

Research on Art and Design-Driven Sustainable and Endogenous Rural Development

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Abstract

The sustainability of rural revitalization has become among the most important socioeconomic development strategies in China. The research questions here revolve around the essence of art and design, positioning endogenous development dynamics in rural settings involving the exploration of the mechanisms of profound interaction and long-term change by art and design in rural regeneration. At present, rural revitalization strategies place more emphasis on immediate financial benefits without considering endogenous forces in the long term. This leads to a more urgent issue: how villages maintain and extend the development effects of external artists once they have gone when early finances are drained away. In accordance with case studies of artistic rural development at Deqing, Zhejiang, and Qingtian, this paper develops a four-dimensional analytical model: Cultural Capital Activation - Subject Capacity Reconstruction - Industrial Ecosystem Construction - Institutional Environment Reinvention. This framework shows how art and design work to bring about endogenous rural development through the mechanisms of operational or core challenges and optimal ways of operation. As the research suggests, the successful implementation of art-based rural development depends on the successful transformation of cultural capital and the significant rebuilding of the agency of village dwellers, which requires the introduction of a multilayered assessment system at the economic, social, cultural, and environmental levels. The collaboration with multiple sectors and the development led by the community should become the focus of future research. By building a strong synergy paradigm, where the people of the village are the decision makers and external forces are the facilitators, it is possible to actually incorporate art design into the rural fabric. This will ease the paradigm change so that it does not have to intervene but rather be driven by internal forces that guarantee long-term mechanisms and sustainable development toward rural revitalization in China.

Keywords

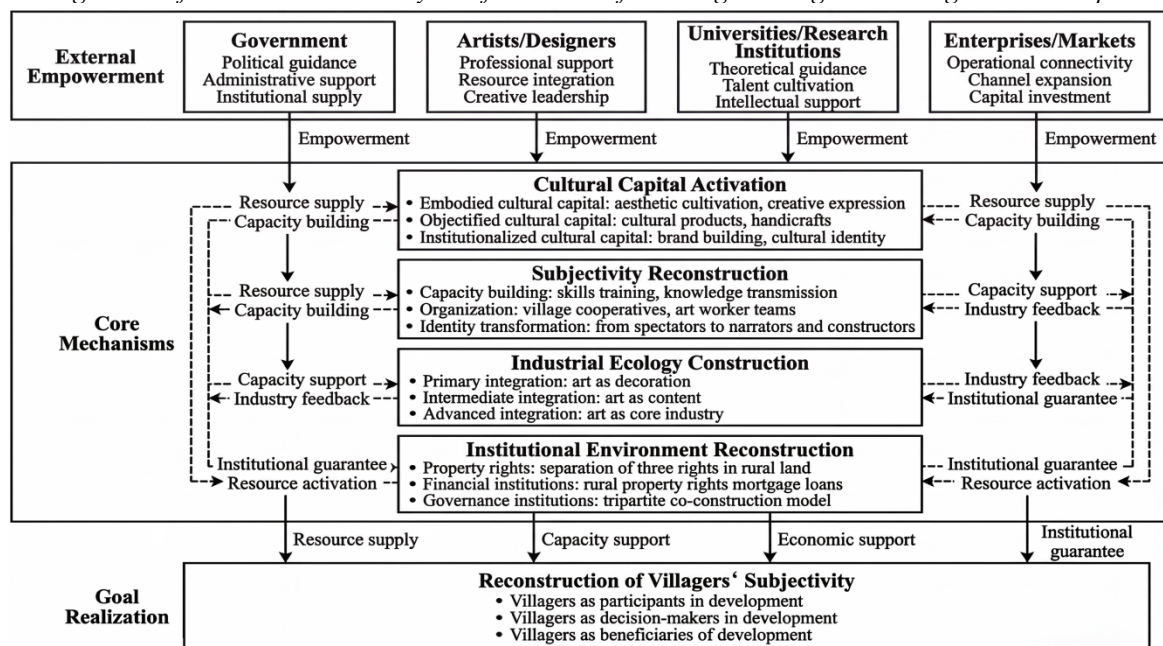
rural revitalization, art design, endogenous development, cultural capital, reconstruction of subjectivity

