



## The Effect of Tourism on the Transformation of Geographical Space Relations (Case Study: Bala Taleqan District, Iran)

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### Abstract

**Purpose-** Geographical space relations have recently experienced profound changes under the influence of several factors, including tourism. The extensive effects of tourism on geographic space have often made negative structural changes. Since tourism outwardly supports local economies, these outcomes have seldom received careful investigation. Therefore, it is highly important to pay attention to the cultural effects, particularly the lasting and frequently disruptive effects on cultural relations. To this end, the present research aims to uncover how the phenomenon of tourism affects the geographic space structure, which forms the central core of human-environment interaction.

**Design/methodology/approach-** This research adopted a qualitative design with quantitative content analysis. The method was content analysis, while snowball sampling was used in line with the research method. The participants consisted of fifteen residents, leading to the extraction of one hundred concepts and twenty-five axial categories. To measure the frequency of each category and its proportionate role in affecting rural spaces, the related diagrams were drawn and analyzed with the help of MAXQDA software. The geographical scope of this research comprises selected villages in the Bala Taleqan district.

**Findings-** The findings point out significant and negative effects of tourism on the study area, including economic, social, and environmental effects. The greatest negative effects were observed in the social dimension. Results demonstrate that tourism exerts a pervasive effect on the cultural and value systems of the local community, gradually transforming and eroding them. This indicates that the region has been significantly damaged by tourists.

**Research Limitations-** This study focuses on Bala Taleqan and seeks to investigate the consequences and effects of tourism on this region.

**Practical implications-** Recognizing the negative effects of rural tourism and suggesting solutions for local managers to reinforce positive effects while reducing negative effects in Bala Taleqan.

**Originality/Value-** In contrast to conventional studies, this study often emphasizes a critical approach, identifying damages, challenges, and the reasons for local resistance to rural tourism. Therefore, by identifying the motives behind such opposition, the study can find solutions for the development of rural tourism and fostering better relations between local inhabitants and tourists.

**Keywords-** Tourism, Geographic Space, Rural Relations, Rural Communities, Taleqan.

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## 1. Introduction

Rural tourism can have negative consequences and effects on the culture of the host society, including higher crime and delinquency, changes in architectural style, more luxury-oriented behaviors, social tensions, and a sense of cultural backwardness. Furthermore, rural tourism is important in terms of several aspects: it can improve the regional tourism industry, ensure that tourism becomes a part of regional planning, and protect the capacities of tourism areas at the district and provincial levels. The control of negative effects (especially socio-cultural effects) as the necessary need for a tourist area, and identifying and mitigating such effects for achieving sustainable rural tourism development are other important effects of tourism. The success of the tourism industry depends on how the support of residents and hosts is understood. Even though tourism is a basic resource-driven activity, relying on services and attractions, its successful progress greatly depends on reciprocal interaction between host communities and tourists. Negative attitudes in the local community and hosts are eventually transferred to tourists, which in turn reduces the likelihood of future tourism (Sadeghi Deh Cheshmeh et al., 2020: 266).

In many developing countries, most key actors in tourism, namely governments, who design tourism development policies, focus on economic aspects of tourism. In their destination planning, their main concern is often increasing tourist arrivals without paying attention to cultural considerations. Consequently, positive and negative cultural effects of tourism (e.g., loss of local identity) are ignored in host communities. In Iran, mismanagement of settlement areas has caused the transformation of the environment under human activity. In such assessments, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has paid specific attention to land-based pollution. (Goeldner, 2003: 85) The effects caused by this phenomenon in generating spatial discontinuities and environmental imbalances are as follows:

The preparation of infrastructure and recreational facilities leads to soil degradation, a reduction in fertility and water retention, modifications in soil texture and structure, and increased soil bulk density. Tourism also has various impacts on vegetation. One form is the destruction of

vegetation, primarily during construction, which diminishes coverage, lowers frequency and height, weakens resistance, and reduces reproductive capacity. These changes can be observed in the damage to vegetation, land, and trees caused by tourists. (Rahbari, 2005: 6) Another factor for the destruction of vegetation is the new and non-native species, which through multiple methods, disrupts native flora and fauna, thereby disturbing the ecological order of the area. (Tekiekhah & Khalili, 2014: 4)

Land-use conversion is another environmental consequence that tourism may cause if not properly managed. Moreover, shifts in water quality are among the most important effects of tourism activities during the phases of preparation, construction, and operation, creating hazardous conditions for buildings, infrastructure, and the health of residents and visitors. (Shakeri, 2015: 61) During the 1970s, the consequences of tourism were critically examined by anthropologists and sociologists, who emphasized its negative socio-cultural effects. In terms of economic development, tourism affects host communities by increasing retail sales, expanding the number of commercial institutions, altering tax structures, enlarging markets for locally produced handicrafts, and increasing job opportunities. (Chen, 2001: 2) However, the destruction of natural resources and cultural and historical heritage is an important issue that is linked to the environmental effects of tourism development. (Alkorish & Jenkins, 1997: 91)

Therefore, in the spatio-temporal continuum, which is the essential framework of human relations, geographical phenomena emerge in line with the constructive nature of space. Based on the spatiality and considering that spatial thinking is the basis of interaction, the influence of tourism as a human phenomenon on the structure of space is not an exception. According to the content above, the present study seeks to answer the following question: What cultural, environmental, and economic effects has tourism had on the rural spaces of Bala Taleqan.

## 2. Research Theoretical Literature

Over the past decade, peri-urban tourism has been regarded as a means of creating new life in economies. It has also been introduced as a way to preserve and honor local culture and resources. The unstable conditions of agriculture and the risks and uncertainties for this sector, which threaten not only

the incomes of villagers and agricultural producers but also the lives of a portion of society, have doubled the growing need for new sources of revenue in peri-urban regions. Consequently, finding new income opportunities that rely on the internal features of communities, and planning to reduce the negative aspects of such activities, have become among the most important priorities of development authorities in countries. Therefore, in the last two decades, peri-urban communities and managers and policymakers have sought to reinforce and diversify income sources for residents, and plan to organize activities and programs that have often been operating without planning in peri-urban regions (Byrd, 2008: 8). Experiences about tourist presence in an area reveal that unplanned peri-urban tourism may have more negative effects than benefits. Results of different studies indicate that planned tourism development pursues objectives, such as sustainable local employment, economic growth, and raising incomes, increased expenditures associated with infrastructure creation, encouraging growth in other branches of the economy, engaging local communities in conserving the environment and local culture, and enhancing cultural exchanges between visitors and residents (Ghaderi, 2023: 25). With respect to the socio-cultural effects of tourism on the lives of residents, various theories and models have been proposed, including Doxey's (1975) model, Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), and Social Exchange Theory. From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, simultaneously with the rapid expansion of tourism, this phenomenon was regarded as a powerful strategy for development, particularly from an economic dimension. During this period, the focus was primarily on the economic benefits resulting from tourism, while its social and cultural consequences were regarded with optimism, ignoring cultural effects. Since the mid-1970s, the mere supportive framework of tourism has been criticized, and the attention has shifted to the unfavorable socio-cultural and environmental consequences of tourism, which result from weak planning (Gartner, 2006: 153).

