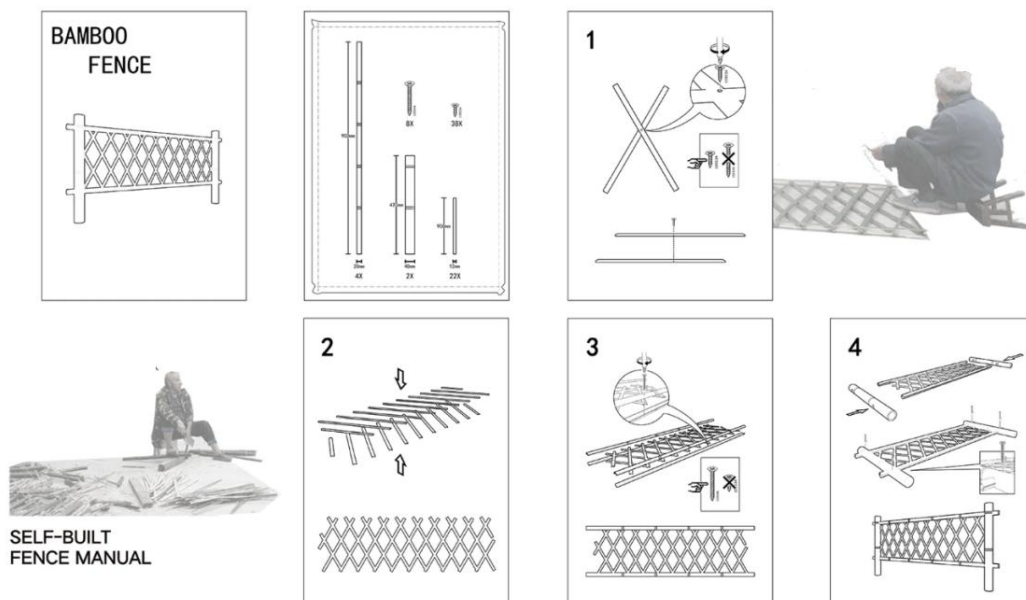


Figure 6. “Self-Build Manual” Fence Part (drawn by Zhang Gaoming).

4. Conclusions

Yuejiagou village project is the team's first attempt to promote villagers' participation in community building based on the advantageous resources of the university, we encountered some resistance in the process of the project, such as the teaching arrangement of the university cannot be adapted to the progress of the project, the students and teachers are running both ways in the village school, and it is difficult for them to be stationed in the countryside to carry out the camping activities; the villagers do not understand some of the research and building activities carried out by the team in the village; it is difficult to carry out the village construction activities effectively; there is a lack of effective encouragement mechanism to promote the power of local enterprises to enter the villages, and so on. "Community building" has been introduced into China relatively late, and most of the practices are concentrated in urban areas, while community building in villages can learn from some of the practices in urban areas, but undoubtedly, the experience of community building in villages is more important.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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