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, artistic interventions in rural development have emerged as vital pathways for revitalizing rural communities worldwide. From Japan's Echoic-Summarily Art Triennial to Europe's rural cultural revival initiatives, art projects have demonstrated their capacity to integrate local resources and foster community engagement, simultaneously increasing economic vitality and strengthening social resilience. Domestically, recent explorations represented by “art-driven rural development”, as exemplified

by cases in Napping, Fujian, and Songyang, Zhejiang, have gradually shifted from initial landscape beautification toward the pursuit of cultural empowerment and systematic revitalization. However, a pervasive challenge has become increasingly evident: numerous art-driven rural development projects quickly fall into dormancy after external artists depart and initial funding is exhausted. In recent years, many tourist attractions, such as ancient villages and castles, have emerged across the country. Many of these attractions involve the demolition of traditional buildings and the construction of modern and antique-style buildings, which are called “ancient towns” or “ancient villages”. This has changed the production and lifestyle of the original residents, forming modern pastoral villages instead of traditional ancient villages, let alone traditional rural culture”^{错误!未找到引用源。}. This phenomenon reveals a core question: How can art design interventions in rural revitalization transcend short-term external empowerment to genuinely activate sustainable endogenous development momentum? Addressing this, this study focuses on the mechanism through which art design drives sustainable endogenous rural development. It primarily explores how art design promotes community capacity building through participatory design and how resilient endogenous development pathways emerge through collaboration among diverse stakeholders. As illustrated in Figure 1, a four-dimensional analytical framework integrating cultural capital activation, subjectivism reconstruction, industrial ecology construction, and institutional environment reconstruction is constructed to reveal the operational mechanisms through which art and design activate rural endogenous momentum. Through a comparative analysis of two representative cases, Deqing and Qingtian, in Zhejiang Province, this study aims to construct an analytical framework that integrates cultural narratives, community cocreation, and institutional innovation. It seeks to reveal the operational mechanisms, core obstacles, and countermeasures through which art and design activate rural endogenous momentum, providing theoretical references and practical guidance for policy formulation and project design.

Figure 1: A four-dimensional analytical framework of art design driving rural endogenous development.



Source: Drawn by the author

2. Methods

The present work uses case studies and literature research designs to develop a theoretical framework and design-driven sustainable endogenous rural development. At the level of the literature review, it synthesizes and reviews the available findings on endogenous development theory, participatory design theory, cultural capital theory, and the local expression of sustainable development goals (SDGs), thus developing a four-dimensional model of sustainability analysis that includes economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. In case selection, specific areas of case selection were given; in both Deqing County and

Qingtian County in Zhejiang Province, the principles of typicality were followed when the areas to be researched were selected. “Endogenous elements” refer to the production factors that can drive rural economic development. They underlie the development of specialty industries and are thus essential if the rural economy is to make a breakthrough. The endogenous elements of rural common prosperity include, inter alia, natural resources, cultural resources, human resources, technology, organization, and capital 错误!未找到引用源。. The following data sources are used: first, semistructured interviews with village officials, artists, residents and business operational entities at both sites; second, archival data such as policy documents, project reports, and statistical data from both sites; and third, field observations where participatory observation is carried out in art-based rural development spaces, business models, and practices. Through the study of the mechanisms, key challenges, and countermeasures, this paper provides an in-depth analysis and cross-case comparison of how art and design stimulate endogenous rural development potential.

3. Results

3.1 The Mechanism of Art and Design in Activating the Endogenous Driving Forces of Rural Areas

Investigations indicate that the essence in which art and design can spur endogenous rural development comes in the form of a four-dimensional interconnected process: cultural capital activation - subject capacity reconstruction - industrial ecosystem development - institutional environment reengineering.

3.1.1 The Mechanism for Revitalizing Cultural Capital is the Foundation of Endogenous Development

The design of art mobilizes stagnant cultural resources into recognisable, affective, and exchange value by digging, interpreting and imaginatively reshaping local rural knowledge into visible, sensual and exchangeable symbolic capital. On the basis of modern agriculture, the metaverse construct automated agricultural production scenarios. With respect to the featured rural culture, the metaverse establishes leisure agriculture culture and tourism scenes. When the digital collection of agricultural and sideline products is cultivated, the metaverse creates virtual agricultural museums 错误!未找到引用源。. This is essentially what the process actually involves the conversion of cultural capital into economic capital and social capital, as explained by Bourdieu. In the symbolic practice of art, the collective memory, local expertise, and local skills available in the countryside are transformed into symbolic products and symbolic products with market exchange value.