Despite its varied nature, rural tourism always carries a huge cultural load. This mutual cultural exchange can be observed in both host and guest communities, with differing levels of acceptance or rejection according to social conditions.

Recognizing the effects of tourism on host communities has become a main field of interest for geographers and other tourism researchers. These effects can be negative and positive, which must be carefully assessed in analyzing their influence on host communities. The cultural aspect is among the most important dimensions of tourism. Indeed, the cultural and social effects of tourism are central considerations in tourism development in any region, especially in rural areas, where the intensity of cultural interaction between host and guest is high, but it has rarely been investigated in academic circles. This type of tourism, which depends on the presence of cultural resources and attractions, is often labeled culture-based tourism (Adabi Mamagani et al., 2014: 55).

Toulabi Nejad et al. (2022) found that tourism in the villages of Chabahar County had significant effects on the economic and social welfare indicators of rural households. The systematic study by Ghasemlou et al. (2022) indicated that approximately 69 percent of the effects of tourism development on the livability of rural regions were assessed as positive in a way that the strongest effects were observed in the physical and economic dimensions, and the weakest in the environmental dimension. Mohebi and Amiri (2024) argue that rural tourism can serve as an effective instrument for economic growth at times and in places where agriculture alone cannot remain a reliable source of livelihood over the long term. In most rural areas, where agriculture dominates the economy and remains vulnerable, attention to other development activities, such as tourism, as a complement to this sector, can ensure improvement in living conditions for rural populations in multiple aspects. Therefore, proper planning in each village, considering its potential, can effectively resolve unemployment and job problems for villagers. Planning for rural tourism development is thus considered a practical solution for addressing the employment problem in these areas. By its special dynamism, this industry can have major effects on the economic, social, and environmental conditions of rural communities, particularly at the local scale.

Research by Ghadiri Masoum et al. (2012) demonstrates that in Taleqan County, tourism has generated flows of capital through the sale of agricultural products and land. In terms of environmental conservation, most of the effects have been negative, and land degradation, noise

pollution, and traffic have increased. Regarding the marketing of agricultural products, villagers have begun to sell their products directly to tourists in recent years, which has strengthened reciprocal ties between the local and host communities. Finally, concerning migration, conditions depend on household economic status, social welfare, and the degree of development of the studied regions.

Alizadeh et al. (2025) believe that tourism has a direct effect on the quality of service provision, which in turn can affect the level of satisfaction that residents have toward tourism. When services are disrupted, it often results in locals' dissatisfaction with the presence of tourists.

Rural tourism is regarded as one of the key bases of sustainable development in rural regions. This type of tourism, by emphasizing the use of both cultural and natural attractions of rural areas, plays a central role in generating jobs and income for local communities while also preserving rural heritage and enhancing the living quality of residents (Torabi, Khavarian-Garmsir, et al., 2023). However, the unsustainable development and inadequate planning of tourism in such areas may lead to negative environmental outcomes and the depletion of valuable natural assets (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012). Therefore, a more comprehensive understanding of tourists' environmental behaviors and recognizing the drivers of responsible environmental behavior have been recommended as a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable planning and management of rural tourism destinations (Gao et al., 2017; Torabi et al., 2024).

Mohibizadeh et al. (2025) emphasize in their study that socio-cultural resilience is the most important factor in rural tourism development, and the degree to which rural tourism succeeds is largely tied to this dimension.

In several well-known destinations around the world, the expansion of mass tourism has changed cultural authenticity as a result of the increase in the number of visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds, because tourism is a place-based phenomenon and affects the characteristics of destinations at different scales (Ziaei, 2015: 120). This phenomenon can change spatial components of tourism areas and affects the residents' sense of place, as the globalization of tourism often coincides with the commodification (Ghadami, 2014: 43). Harold Proshansky's theory suggests that place identity forms part of an individual's overall

identity, resulting from their broader understanding of the physical world where they live (Proshansky, 1978, p.147). Among the socio-cultural effects of tourism for place identity is the "demonstration effect", which points to the obvious differences between visitors and host communities, in such a way that the mere presence of tourists can cause behavioral changes among locals, especially younger generations (Bemanian, 2009: 20). Under such circumstances, residents observe the financial capability of tourists, and as they realize their inability to achieve the lifestyle displayed by visitors, they may experience disillusionment. This pursuit of imitation decreases their sense of belonging to their living places (Mison, 2011: 74).

The beautiful villages of Taleqan are dispersed across the northern and southern slopes at an altitude of 1,400 to 2,600 meters along rivers and springs and have attracted a large number of visitors. Bala Taleqan, located about 100 kilometers northwest of the capital of Alborz Province, is within a vast valley of the Alborz Mountains. The region of Taleqan comprises 84 mountain villages, with a longitude of nearly 80 kilometers from northeast to southwest and a latitude of approximately 15 kilometers, encompassing an area of about 1,400 km<sup>2</sup>. The geographical coordinates of Taleqan are around 80° longitude and 38.5° latitude. The Shahroud River, known as the lifeline of this land, originates in the eastern foothills with a longitude of nearly 105 kilometers westward. It carries the waters of more than 15 small and large rivers fed by springs and snowmelt, eventually joining the Sepidrud, merging with the Ghezel Ozan River, and flowing towards the Caspian Sea. Bala Taleqan consists of two districts: the central district and Bala Taleqan.

