

Understanding the cultural potential of rural history: A conceptual framework of cultural capital development

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Abstract

As the process of globalisation accelerates, cultural diversity is receiving unprecedented attention. As the international community continues to explore sustainable development models for traditional communities, the value of culture in shaping local identities, transforming resource values and enhancing economic competitiveness has become increasingly important. Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley opens a window for the international community to understand the Chinese countryside, and the history and cultural resources of the classic case study of Kaixiangong Village in the new era. In the context of the new era, the cultural resources of Kaixiangong Village have undoubtedly become an excellent example for exploring the transformation mechanism and sustainable development path of rural cultural resources. Borrowing Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, the study chooses a village in Suzhou, China Kaixiangong Village, and explores the ways and mechanisms of transforming rural cultural resources into cultural capital through field surveys, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The study finds that: 1) The transformation of cultural resources involves the synergy of the government special team, the village committee and the enterprise group. The rural governance structure under the scale reorganisation promotes the development of rural regionalisation and the overall planning of cultural resources. 2) The village committee plays the role of coordinating all parties in the process of transforming cultural resources, making use of the social base of rural acquaintances, storing villagers' unused houses, and overlaying the policy benefits to guarantee the group's market operation in the countryside. 3) The group and the village enterprise, as the terminal of transforming cultural resources, maximise the economic value of cultural resources through rural operation. Maximise the economic and social benefits of cultural resources, transform them into value-added cultural capital, and give them capital attributes. At the same time, the passive impact on villagers during the transformation of cultural resources requires the establishment of an effective communication mechanism in the subsequent development of the village to ensure the sharing of benefits and sustainability. The study aims to accurately analyse the capitalization mechanism of rural cultural resources, deeply explore the positive role of rural historical and cultural potentials in contemporary socio-economic development, further expand the application dimension and feasible path of cultural capital in rural revitalization practice, and contribute innovative and referential Chinese wisdom and solutions to the effective development and utilization of global rural cultural resources.

Key words : cultural capital Kaixiangong Village Peasant Life in China Government special team

1. Introduction

Since 2000, culture and heritage have been recognised as the fourth pillar of sustainable development in European and international policy research. The rise of culture as a solution to urban social and economic 'diseases' has received unprecedented attention (Sabatini, 2019, Dinardi, 2015). However, research on culture-led development strategies has focussed mainly on large cities and metropolitan areas, with less attention paid to villages and small towns (Bell and Jayne, 2010, Lysgård, 2019). So far, the link between rural development and culture has been dominated by tourism, which may have exacerbated existing problems while promoting economic development (Ghahramani et al., 2020). Cultural policy in the countryside is limited and related to the urban culturally dominated policy discourse (Lysgård, 2016). Despite this lack of attention, cultural resources can be a valuable driver of revitalisation in rural areas and a major contributor to social cohesion and civic engagement (Thurley et al., 2015). In rural areas, culture mainly refers to landscape management and conservation, traditional social practices, customs and lifestyles, etc. Established research narratives on rural culture also mainly refer to natural capital and tourism-related benefits, neglecting other rural resources and capital (Egusquiza et al., 2021).

Indeed, culture shapes access to other forms of capital and is itself an indispensable form of capital (Daskon and McGregor, 2012). We believe that rural areas will benefit from culture-led revitalisation opportunities, and that traditional or vernacular culture has been recognised as a key resource and an important variable in the survival and sustainability of villages. Rural villages beyond culture itself and heritage-related tourism can access additional resources by utilising the power of higher levels of government and business, but the transformation of cultural resources driven by different agents has rarely been studied. To address the existing research limitations, this study uses Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, aiming to understand the ways of accumulation of

cultural resources in the countryside, the transformation pathways and the impact of cultural capital on rural development. A rural village in Suzhou, China is empirically selected to explore the process of realising rural cultural capital and the key elements involved in the process. The main contribution of the study is the introduction of a new transformation theory model that describes the transformation mechanism of cultural resources. The study aims to contribute to the study of rural cultural capital by furthering the understanding of rural cultural values and the factors that may influence participants' cultural capital.

2. Literature review

2.1 Capitalisation of cultural resources

Culture is a highly ambiguous concept that is difficult to define. Broadly speaking, culture can be divided into three categories: material, institutional and spiritual. Generally speaking, the capitalisation of cultural resources refers to the transformation of all kinds of industrially exploitable cultural resources owned by a society into value-added cultural capital with the goal of maximising economic and social benefits, and endowing them with the attribute of capital. Resources, as the sum of all means of production that can promote the progress of the cultural cause, play an important role in cultural identity, power cohesion and economic competition, and prompt the corresponding cultural capital to participate in cultural production activities, thus generating new cultural resources (Ma et al., 2021). Resources are not capital in themselves, but only have potential value before they are transformed. Moreover, not all cultural resources can be transformed into cultural capital, only those that can be developed under the existing conditions and have market potential can be transformed into capital. Therefore, Bourdieu believes that cultural resources and cultural capital have a dependent relationship, and cultural capital is the cultural resources that are activated and utilized. Sotheby's believes that cultural resources are the cultural products of labour value accumulation, and only the cultural commodities that can be circulated and generate new benefits in consumption can be called cultural capital, and they tacitly agree that cultural products are the basis of cultural capital, which raises the starting point of classification of cultural resources. Therefore, the essence of capitalisation of cultural resources is the process of activation and utilisation of static cultural resources, which is also the essence of cultural capital.