3.1.2 The Mechanism for Restructuring Core Competencies is the Core of Endogenous Development

Art design allows villagers to evolve into active and not passive participants in their villages as a result of participatory design and community cocreation to become active participants as narrators, organizers, and builders. Through building a “village art draw”, Qingtian County transformed the people who used to be considered passive to joint workers and performers and where art became a part and parcel of their everyday lives. The development of the Homestay Academy in Deqing and the qualifications of the new homestay manager profession essentially altered the short-term and project-prone labor requirements into a long-term talent provision system. The 600 plus homestays in the county are founded by former farm laborers who have turned out to be the islands of support in the homestay business. In addition to highlighting the valuable content addressed by the authors and suggesting future research directions, this review provides insights into sustainability and rural homestay tourism from the perspective of co-occurrence. In the context of sustainable rural tourism, only 51% of the reviewed studies considered homestay as the core and independent area of inquiry. This review highlights that an increasing number of researchers from developing countries are working on community-based rural homestays, especially in the Asia-Pacific region 错误!未找到引用源。. The tripartite coconstruction model of village collectives + villagers + art institutions implemented in Jiangjun Village, Chongqing, facilitates the change of villagers as passive consumers to active agents and the direct beneficiaries of art activities. This is accomplished by entering into a unified-formation of what is referred to as a new entity, which incorporates the processes of asset management, business operations and spatial planning.

3.1.3 The Industrial Ecosystem Construction Mechanism Underpins Endogenous Development

To enhance this, it would be necessary to integrate three layers of the supply chain progressively to establish a complete industrial chain. Decorative art has a place at the main level of integration where art improves the visual appeal of the paper packaging of agricultural products, homestay exteriors and village signage. At the middle level, it will be the center of art and stimulate the promotion of cultural and creative products, handicraft, and art workshops that are rooted in local culture. On a higher level, art becomes the industrial heart, creating an industrial complex where aesthetic creativity becomes the heart of the competition. In the industrial development paradigm, although the intervention of artists may not be entirely for commercial purposes, it is mainly “commodity art” and accompanying industries such as tourism that promote the development of the rural economy 错误!未找到引用源。. The practice of Deqing is quite a bright example of this evolutionary course: beginning with the breakthrough in the homestay industry, Deqing is developing to the contextual diversification of the homestay + model, making almost 3,500 people come home to find a job and start an enterprise, over 800,000 visitors a year, and realizing a tourism income of more than 50 million yuan. It finally created a system of composite industrial ecosystem with deep synergy of agriculture, culture, tourism and sports with the critical jump of artistic events to a prosperous economic industry.”

3.1.4 The Institutional Environment Reconstruction Mechanism is the Safeguard Against Endogenous Development

The separation of homestead land into three-rights revealed the first rural homestead management regulations of the country, with Deqing changing rural dead assets to rural living rights and developing the first homestead of three-right separation certification in China. Under the policy of “separation of three rights” for homesteads, 33 pilot areas, such as Yiwu city, Deqing County, and Jinzhai County, have tried to solve the problem of idle rural homestead and aboveground housing by transferring homestead use rights in various ways, which also benefits farmers, rural collective economic organizations, the government, and other related entities 错误!未找到引用源。. It was the first of these cases to offer 19 different forms of rural comprehensive property mortgage facilities, such as land contract management rights, having dispersed a cumulative 741 million yuan to bring vitality to industrial development in terms of financing. The first village-level returning entrepreneur association was created in China, and a homestay academy and farmer university created to inculcate local talent incessantly, and powerful village companies were established to combine multiple village resources to operate in the market. The market-driven Deqing path is compared with the culture-driven Qingtian path in Figure 2, which shows the key nodes and temporal sequence of institutional innovations in Deqing alongside the cultural restoration and participatory mechanisms in Qingtian, both of which ultimately converge on the reconstruction of villagers’ subjectivity. The combination of the introduction of foreign resources and the mobilization of domestic resources is a network of institutional arrangements that creates a development structure. This has been done to ensure that more groups of villagers will be positively impacted by institutionalized profit-sharing mechanisms.