According to the 2016 census conducted by the Statistical Center of Iran, the population of the Bala Taleqan district was recorded at 26,976 people. The city of Taleqan, situated in a highland region within the Alborz range, consists of four neighborhoods: Shahrak, Galinak, Kulej, and Pordeh Sar. Its location in the central Alborz causes it a mountainous and summer-like climate, leading to a seasonal habitation. During the summer months, the population exceeds 15,000, but the permanent population is around 8,000. The villages for this study were selected based on the number of tourist arrivals and include villages of Bala Taleqan (Hashan, Karkabud, Geliyad, Owrazan, Vashteh,

Guran, Mangolan, Avanak, Sagan, Navizak, Sagan Chal, Bezaj, Khasban, Jozinan, Hasan Jun, and Haranj). Due to easier accessibility and their strong historical and cultural backgrounds, these villages have received more tourists compared to other villages in Taleqan.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, the concept of tourism compatibility received attention, introducing the idea of alternative tourism into tourism literature (Weaver, 2012, pp. 39-42). This concept stresses that tourism development must account for the prevailing conditions within local communities, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, as well as their capacities. Tourism should be planned and implemented in a way that aligns with these local conditions and capacities (Swarbrooke, 1999, p. 318). By the late 1990s, scientific and practical achievements from the supportive, precautionary, and compatibility perspectives outlined the requirements for tourism development, underlying theoretical discussions within the sustainable development paradigm framework (Weaver, 2004, p. 512). Later, the concept of carrying capacity emerged, which has two special functions in tourism planning. First, it recognizes that tourism destinations have finite and perishable resources that must be presented to acceptable limits. Second, it provides a framework for evaluating the social effects of tourism development (Neidig, 2006, p. 27). During the same period, social exchange theory gained attention, rooted in behavioral psychology and the economic theory of utility-based fairness (Kim, 2002, p. 12). Human relationships are interpreted through the balance of costs and benefits, where individuals decide whether to commit to an interaction after weighing its costs and benefits. (Ap, 1990, pp. 610-616). Tourism outcomes are categorized as positive (benefits) or negative (costs) (Gursoy et al., 2002).

Doxey (1975) introduced an index for stages of resident satisfaction and dissatisfaction in tourism destinations to explain how local attitudes shift as tourism grows. With rising tourism density, increasing prices, and perceived threats to traditional lifestyles, opposition to development from local communities becomes apparent. Residents often feel that their community is changing and tourism costs outweigh its benefits, resulting in annoyance toward tourism development, as the growth of tourism causes

hostility and opposition among residents toward tourists and tourism facilities. (Ardakani, 2003, p. 63).

Geographical space comprises structures, compositions, phenomena, and systemic and spatial relationships. Each dimension is integrated within the overall framework of space and forms a specialized subject within geographic sciences, including locational, biological, and climatic aspects. Despite numerous positive effects of tourism, it has also fundamentally changed the spatial structure of destination areas. These enduring changes have been the subject of extensive global research on the cultural effects of tourism on the culture of host communities. In this regard, Taghdisi et al. (2012) studied the socio-cultural effects of tourism in Dalahu County, indicating increases in social and cultural anomalies and changes in local traditions due to tourism. Adabi Mamaghani, Khani, Sajasi, Gheidari, and Farrokhi (2014) studied culture-centered tourism on social-cultural changes in rural destinations, indicating that tourism significantly affected social and cultural dimensions. Amini and et al (2015) studied host community attitudes towards tourism development in Damab Village, Isfahan Province, indicating that tourism caused socio-cultural disturbances, including the commercialization and commodification of the village's cultural aspects, as well as the expansion of social and cultural irregularities. Sheikhi (2015: 23), in a study in Sistan and Baluchestan, indicated that sustainable tourism development could reduce inter-ethnic tensions in multiethnic communities.

In summary, rural tourism has diverse positive and negative effects on host communities. Its cultural effects are particularly significant, including negative effects, such as cultural transformations, conflicts between residents and tourists, changes in cultural patterns, and in some cases, changes in local culture. Economically and environmentally, tourism affects rural income and product sales while sometimes contributing to agricultural degradation. The socio-cultural consequences of rural tourism can affect its trend, provoking widespread resistance from local communities. Social and cultural anomalies, changes in customs, and tension between tourists and residents exemplify these consequences.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Geographical Scope of the Study

The research was conducted in the Taleqan region, with its maps presented in Figures 2 and 3. Taleqan is the center of Bala Taleqan District and one of the cities in Alborz Province, Iran. The county comprises about 86 villages. The total area of Taleqan is approximately 1,200 km<sup>2</sup>, located at 36°12' N latitude and 50°47' E longitude. This region is a highland area, situated 133 kilometers northwest of Tehran and 96 kilometers from Karaj. Its borders include Mazandaran Province in the

north, Savojbolagh County in the south, Fashgel Dareh and Abyek County in the southwest, and the Alamut region in the northwest. According to the most recent census, Taleqan's population is estimated at 3,545. However, due to its placement within the central Alborz Mountains, it has seasonal population fluctuations, particularly during spring and summer. Local languages include Taleqani and Mazandarani. Villagers between Jostan and the Kandovan Mountains speak Mazandarani with the Taleqani-Tabari accent, while those in western Jostan speak in Mazandarani with the Taleqani accent (Figure 1).

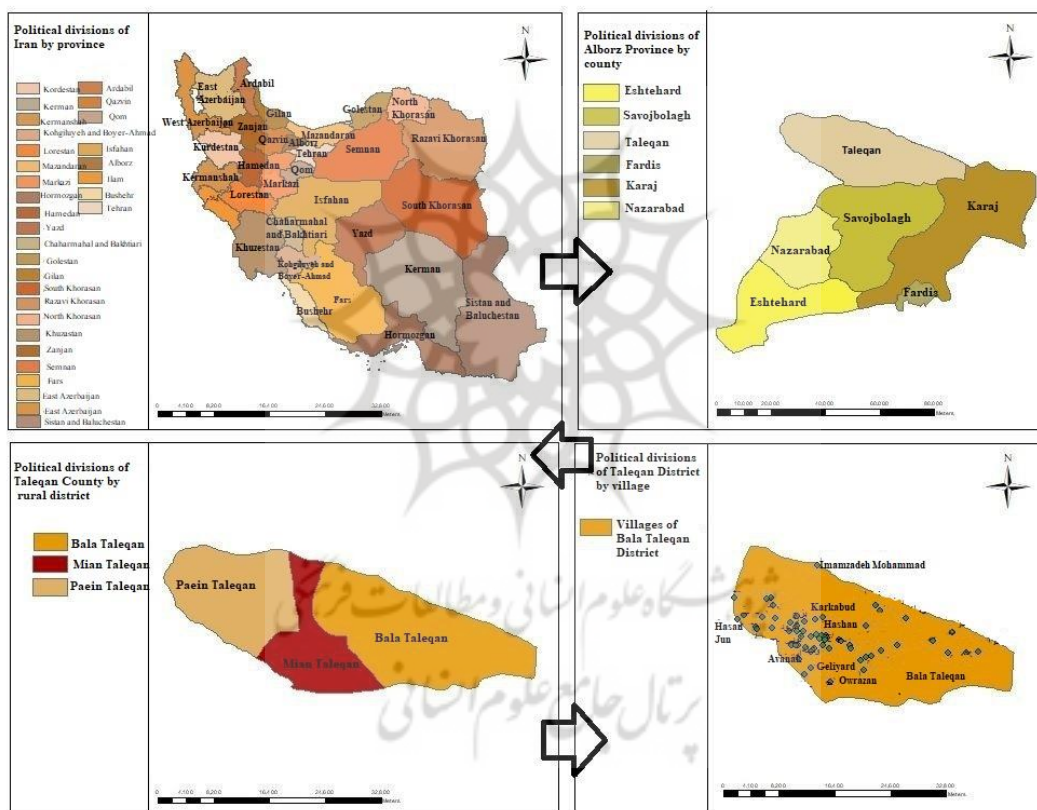


Figure 1. Study Area

#### 3.2. Methodology

This study employed content analysis as its methodological framework, using a qualitative approach with a quantitative content analysis strategy. The research process included the following steps:

- Collecting and analyzing data until saturation;
- Coding data at three levels (finding concepts in data): open, axial, and selective coding.