In rural areas, the material dimension of cultural resources is embodied in the products that people create and their longstanding ways of producing them, including the specific tools, processes and technologies used to produce goods. The institutional dimension consists of the moral and ceremonial norms established over time to maintain stability and social order in rural societies. The spiritual dimension reflects the shared psychological structure and emotional response patterns, often expressed in villagers' personalities, values and outlook on life (Daskon and McGregor, 2012). Cultural resources provide opportunities for other forms of capital to be shaped in the process of capitalisation, as assets that represent the strengths or weaknesses of actors, such as natural, physical and financial capital, and profoundly influence villagers' upgrading decisions and standards of living (Lewis, 2005). There is a consensus among researchers that cultural resources must undergo a series of developmental transformations and market operations before they can finally be transformed into cultural capital. However, for the capitalisation process of cultural resources, or the transformation mechanism of cultural resources, more studies focus on the cross-section results of cultural resources into cultural capital. Fewer studies have explored the capitalisation process and effectiveness of cultural resources from the time series dimension.

2.2 Cultural capital and rural development

When cultural resources are transformed into cultural capital, they become a kind of assets that can be transferred from one generation to another in the social field over time. The concept of cultural capital we are discussing nowadays is mostly derived from Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, in which he believes that cultural capital is the appropriation of certain cultural resources by actors, including their dress and behaviour, aesthetic preferences, cultural qualities, educational diplomas, and so on (Apple et al., 2009). Cultural capital is the accumulation of the value of cultural labour in the field of production, which can evolve into a class structure of continuous intervention, the capital power of resource distribution, and is expressed as a method and adaptive capacity, which provides human society with the possibility of using and transforming the natural environment (Berkes and Folke, 1992). Correspondingly, cultural capital possesses three forms: concrete, physical and institutionalised. Concrete cultural capital is dependent on the inherent cultural skills and cultivation of individuals; physical cultural capital is the form of material presentation under the action of subjective initiative; and institutionalised capital is the form of officially sanctioned institutionalisation. The three forms of existence complement and influence each other, and play the roles of regulating, structuring and safeguarding in the 'field' on which the

theory of cultural capital is based. cultural capital theory has developed the following characteristics under the continuous expansion of researchers: (1) cultural capital (1) Cultural capital can bring economic value, which is in essence a kind of 'attention economy'. (2) With the help of certain real carriers, cultural capital has the form of materialisation. (3) Cultural capital can be accumulated through time, which needs to be inherited by people. (4) Cultural capital can be accumulated and reproduced. Cultural capital can be accumulated and reproduced, and its essence is the continuous expansion of the value system.

Bourdieu leaves a lot of space for the study of cultural capital, which is both determined by the social structure and reproduced through the continuous practice of the subject, and the concept of cultural capital can be interpreted in the broader social context of the city and even the countryside. The countryside can be regarded as 'a history of accumulation', or even a way of existence in which culture and capital are organically combined. This gives rise to the concept of rural cultural capital, which is an umbrella term for those historical or contemporary, traditional or modern, material or immaterial, dynamic or static, tangible or intangible rural production and lifestyles that have been created under the dual role of agricultural and industrial civilisations. Rural cultural capital is based on in-depth excavation of rural cultural resources, through a variety of ways to carry out the optimal allocation of resources and effective operation, so as to promote the progress of cultural productivity, and achieve the maximisation of the economic and social benefits of cultural capital. In the process of transforming such resources into capital, a benign interactive cultural construction can be formed, which becomes the productivity and competitive advantage of the countryside and drives the development of rural industries (Daskon and McGregor, 2012). Through the intensive use of cultural resources in the countryside, it can optimise the industrial structure of the countryside, change the mode of economic development and promote the development of the tertiary industry. At the same time, it can also bring back the labour force, adjust the population structure, and revitalize the countryside (Radcliffe and Laurie, 2006). Some studies have extensively discussed the impact of rural cultural capital on rural livelihoods (Ma et al., 2021), or linked rural cultural capital with rural tourism and cultural festivals, and discussed the relationship between culture and labour, resources and social capital (Rossetti and Quinn, 2021). However, these studies are more at the level of phenomenon association, and have not explored in depth the transformation process, mode and conditions of cultural resources, and lack of application-oriented transformation strategies. This study focuses on the transformation mechanism of cultural resources, and explores the impact of cultural resources on rural governance structure and spatial planning, so as to realise the transformation into economic benefits. The integration process of cultural resources, the way they are transformed into cultural capital, and the key details of the transformation will be fully investigated.