3.2 Multidimensional Barriers and Deep-Seated Causes of Endogenous Development

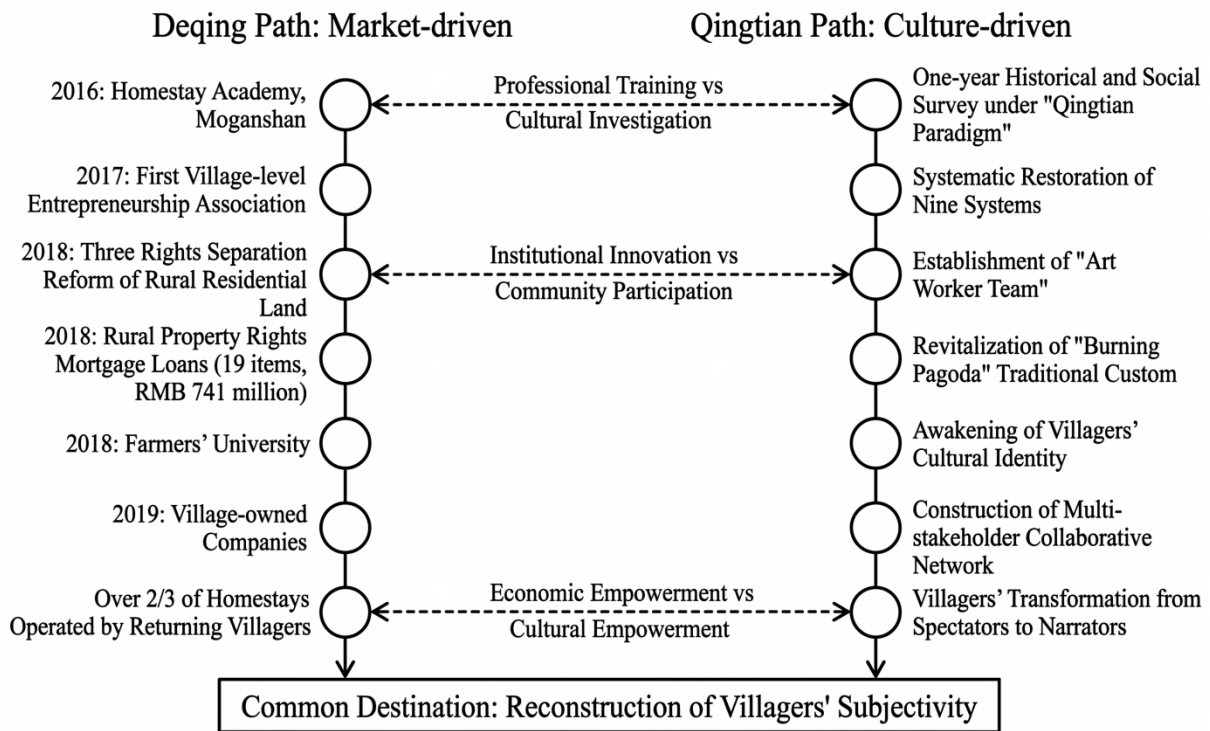
In this paper, the three structural barriers, namely, institutional, cultural, and economic, that hinder the role of art and design in bringing about endogenous rural development are determined. A set of such obstacles creates what can be called a deep water zone, which therefore has to be overcome by endogenous development.

3.2.1 The Core Institutional Barrier Lies in the Absence of a Systemic Collaboration Mechanism

The stakeholders in art-based rural development are varied and include villagers, artists, governments, enterprises, and public welfare organizations. This study aims to examine local communities’ awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism development and the linkages between sustainable aspects and demographic variables and their desire for tourist development. In this study, SUSTDI is used to compare stakeholders’ awareness and comprehension of sustainable development across demographics 错误!未找到引用源。. Nevertheless, in the field, there is an overall deficiency of centrally planned collaborative initiatives that can

be in a position of incorporating thousands of demands and reconciling the needs of the populace and profitability.

Figure 2: Comparison of art-oriented rural construction paths in Deqing and Qingtian



Source: Deqing path data compiled from Zhu Liming, "Deqing Practice and Enlightenment of County-level Pioneering in Common Prosperity Demonstration Zone" (Policy Outlook, 2022, No.10, pp.49-53); Qingtian path data compiled from Chen Zhaojia & Guo Hongyu, "Research on Color Application and Cultural Inheritance in Art-oriented Rural Construction: Taking 'Qingtian Paradigm' as an Example" (Urbanism and Architecture, 2025, Vol.22, No.3, pp.12-15).