The data collected for grounded theory development were analyzed using theoretical coding. Initially, suitable codes were assigned to different segments of the data and organized into categories, a process known as open coding. The researcher then examined the dimensions of these categories and their interrelationships during axial coding. Through theoretical sampling during the coding process, additional data about different individuals,

events, and situations were collected, providing a rich image of concepts and categories. Selective coding was finally used to monitor the categories, leading to the emergence of a theoretical framework.

This research aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, in which tourism effects as a social reality are shaped through shared interpretations produced and reproduced by social actors. An inquiry strategy was used to explore meanings and interpretations to develop scientific understanding from the perspectives of social actors. Sampling was purposive, using multiple purposive techniques combined with snowball and theoretical sampling

strategies. Snowball sampling enhanced research validity according to participant trust. Codes were extracted through in-depth interviews with residents and experts in two stages: initially to extract concepts and subsequently to construct a continuum of core and selective codes.

Accordingly, data collection methods included field visits (in-depth interviews), snowball sampling, semi-structured interviews with experienced, primarily local participants, and desk studies. By the 15th interview, responses became repetitive, indicating data saturation. Analysis was performed using grounded theory (Figure 2).

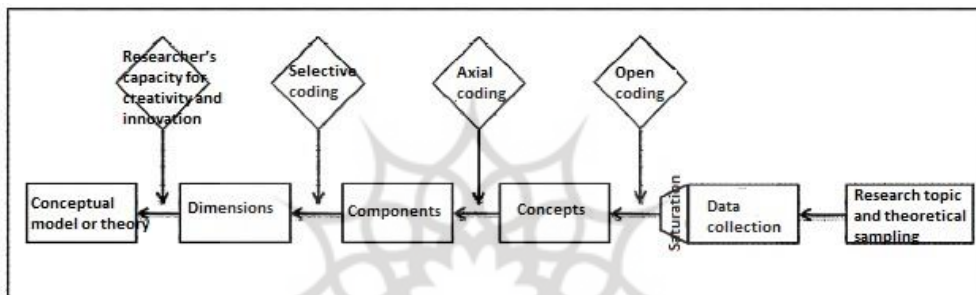


Figure 2. Grounded Theory.

Table 1 illustrates the household distribution and population of the villages in Taleqan.

Table 1. Villages in the Study

Province	County	District	Village	Population	Households
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Hashan	53	23
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Karkabud	111	44
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Owrazan	267	84
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Geliyard	309	90
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Vashteh	893	296
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Guran	380	132
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Mangolan	291	103
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Avanak	92	41
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Sagran Chal	216	66
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Sagran	140	49
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Navizak	248	81
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Bezaj	281	96
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Khasban	778	279
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Jozinan	449	151
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Hasan Jun	762	275
Alborz	Taleqan	Bala Taleqan	Haranj	582	202

#### 4. Research Findings

As discussed above, tourism, especially in recent years, has significantly altered rural spatial structures and settlement patterns, often introducing external, disorganized, and non-native elements. These interventions have disrupted long-standing

human mechanisms established over centuries, resulting in structural-functional inconsistencies across the geographic space and diminishing spatial cohesion. Intervening and contextual factors, by guiding basic and emergent actions, have contributed to a general disorder in settlement organization.

In this study, approximately 100 initial concepts were extracted from participatory interviews with local villagers. Through initial coding, 25 open codes were generated, which then led to the axial codes or categories. Using MAXQAD software, frequency diagrams were drawn for each final category, demonstrating their relative influence. Finally, 20 core dimensions were identified,

forming the pattern for the grounded theory paradigm of the study.

Table 2 presents a wide range of economic, social, and environmental factors affecting the region. Participants reported the extensive degree of regional degradation and that tourism has imposed significant negative effects.

**Table 2. Core Concepts and Axial Categories**

Row	Concepts	Axial Codes
1	Tourists have caused damage to agricultural fields.	Land Degradation
2	During the summer, villagers face security risks due to increased tourist arrivals.	Insecurity
3	Guards are hired in spring and summer to ensure village safety.	Lack of Security
4	Tourists excessively exploit local environmental resources.	Environmental Damage
5	Many tourists are unfamiliar with village nature and misbehave.	Social Incompatibility
6	Tourists often generate cultural and value conflicts with villagers.	Cultural Conflicts
7	Tourists do not respect the cultural values of residents.	Social Disorder
8	Tourists roam the village at all hours, contrary to local norms.	Overcrowding
9	Most tourists ignore villagers' religious and traditional practices.	Disrespect for Cultural Values
10	Tourist presence has risen land prices, tempting locals to sell.	Rising Land Prices
11	Tourists introduce elements that harm rather than benefit the village.	Incompatible Cultural Interventions
12	Tourism growth has changed traditional village life.	Lifestyle Changes
13	Tourism has changed living standards in ways often incompatible with village geography.	Changing Local Standards
14	Tourists often cause pollution through smoking, hookah, and other activities.	Environmental Pollution
15	Increased traffic and tourist gatherings disrupt village tranquility.	Noise Pollution
16	Young villagers imitate tourists, leading to family challenges and identity changes.	Transformation of Local Identity
17	Tourism growth has caused deterioration of the historical village texture.	Damage to Historical Texture
18	Warm seasons and higher tourist numbers increase noise and disorder.	Disturbance of Peace
19	Tourist style of clothing is often different from local village norms.	Cultural Conflicts
20	Tourists serve as inappropriate examples for rural youth.	Unsuitable Role Modeling
21	Capitalist and commercial influences have replaced the traditional rural lifestyle due to the presence of tourists.	Commodification of Villages
22	Tourists' cultural roots differ significantly from locals.	Social Differences
23	Tourists disrespect religious ceremonies and roam in inappropriate clothing styles.	Cultural Misbehavior
24	Tourist arrivals increase housing costs, causing economic difficulties for locals.	Rising Capitalism
25	Rural housing architecture increasingly imitates urban architecture, often improperly.	Changing Settlement Texture

Furthermore, the results presented in the table have been organized into selective codes, shown in Table 3. Land degradation has been one of the most critical negative consequences of tourism. Unfortunately, tourists have caused significant damage to agricultural lands, making farmers the primary opponents of tourism in the region because

not only have they failed to benefit from tourism, but their lands have also suffered harm. Social problems, especially rooted in the traditional social and cultural structure of the area, have led to conflicts between tourists and residents, while environmental effects have also been extensive (Table 3).