3. Research design

3.1 Case study

A village in Suzhou, China, Kaixiangong Village, one of the representative economically developed areas in Southern Jiangsu Province, was selected for the study, [Figure 1](#). Kaixiangong Village consists of five natural villages: Kaixiangong, Lotus Bay, Xicaotian, Tianzixuwei, and Sifangxuwei. The village area has a total area of 4.5 square kilometres, with 25 villagers' groups, 752 households, a resident population of 3,020, 2,965 acres of arable land, 45 acres of mulberry land, 2,920 acres of paddy and mulberry land converted into fish ponds, and 1,400 acres of water surface in the outer swings.

The accumulation of cultural resources in Kaixiangong Village comes from Mr Fei Xiaotong's *Peasant Life in China*, which analyses the economic system, social structure and cultural ecology of Kaixiangong Village in depth, and constructs a complete and academically valuable narrative framework for the village. This is not only an objective record of Kaixiangong Village's specific stage of development, but also gives authority and uniqueness to the village's cultural resources, constituting the core and dominant part of Kaixiangong Village's accumulation of cultural resources. 1938, when Fei Xiaotong was studying at the University of London in England, he relied on a study of the village's economic system, social structure, and cultural ecology. In 1938, while studying at the University of London, Fei Xiaotong wrote his doctoral thesis, *Peasant Life in China*, based on his research in Kaixiangong Village, which documented the process of rural industry in China, and he visited Kaixiangong Village a total of 26 times. Since then, Kaixiangong Village has become a research base for the international sociological community to study the Chinese countryside and establish long-term academic ties.