3.2.2 Core Cultural Barriers Lie in the Breakdown of Identity and the Loss of Local Knowledge

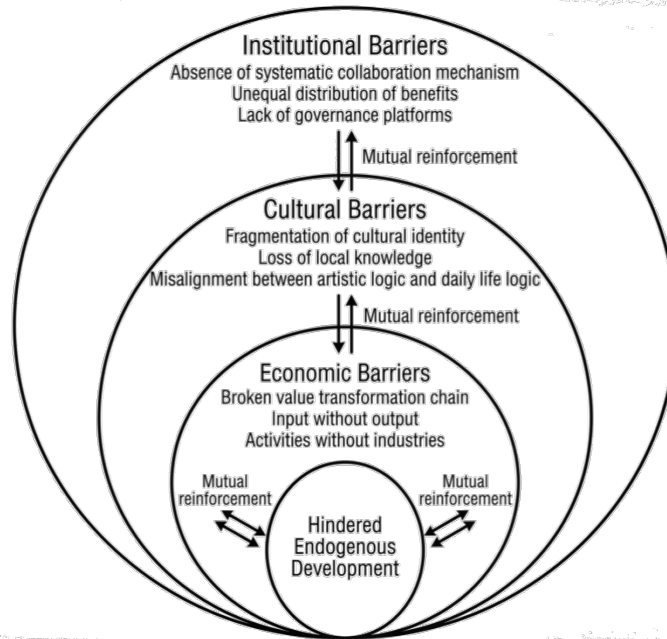
In urbanization, which occurs quickly, rural territories experience various problems, including the homogenization of landscapes, fragmentation of local knowledge and deterioration of cultural identity. Intervention in art is expected to rejuvenate cultural resources, but when mismanaged, it can further discredit the connection. The intervention of contemporary public space art helps the village create a new cultural trait that is "out of nothing" and increases the new "basic point" of regional cultural development 错误!未找到引用源。. The strain between the ideals of artists in their quest to find an authentic example of cultural recreation and pragmatic realities of the villagers on the basis of immediate interests in the case of Qingtian is a revealing moment of a detachment between art logic and the realities of life. In cases where art does not integrate into the lives of villagers in terms of their perceptions and livelihood, it finds it difficult to infiltrate into the inner world of rural society. The renewal of cultural capital runs the danger of being not more than a superficial implantation of foreign languages.

3.2.3 The Core Obstacle at the Economic Level Lies in the Disruption of the Value Conversion Chain

Many efforts have failed to make crucial transitions through art events to the economic industry and have indulged in an unhappy pattern: exterior support starts the project, and the project centers at landscape construction and the festival fail to supply effective improvements to the capabilities of the villagers, connect with local industries, or provide some way of recycling revenues; the project ends soon when exterior support is terminated. This also highlights the risk of a top-down organized festival, which can quickly be withdrawn through a political decision 错误!未找到引用源。. This situation of input and no output, events and no

industry is essentially caused by the inability to determine a constant conversion route between cultural resources and economic returns such that no one can cement the economic base of endogenous development.

Figure 3: Structural model of barriers to endogenous development in art-oriented rural construction.



Source: The three-dimensional structural model of institutional, cultural, and economic barriers and their specific contents are compiled from Liu Qi, “Symbiotic Participation: Exploring Models of Art-oriented Rural Construction” (2026); Li Zhaoyang et al., “Art Participation in Rural Construction: Basic Characteristics, Challenges, and Countermeasures” (Furniture & Interior Design, 2024, No. 11); Xue Bai & Zhao Yiqing (2025); Yan Jun & Xu Beichen (2023); Chen Yuqian (2025); Duan Jianguhua (2026).

3.3 Pathway System for Art and Design-Driven Endogenous Development

On the basis of the synthesis of the experience of successful examples and theoretical synthesis, the relevance of the four-dimensional system of development endogenous pathways developed through potentiating the development of the core entities, transformation of resources, building of industry chains, and institutional protection is systematized in this work.