**Table 3. Frequency of Selective Codes**

Row	Selective Codes and Dimensions	Frequency
1	Land degradation	15
2	Insecurity	15
3	Environmental damage	15
4	Social incompatibility	14
5	Incompatible cultural interventions	14
6	Noise pollution	15
7	Disrespect for cultural values	14
8	Rising land prices	15
9	Rising capitalism	14
10	Lifestyle changes	13
11	Changing local standards	14
12	Environmental pollution	14
13	Transformation of local identity	18
14	Damage to Historical Texture	14
15	Disruption of Peace	13
16	Unsuitable Role Modeling	13
17	Commodification of villages	12
18	Changing construction patterns	13
19	Changes in Settlement Texture	13
20	Cultural Misbehavior	12

Figure 3 illustrates the commodification of rural tourism. This diagram highlights how tourism has fully transformed the cultural structures of villages toward profit-oriented practices, disregarding the cultural dimensions of tourism. Commodification is concerning because a segment of the village, benefiting financially from tourists, has begun

promoting ceremonies that superficially appear culturally authentic but are in reality exaggerated and unreal, and not performed similarly in the past. This extremism has caused disputes between elders and village leaders, as tensions rise over the misrepresentation of traditional practices.

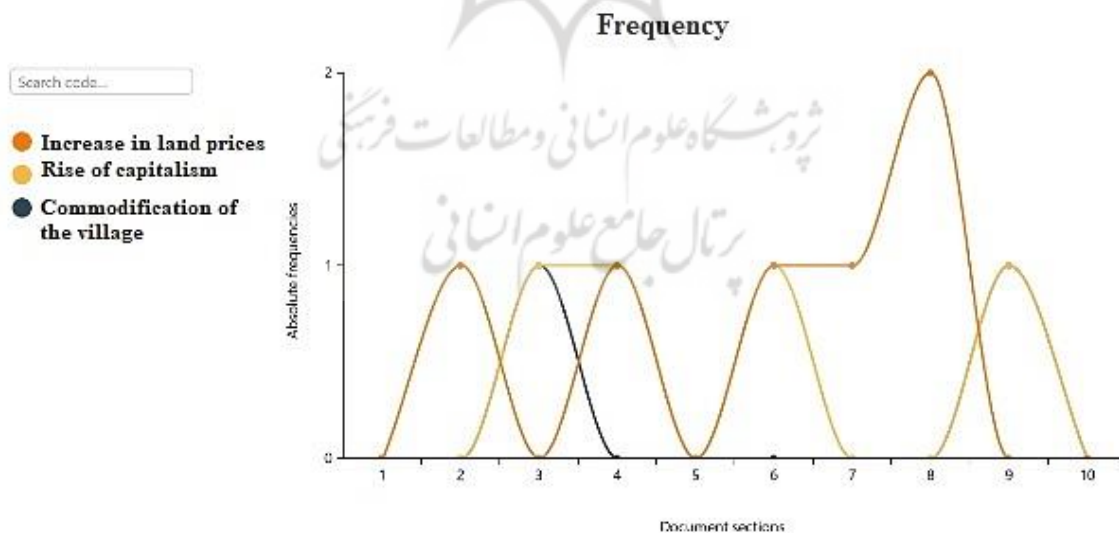
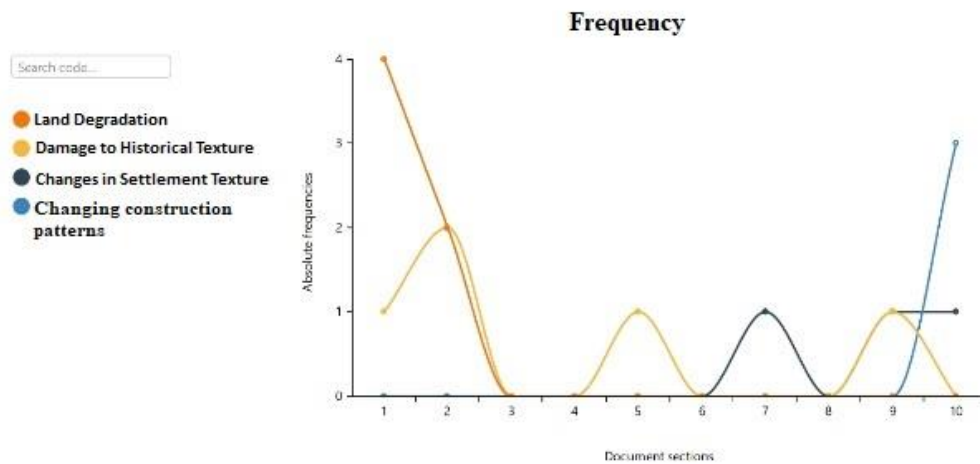
**Figure 3. Frequency of Selective Codes**

Figure 4 shows the consequences of tourism on environmental degradation, including damage to farmland and historical sites. The diagram indicates the pervasive negative effects of tourism on the

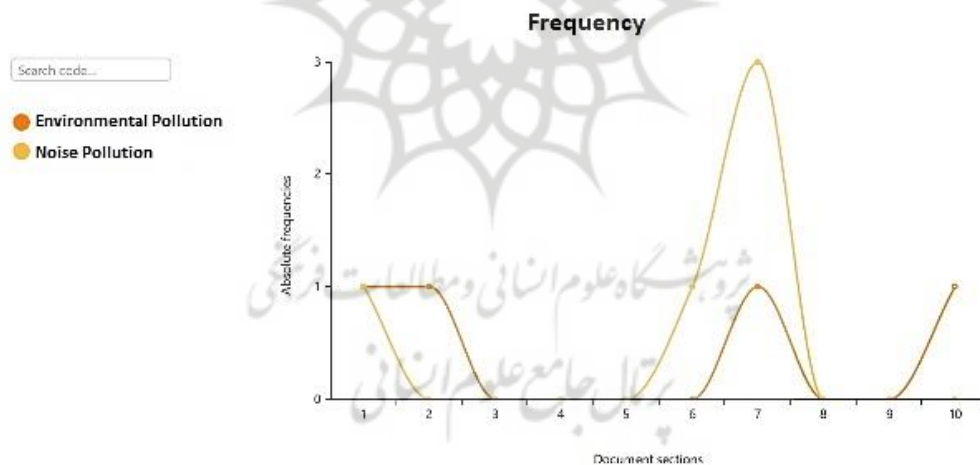
region's physical structure. Traditional rural buildings are being replaced with villa-urban constructions, altering the area's traditional rural structure.