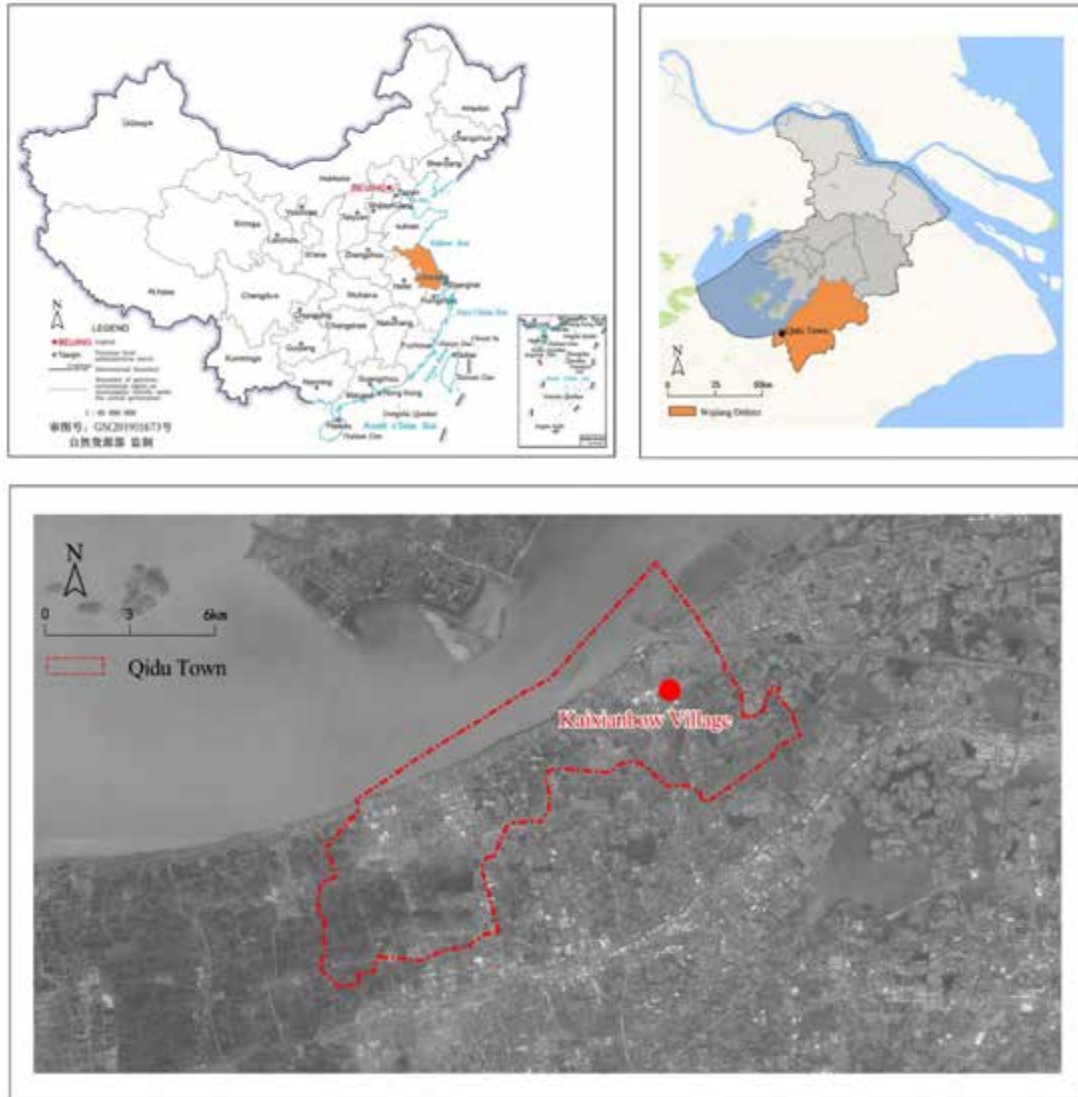


Figure 1 Location map of Kaixiangong Village
Source: Self-drawn

3.2 Research method

In order to fully discuss the transformation mechanism of Kaixiangong Village cultural resources, this study adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. A one-week field survey of the village was conducted in July 2023, with short semi-structured governmental, village committee, enterprise group leaders, and villagers field interviews (N=20). The interviews were semi-structured and included open-ended questions that allowed respondents to answer questions in their own way, independent of the researcher. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and thematic analysis techniques were used to identify key themes and conceptual issues. Secondly, questionnaires were administered to the villagers and 150 valid questionnaires were collected. In addition, Kaixiangong Village's planning atlas related to cultural resources, statistical data, and information about development projects by outside companies were collected. Although, a case study can never form a generalisable sample, this study can be partially replicated and can shape the design of future studies.

4. Capitalisation of cultural resources

4.1 Accumulation of cultural resources

The study systematically combed and statistically analysed the specific content of Mr Fei Xiaotong's 26 visits to Kaixiangong Village, [Figure 2](#), quantifying the material, spiritual and institutional levels of cultural resources respectively. We divided the sequence of visits into three stages, the first stage is from the 1st visit to the 9th visit (1935-1985), which is mainly the accumulation of cultural resources in the material level. The second stage is

from the 10th visit to the 19th visit (1985-1996), in which the accumulation of cultural resources shifted from the material level to the spiritual and institutional levels, and the accumulation of cultural resources was relatively balanced in the three levels. In the third stage, from the 20th visit to the 26th visit (1996-2002), the accumulation of cultural resources was mainly at the spiritual level, with the material level decreasing and the institutional level increasing.