**Figure 4. Frequency of Selective Codes**

As depicted in Figure 5, tourism has led to significant environmental pollution, including noise and waste, which has negatively affected the aesthetic quality of the area. Unfortunately, tourists, particularly from Tehran, have left various types of waste, creating an unsightly

environment near Talaghan Dam. Noise from recreational activities and singing in the village and central town during weekends disturbs local religious residents, and these disruptions are especially offensive during periods associated with mourning ceremonies.



**Figure 5. Frequency of Selective Codes**

Figure 6 demonstrates that the cultural and social identity of the rural environment has been deeply changed, with tourism altering the view of the area. Traditional lifestyles and local values have diminished, and patterns of life have shifted from rural to urban under the influence of tourists. This is

most apparent among the youth, who embrace these changes, while their fathers resist them, attributing these shifts to tourists, who they claim have “corrupted their children”. This has led to considerable intergenerational conflicts within families.

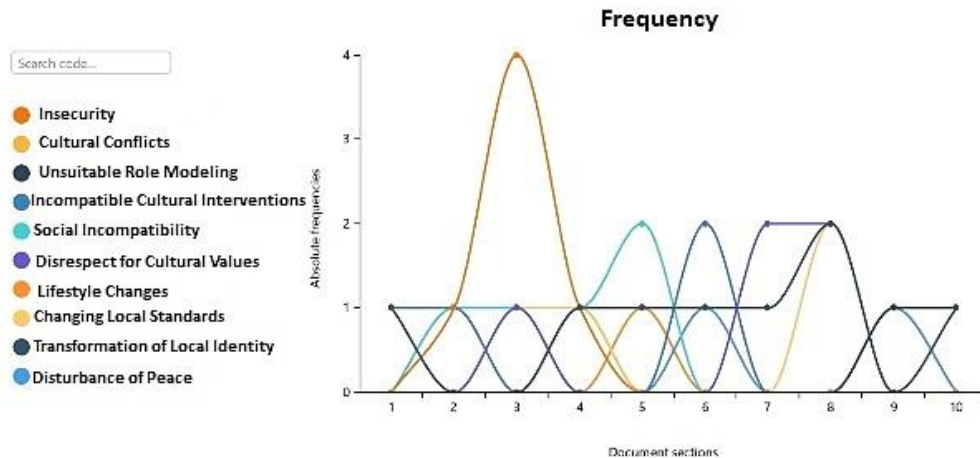


Figure 6. Frequency of Selective Codes

Figure 7 indicates that social changes have been the most significantly influenced by tourism, with the most profound changes occurring in the social dimension. In other words, rural social structures have undergone widespread change. Additionally, due to inadequate waste collection systems, limited

cooperation from residents, and the weak performance of village councils, waste management remains a major challenge. This is particularly problematic in Talaghan, where natural tourism and scenic landscapes are central attractions.

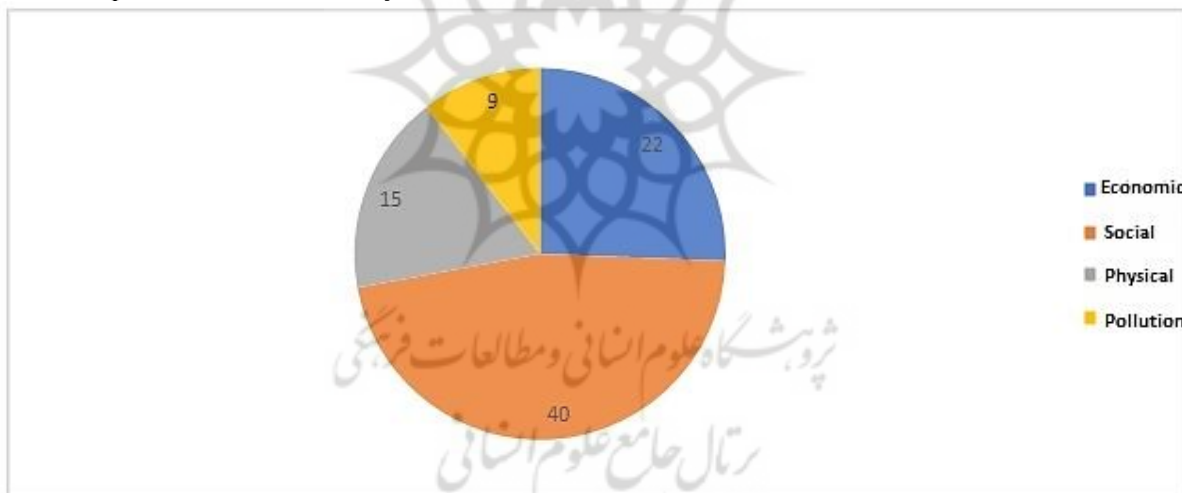


Figure 7. Frequency of Core Categories

As mentioned above, the primary effect of tourism in the rural areas of Bala Talaghan has been on socio-cultural relations, followed by economic, physical, and environmental categories. The major challenges stem from the religious texture of the villages and the incompatibility between tourists

and local social norms. Consequently, social problems have increased, and there has been minimal cooperation for rural tourism development. Tourism events and ceremonies have become arenas of social challenges rather than opportunities to strengthen culture (Figure 8).

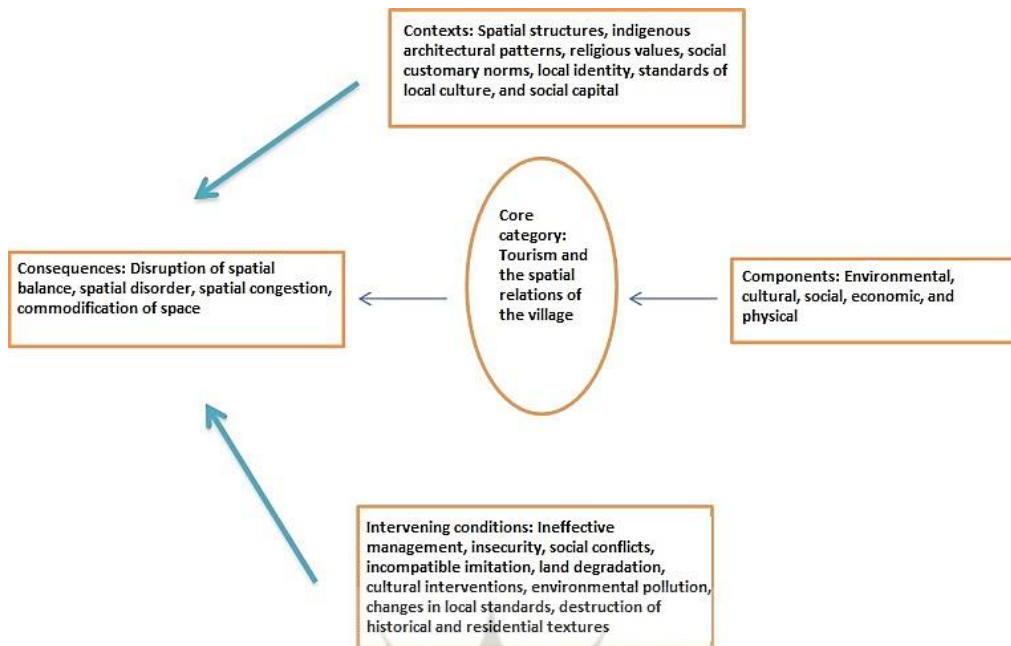


Figure 8. Paradigmatic Pattern Derived from Grounded Theory

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The rapid expansion of tourism and its increasing influence on human relations, environmental stability, and residential landscapes have led to significant structural disturbances and imbalances. As traditional residential and spatial patterns have been surpassed, a basic duality has emerged in the villages under study. The destruction of spatial and identity connections, particularly in Bala Taleqan, has affected religious, cultural, and belief-based dimensions. The lack of effective management and strategic planning has resulted in the commodification of rural and residential spaces, undermining the villages' structural and functional purposes. Since the meaning of space is rooted in social interactions and spatial-identity structures, the growth of capitalism and the uncontrolled exploitation of local resources without consideration of the host culture have disrupted customary practices. Changes in the organization of space have consequences due to unrestrained growth under capitalist pressures. Furthermore, insufficient planning and limited participation by local people in shaping tourism objectives in Taleqan have exacerbated spatial conflicts, leading to an imbalance of geographic space structures and ecosystem instability. According to this research and existing studies, tourism, particularly since its uncontrolled growth after the 1960s, has been gradually scrutinized due to its negative social,

economic, and cultural impacts, highlighting a deficiency in management and planning. Social anomalies, especially driven by inadequate management and region-specific policy-making, have been particularly notable, concerning village commodification and reinforcement of centralization. The most significant role of tourism in host communities in recent decades has been related to social, cultural, and particularly religious norms. Compared with prior research, while tourism has generated economic benefits, it has simultaneously produced widespread challenges affecting local social standards, thereby reshaping the geographic spaces of communities. Sustainable development that is balanced and aligned with local patterns seeks to restore equilibrium in spatial components; without such alignment, the result is a proliferation of spatial disarray across the national geographic landscape.

Based on the aforementioned content, the following recommendations are offered:

- Enforce and monitor regulations concerning land use changes and the protection of rural landscapes.
- Avoid converting non-touristic areas into tourist destinations.
- Pay attention to the social structure and core values of host communities when designing policies and planning.

- Implement management and planning frameworks according to local communities and spatial structures.

This study, consistent with Adabi Mamaghani et al. (2014), emphasizes that social and cultural development is the most profound impact of tourism in the region, highlighting the necessity of addressing cultural dimensions for successful rural tourism. Furthermore, Toulabi Nejad et al. report that tourism can enhance economic and social welfare for rural households, provided its negative cultural and social effects are minimized. These findings are consistent with Ghasemloou et al. (2023), demonstrating the visible impact of tourism development on the quality of life of residents. Additionally, as Movahedi and Amiri (2024) argue, rural tourism, if managed for cultural impacts, can become a tool to improve villagers' livelihoods. In line with Taghdisi, Taghvaei, and Piri (2012), this research argues that tourism leads to an increase in socio-cultural anomalies and alterations in local

customs, causing resistance and opposition to tourism development from community members. Likewise, Adabi Mamaghani, Khani, Sajasi, Ghidari, and Farrokhi (2014) reported extensive changes in local communities driven by tourism. Amini Bakhti and Baba Jamali (2015) also observed that tourism has been commodified, with certain events in Taleqan differing from their historical and cultural origins to meet tourist expectations. Finally, consistent with Sheikh (2015), this research reports that tourism has the potential to alleviate some regional tensions, although it can also act as a factor of social tension.

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#### Authors contributions

The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

#### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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## تأثیر گردشگری بر دگرگونی روابط فضایی جغرافیایی (مطالعه موردی: بخش بالا طالقان، ایران)

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### چکیده مبسوط

#### ۱. مقدمه

است در پژوهشی در منطقه سیستان و بلوچستان به بررسی تأثیرات گردشگری در جوامع چند قومی پرداخت نتایج نشان می‌دهد از طریق توسعه پایدار گردشگری می‌توان تنش‌های بین اقوام را تقلیل بخشید.

#### ۳. روش تحقیق

روش انجام پژوهش در این مقاله تحلیل محتوا است، در این تحقیق از روش تحقیق کیفی راهبرد تحلیل محتوای کمی استفاده شده است. نمونه‌گیری در این پژوهش، هدفمند و از نوع نمونه‌گیری با استفاده از تکنیک‌های هدفمند چندگانه و ترکیب دو راهبرد نمونه‌گیری گلوله برفی و نمونه‌گیری نظری است. بر این اساس روش جمع‌آوری و گردآوری داده‌ها از طریق بازدید میدانی (مصاحبه عمیق)، گلوله برفی، مصاحبه نیمه ساختاریافته از افراد با تجربه و غالباً بومی و کتابخانه‌ای است، در بخش مصاحبه‌ها، در مصاحبه شماره ۱۵ جواب‌ها تکراری شد و داده‌ها به اشباع رسید

#### ۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

گردشگری منجر به آلودگی‌های گسترده محیط‌زیست اعم از آلودگی صوتی و پسماند شده است و ظاهر نامناسبی برای منطقه به همراه داشته است. متأسفانه گردشگران به ویژه از تهران منطقه را با انواع زباله آلوده کرده‌اند. سد طالقان نمای زشتی از انواع زباله‌ها در دریاچه دارد و سر و صدای رقص و آواز گردشگران در روستا و شهرک مرکزی طالقان در اواخر هفته به گوش می‌رسد. مردم محلی مذهبی هستند و با این مراسم‌ها کنار نمی‌آیند به ویژه که در زمان تعطیلی‌های مرتبط با عزاداری‌ها هم این رفتار گردشگران مردم بومی را آزرده می‌کند. هویت فرهنگی و اجتماعی محیط‌های روستایی به شدت تغییر کرده است و گردشگری چهره منطقه را تغییر داده است. سبک زندگی و ارزش‌های رایج در روستاها از بین رفته است و الگوهای زندگی تحت تأثیر گردشگران کاملاً از حالت محلی به وضعیت شهری تغییر پیدا کرده است. ساختارهای روستایی در بعد اجتماعی تغییر گسترده‌ای کرده است. این تحولات اجتماعی منطقه را به شدت در حال تغییر دادن است. همچنین چون