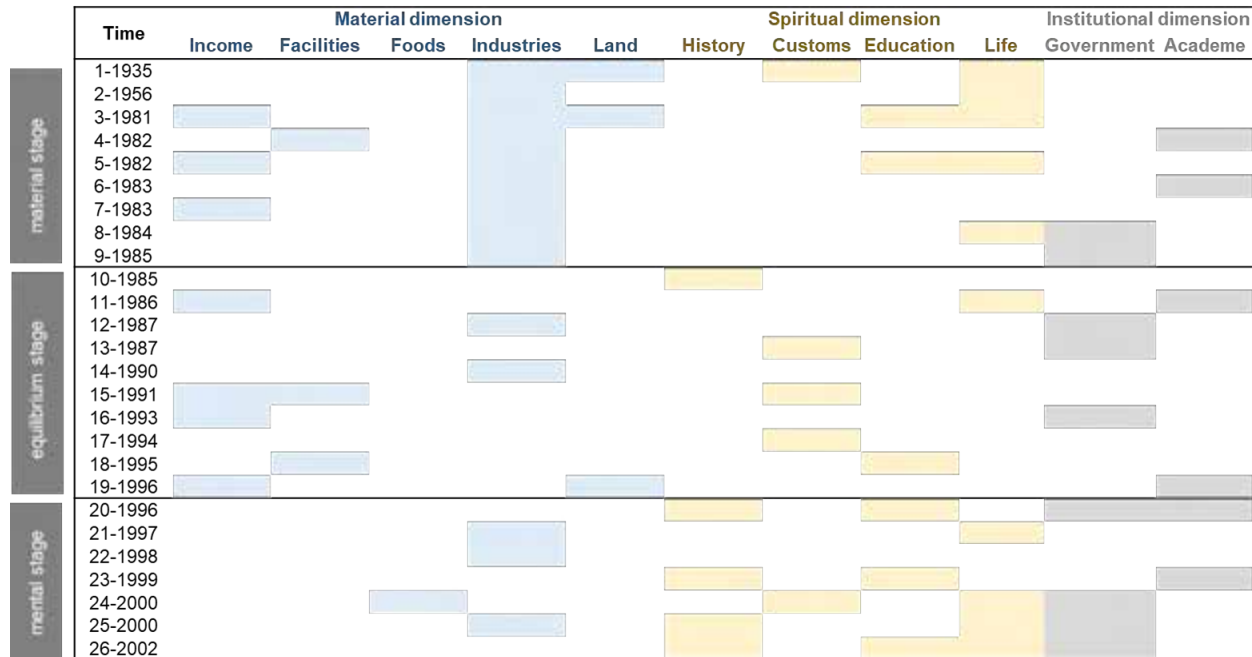


Figure. 2 A compendium of Fei Xiaotong's 26 visits
Source: Self-drawn

We further screened the content frequency of the 26 visits to the countryside to determine the main content of each stage of the visit, in order to identify the process of accumulation of elements of cultural resources, and to provide a basis for the subsequent transformation of resources, [Figure 3](#). In the material stage, industrial labour and land use, as the main accumulation of cultural resources at the material level, not only create the material products needed for life and satisfy the basic needs of rural residents through specific production and practical activities and the development of land space, but also lay a solid material foundation for subsequent academic research, and their embedded economic value and physical presence form the material foundation of cultural resources. The economic value and physical existence of these products constitute the core elements of the material foundation of cultural resources in the countryside. In the equilibrium stage, economic income and infrastructure at the material level, local customs at the spiritual level, and academic research at the institutional level mutually empower each other, and the optimisation and upgrading of economic income and infrastructure provide material support and dissemination platforms for the inheritance and display of local customs, while the unique local customs attract more attention and feed the economic development. Meanwhile, academic research at the institutional level provides theoretical basis and scientific guidance for the first two, ensuring that cultural resources in the countryside achieve all-round, sustainable and balanced development in the process of accumulation, and jointly promoting the advancement of rural cultural capital to a higher level. In the mental stage, the focus of cultural resources accumulation is shifted to the spiritual level of historical accumulation and cultural education. Deep historical deposits have injected rich connotations into rural culture, while cultural education plays a key role in the process of inheriting and promoting these cultural elements. This process not only promotes intergovernmental exchanges at the institutional level and the deepening of academic research, providing policy support and theoretical guidance for the development and utilisation of cultural resources in the countryside, but also, with the help of various channels of communication, vigorously promotes the widespread dissemination of rural cuisine at the material level and enhances the overall influence of rural culture.