موفقیت صنعت گردشگری بستگی به شناخت و درک و فهم کیفیت حمایت ساکنان محلی و میزبان دارد. باینکه گردشگری یک فعالیت منابع پایه است و به خدمات ارائه شده و جاذبه‌های دیدنی بستگی دارد اما توسعه موفقیت آمیز آن تا حد زیادی مستلزم تعامل دوسویه جامعه محلی و میزبان دارد. کج خلقی‌های جامعه محلی و میزبان نهایتاً به گردشگران منتقل خواهد شد که این امر سبب کاهش گردشگری در آینده خواهد شد. بنابراین در پیوستار زمانی- فضایی که اصلی‌ترین چارچوب مناسبات انسانی است، پدیده‌های جغرافیایی در ارتباط با ویژگی‌های ساختاری بودن فضا شکل می‌گیرند. از این رو با مبنا قراردادن فضا مندی و در نظر گرفتن آنکه اندیشه فضایی بنیان برهم‌کنش‌ها است، تأثیراتی که گردشگری به عنوان یکی از پدیده‌های انسانی بر ساختار فضا می‌گذارد نیز از این مستثنا خارج نمی‌باشد. این پژوهش بنا بر آنچه ذکر شد در پی پاسخ به این سوال است که اساساً گردشگری چه اثراتی در فضاهای روستایی بخش بالا طالقان به لحاظ فرهنگی، زیست محیطی و اقتصادی داشته است؟

#### ۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

فضای جغرافیایی شامل ساختار، ترکیب‌ها، پدیده‌ها، روابط سیستمی و فضایی است که ابعاد مختلفی دارد هر یک به نوبه خود در چارچوب کلیت فضا با یکدیگر نظام یافته و موضوع یکی از رشته‌های تخصصی علوم جغرافیایی به شمار می‌آیند. گردشگری علاوه بر اثرات مثبت بی‌شماری که داشته است، منجر به تغییرات اساسی در ساختار فضایی مناطق هدف گردشگری شده است که بصورت مانایی طی چرخش‌های فضایی که صورت گرفت همچنان این ابعاد را پژوهشگران در حوزه اثرات گردشگری بر فرهنگ جوامع مقصد تحقیقات گسترده‌ای در سطح جهان انجام داده‌اند. گردشگری منجر به افزایش ناهنجاری‌های اجتماعی فرهنگی و تغییر در آداب و رسوم جامعه محلی شده است. می‌توان گفت که توسعه گردشگری تأثیرات عمیقی بر تغییرات اجتماعی فرهنگی منطقه مورد مطالعه داشته است. همچنین گردشگری باعث ناهنجاری‌های اجتماعی فرهنگی شامل کالایی و تجاری شدن جنبه‌های فرهنگی روستا و گسترش ناهنجاری‌های اجتماعی و فرهنگی در روستا شده

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همچنین این تحقیق همانند ادبی ممقانی، خانی، سجاسی، قیداری و فرخی (۱۳۹۳) اعتقاد داشتند که جامعه دم‌حلی دچار تحولات زیادی شده است و گردشگری جامعه بومی را دستخوش تغییر گسترده کرده است. همچنین تحقیق فوق همانند امینی بختی و بابا جمالی (۱۳۹۴) معتقد هستند که گردشگری تبدیل به کالایی برای فروش شده است و برخی رویدادهای گردشگری که در طالقان برگزار شده است با اصل و ریشه تاریخی موضوع تفاوت داشته و نوعی انحراف از فرهنگ جامعه به جهت راضی کردن گردشگر صورت گرفته است. همچنین این تحقق همانند شیخ (۲۰۱۵) معتقد است که برخی تنش‌های موجود در منطقه را می‌توان با کمک گردشگری کمتر کرد هر چند که گردشگری می‌تواند خود عامل تنش اجتماعی باشد.

**کلیدواژه‌ها:** گردشگری، فضای جغرافیایی، روابط روستایی، جوامع روستایی، طالقان.

#### تشکر و قدرانی

این مطالعه برگرفته از یک طرح تحقیقاتی پسادکتری در دانشگاه رازی است. بنابراین، از اساتید و کارشناسان ارجمند که با حمایت و همکاری خود در به سرانجام رساندن این پژوهش نقش بسزایی داشتند، صمیمانه تشکر و قدردانی می‌کنیم.

سیستم جمع‌آوری زباله ندارد و مردم بومی هم همکاری نمی‌کنند و شوراها را اسلامی روستایی هم ضعیف عمل می‌کنند

#### ۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

این تحقیق همانند ادبی ممقانی و همکاران (۱۳۹۳) معتقد است که تحولات اجتماعی و فرهنگ مهم‌ترین تأثیر گردشگری در منطقه است و برای موفقیت گردشگری روستایی ابعاد فرهنگی گردشگری باید دیده شود. همچنین تحقیق فوق همانند طولابی نژاد و همکاران نشان دادند که گردشگری می‌تواند منجر به رفاه اقتصادی و اجتماعی خانوارهای روستایی بشود مشروط بر آنکه به آثار منفی فرهنگی و اجتماعی آن توجه شود و این تأثیرات منفی به حداقل برسد. همچنین نتایج تحقیق یافته‌های قاسملو و همکاران (۲۰۲۳) همسو است که نشان می‌دهد که اثرات توسعه گردشگری بر زیست‌پذیری مردم بومی مشهود است. همچنین این تحقیق همانند موحدی و امیری (۱۴۰۳) معتقد هستند که گردشگری روستایی مشروط به مدیریت اثرات فرهنگی می‌تواند ابزاری برای بهبود معیشت روستاییان باشد. این تحقیق همانند تقدیسی تقوایی و پیری (۱۳۹۱) معتقد است که گردشگری منجر به افزایش ناهنجاری‌های اجتماعی فرهنگی و تغییر در آداب و رسوم جامعه محلی شده است و همین امر اعتراض مردم محلی و واکنش آنان را به همراه داشته است و سبب مخالفت‌هایی با توسعه گردشگری شده است.



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