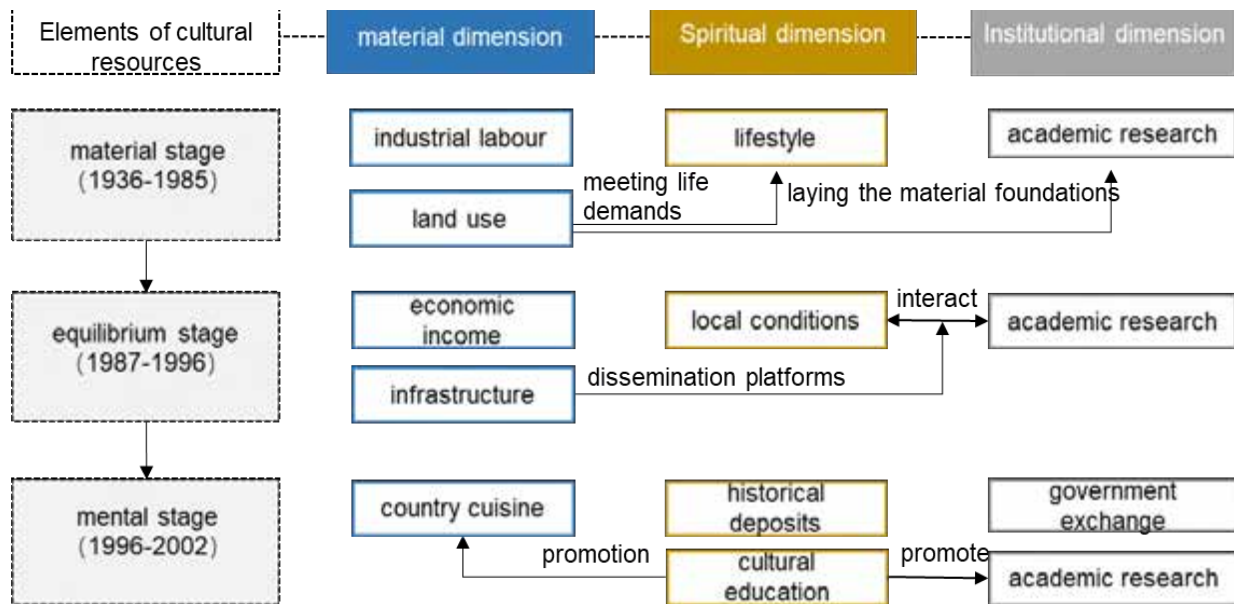


Figure 3 Cultural resources element accumulation
Source: Self-drawn

4.2 Transformation of cultural resources

4.2.1 Transformation path 1: government special team under scale reorganisation

The uniqueness of China's villages lies in the vertical depth and grassroots intervention of the governance system. Unlike the bottom-up governance model in Western countries, Chinese villages are governed by an informal administrative body, the village committee, which is an extension of state power and is indispensable for most village development, capital introduction, and project attraction, but when the influence of the village extends beyond its boundaries and attracts cross-regional investment, large-scale project resources or complex policy coordination needs, the limited resources and coordination capacity of the village committee alone are often insufficient to cope with the situation. However, when the influence of the village extends beyond the village, attracting cross-regional investment intentions, large-scale project resources, or facing complex policy coordination needs, it is often difficult to cope with the limited resources and coordination capacity of the village committee alone, and a cross-scale reorganisation of the government special team becomes a necessary and efficient response. In Kaixiangong Village's cultural resources capitalisation process, a government special team was set up to coordinate the development of the hyper-village, and work with the village committee to promote the transformation of cultural resources and the dissemination of the 'Jiang Village' IP, Figure 4. In addition to the valuable academic cultural resources left behind by Mr Fei Xiaotong for Kaixiangong Village, in the context of China's rural revitalisation strategy, Suzhou City has established the 'China Jiang Village' rural revitalisation demonstration zone in 2020, which is officially recognised at the municipal level. Institutionalisation. In the same year, Wujiang District, a subordinate district of Suzhou, built a project command department for Kaixiangong Village, and started to organise government personnel across administrative scales to form a special team. The mayor of Wujiang District acted as the head of the command department, linking up various departments of agriculture and rural areas at the district level, and correspondingly, Qidu Township set up a special comprehensive rural upgrading task force and deployed township staff to work in the village, which has been in place since then.

The establishment of the government special team in Kaixiangong Village has led to a systematic transformation of the village, laying the institutional foundation for the creation of the 'Jiang Village' cultural brand. On the one hand, the special team continues to promote the excavation of village culture, and on the other hand, it works with the village committee to assist in village planning and the development of introduced projects. As Director Shen of the government special team said:

'At the beginning of the establishment of the task force, the overall planning of the village was to build a cultural development corridor centred on Kaixiangong Village, and around Kaixiangong Village North, Kaixiangong Village South and Lotus Bay Village, we built the Jiang Village 1936 North Garden, Taihu Crab Garden, Jiang Village 1936

South Garden, and Jiang Village 1936 Landscape Mulberry Field. Now all of them, except the North Garden, have been completed and are open for business.'

At this point, cultural resources have been transformed into institutionalised capital. The cultural capital of Kaixiangong Village exists in an 'institutionalised state' in the form of social identity, which is officially recognised, legal and socially accepted. Kaixiangong Village's cultural resources, both material and spiritual, are preserved, inherited and disseminated more widely through the vehicle of the government special team.

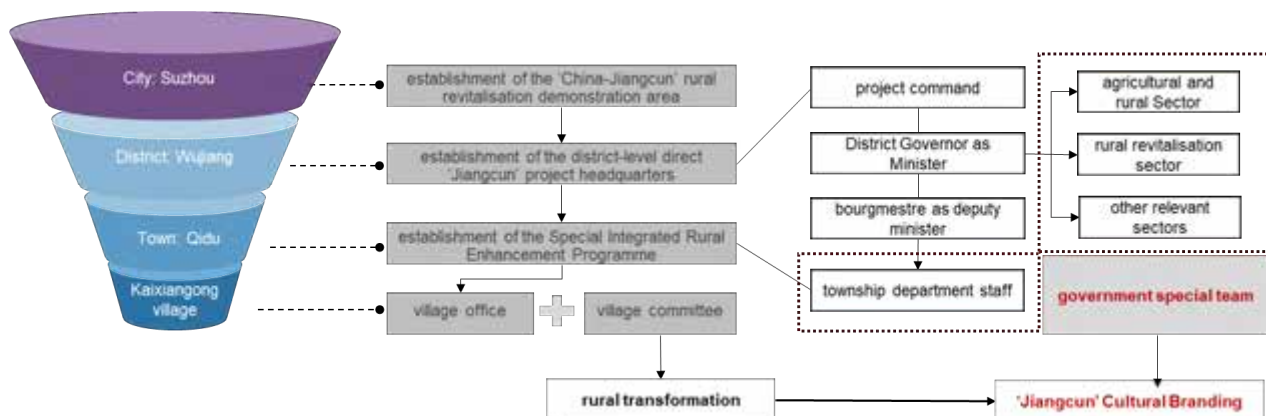


Figure 4 Institutions under scale reorganisation cultural capital
Source: Self-drawn

4.2.2 Transformation Path 2: Internal and External Symbiosis of Rural Public Cultural Space

The co-governance between the government special team and the village committee has led to the materialisation of Kaixiangong Village cultural resources, creating new values in the production field through the introduction of projects, promoting the reproduction of cultural space, and storing it in an 'objective state' in the concrete material. Through the investment and introduction of projects, new values are created in the production field, and the reproduction of cultural space is promoted, which is stored in the concrete material in an 'objective state'. In order to revitalise and utilise cultural resources, a series of rural public cultural spaces have been created, Figure 5, and with the development of urbanisation and rural revitalisation, rural operating companies with cultural service skills have become the dominant factor in intervening in the development of the countryside, and the traditional endogenous space and the new exogenous and modern space have appeared to be mixed and symbiotic. In Kaixiangong Village, we see two different paths of cultural resources being transformed into public space under the intervention of capital. Firstly, there is the entry of the village sage enterprises. Kaixiangong Village's Shanshui Mulberry Field, South Park Carnival and Taihu Crab Bank are all invested by the village sages, who have returned to their hometowns with their deep feelings for their hometowns and their familiar industrial fields, and have given back to their hometowns through their practical actions. Compared with foreign enterprises, the sages deeply understand the value of their hometown culture, show a high degree of cultural identity and cultural self-awareness, and integrate regional cultural characteristics into industrial development, which not only promotes local economic growth, but also promotes the inheritance and innovation of rural culture. As the director of government special team, Mr Miao, said:

'In the beginning, we also negotiated co-operation with larger foreign companies and groups, but their understanding of the culture of Jiang Village was not that deep. Instead, my local entrepreneurs were able to sense what we wanted, what we wanted to do for the villagers, what we wanted to do for this village.'

Secondly, in order to further expand the influence of the 'Jiang Village' cultural brand, the village has introduced a village operation company (Blue City Group), which cooperates with the government in rural revitalisation projects. For example, Kaixiangong Village's Jiang Village Hall, Market, Council Chamber and Cultural Gallery are all public cultural spaces funded by the company during its operation of the village. Compared to the direct economic benefits generated by the mulberry fields, crab gardens and carnivals, the functional attributes of these public spaces are more integrated into the lives of the villagers and attract foreign tourists to learn about village culture. Integration of fragmented cultural resources and further formation of cultural capital will lead to the development of diversified industries.



Figure 5 Public cultural spaces in villages
Source: Provided by the village

4.2.3 Transformative pathway 3: Participatory research and learning activities

In the process of capitalising cultural resources, in addition to institutionalised and materialised forms of storage, Kaixiangong Village also has an educational and cultural dissemination value of study activities. This includes village social surveys and academic exchanges between scholars from home and abroad at the beginning, as well as a wide range of research experiences for students at the present time. The unique cultural features and connotations of the villages, such as historical deposits, local customs and lifestyles, have been internalised over time into the unique spiritual qualities of Kaixiangong Village. Research activities have expanded the scope of dissemination of this cultural capital, and its audience has shifted from scholars to a wider public. The participatory nature of this spiritual transformation of cultural resources is very important. Therefore, the promotion of research activities and the target groups are the main considerations for Kaixiangong Village in shaping its cultural capital. Through research and interviews, our research team concluded that study activities are mainly classified into task-type, spontaneous-type, and education-type, [Figure 6](#). Specifically, task-type study activities are usually carried out by government staff as the main body to carry out collective activities, mainly to learn from the village's governance model of multi-party participation, the government's experience of linking social capital and villagers' assets for economic development, and the experience of tapping into the countryside cultural resources to create a village cultural brand. Resources to create a rural cultural brand model. Spontaneous research activities refer to the researchers' independent decision to go to the countryside for research based on their own research interests and research directions. Their research includes the social structure change, economic transformation, and cultural inheritance of Kaixiangong Village. Through interviews, observations, questionnaires, etc., they dig into the first-hand data, and dedicate themselves to contributing innovative results to the field of academic research. Educational study activities are agricultural experience activities organised for primary and secondary school students to participate in, based on the rural agricultural production environment, integrating agricultural knowledge learning and practical experience in depth. Through field visits to farmland, participation in agricultural operations, observation of the growth process of crops and other forms, primary school students are guided to broaden their horizons of knowledge in real agricultural scenes, and to understand the basic process and importance of agricultural production.

The interactive process of research activities further promotes the capitalisation of cultural resources and gives participants unique cultural capital experiences, for example, participants can buy cultural goods, develop skills and learn about local cultural history. Of course, there are scholars who believe that people participate in study activities just for fun, not for the development of cultural capital in villages. However, from the actual development of Kaixiangong Village, the high frequency of study activities has been effective in spreading culture. Participants have attracted more social resources to invest in them, further helping the village to carry out more cultural projects, so that the culture of the Jiang Village can be cohesive in Kaixiangong Village, which is worth preserving and passing on, and sharing with a wider range of people and regions.



Figure 6 Three Types of Research Activities
Source: Provided by the Village Council

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Mechanisms for the formation of cultural capital

The analysis of the research results shows that the process of cultural resources capitalisation is complex, and the relationships between different subjects are intertwined, and they play different roles and have their own interests in the process of cultural resources capitalisation. Therefore, this study provides a conceptual model of cultural capital development and related dominant actors, [Figure 7](#), which includes the direction and interrelationships of different actors in the process of cultural resources transformation, as well as the forms of cultural capital that are formed under the role of these actors. Firstly, the transformation of cultural resources involves the synergy of government special team, village committee and enterprise group. In the case of Kaixiangong Village, cultural resources were the first to be officially recognised, and the legitimacy of the social identity was the strategic basis for a series of business projects. The reorganisation of the village governance structure has facilitated the regionalisation of the village and the development of the cultural concept of 'Extensive Jiang Village', which has facilitated the overall planning of Cultural resources. The government's function is to attract investment and bring in external resources and capital. Secondly, village committee plays the role of coordinating all parties in the process of transforming cultural resources, making use of the social basis of village acquaintances, storing the idle houses of villagers, and overlaying policy preferences to guarantee the market operation of the group's enterprises. In addition, the group and the village committee, as the end point of cultural resources transformation, maximise cultural resources and social benefits through village operations, transform them into value-added cultural capital and give them capital attributes.

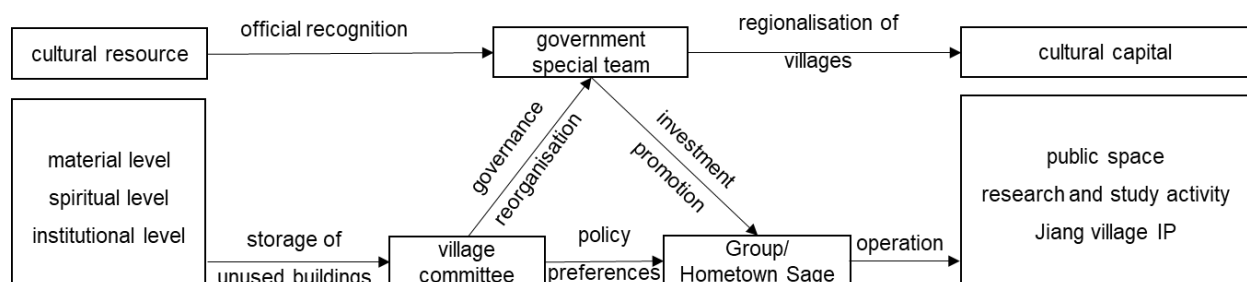


Figure 7 Cultural resources transformation mechanism
Source: Self-drawn

5.2 Response of villagers to passive participation

In the case of Kaixiangong Village, we see that the government, village committees and enterprises are actively involved in the dissemination, transformation and transmission of cultural resources in the villages, but the villagers living in the villages are involved in a passive way. In our research questionnaire, we found the unequal distribution of benefits in the relative deprivation theory and the information asymmetry in the knowledge gap hypothesis. More than 24% of the villagers are indifferent to the development of the cultural industry in the countryside, and 27% of the villagers think that the current public cultural space attracts insufficient and does not have a positive impact on their lives. This shows that the value-added of cultural capital has not yet fairly benefited all villagers, and villagers fail to get direct economic and social benefits from it, then their interest and support for these changes will be reduced. Second, villagers only see the external changes in the villages superficially, and differences in access to information further widen the knowledge gap between different groups. Villagers do not understand the specific process and long-term significance of the transformation from cultural resources to cultural capital, and therefore cannot feel the positive impact of this transformation.

The reason for this is the lack of participation in the project and the lack of sustainability, which leads to the perception of group differences in the process of transforming cultural resources. This also requires that the government, enterprises and village committees pay more attention to the actual needs and opinions of the villagers in the subsequent development of the countryside, and promote the active participation and support of the villagers through the establishment of an effective communication mechanism, ensuring the sharing of benefits and respecting and integrating the local cultural characteristics, as well as the provision of the necessary education and training. In addition, the government and village committees need to pay more attention to the actual needs and opinions of villagers by establishing effective communication mechanisms, ensuring benefit sharing and respect for and integration of local cultural characteristics, and providing the necessary education and training, so as to promote villagers' active participation and support. At the same time, there is a need to formulate long-term plans to ensure that the process of transforming cultural resources into cultural capital is sustainable and can bring about substantial improvements.

5.3 Conclusion and prospect

The main purpose of this study is to further understand the transformation paths and mechanisms of rural cultural resources, which provides theoretical explanations and case sharing for the study of the adaptive use of rural cultural resources. Based on a study of a rural village in Suzhou, China, a new theoretical model of cultural capital is proposed, including the relaxation of the accumulation of cultural resources, transformation pathways and impacts. The study reveals three forms of cultural capital storage in villages, the interactions between different actors and the passive responses of villagers. The study highlights the dominant role of the scale-restructured village governance structure in the formation of cultural capital, the coordinating role played by village committees in the process of resource transformation, and the value-added role in the operation of group enterprises.

Clearly, this is an exploratory study and conclusions relying on one case alone are not broadly generalisable. Rural culture is significantly territorial, and future research could carry out a larger survey of villages. Attention should also be paid to how rural cultural capital can be beneficial to participants on an individual level.

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