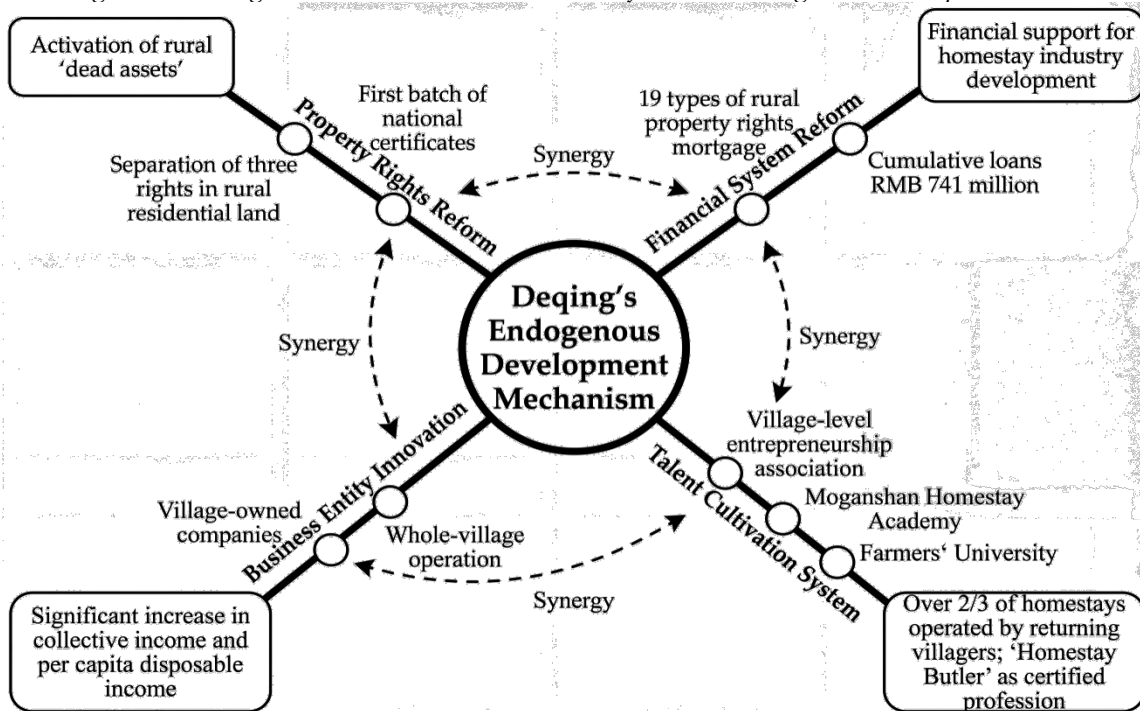
It is centered on the central growth process, which aims at transforming the sense of external empowerment into that of endogenous drive. Its nature is to be based on the applied logic of useful, capable profitable and progressive development through three synergistic strategies: first, the capacity-building of villagers as the primary actors; second, the cultivation of local talent and new rural elites so that the local talent and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage may play leading roles; and finally, the mechanism of talent return and cultivation of the youth so that a good circulation of the supply and demand of the talent may be established through the base of rural practices and entrepreneur incubation. Incentive policies such as entrepreneurship subsidies and tax incentives should attract returning migrant youth to inject vitality into rural digital transformation 错误!未找到引用源。

The resource transformation pathway implies the activation of rural so-called dormant assets creatively into vital capital. Change is developed in three layers: At the cultural resource industrialization level, combining intangible cultural heritage, folk customs and historical memories with the operation of modern design, it provides cultural tourism products and experiences that are tacit and consumable and works together with ecological aesthetics at the ecological value conversion level and the artistic renovation and functional conversion of idle old houses and communal areas at the spatial resource revitalization level. An example of this is Wusi Village in Deqing, which follows this model of operation as a whole-village operation, and the results were transformed with a very vivid transformation in which pig nests are turned into gold mines and leaves are turned into cash.

Its industrial chain construction direction should be to transform into a nonpoint breakthrough to a systemic-level convergence ecosystem. A complete industrial chain should include the exploration of resources and creative incubation upstream, product design and production, brand promotion and market expansion, and digital technology empowerment and feedback iteration in the whole process, the midstream.

The institutional safety route highlights the transformation of project cycles into institutional cycles. Its essence would be that it offers long-term accommodation to endogenous development by making three forms of institutional innovation, namely, revenue distribution innovation, which creates development mechanisms that include villager equity participation as well as profit sharing to ensure that development is beneficial to the whole village. Innovation in the governance mechanism: The establishment of institutional platforms, including villager deliberative councils and cooperatives, to ensure transparency in the distribution of public resources and decision-making. Enhanced policy support system: Strengthening existing beneficial, policy-enhancing policies to boost agriculture and enhancing mechanisms that link and empower farmers. Figure 4 illustrates Deqing's institutional innovation system, mapping the four core institutional innovations—property rights reform, financial system reform, talent cultivation, and business entity innovation—to their corresponding outcomes and demonstrating how these institutional arrangements collectively form the cornerstone of endogenous development.

Figure 4: Dealing with the institutional innovation system and endogenous development outcomes



Source: Deqing's institutional innovation system and outcome data compiled from Zhu Liming, "Deqing Practice and Enlightenment of County-level Pioneering in Common Prosperity Demonstration Zone" (Policy Outlook, 2022, No.10, pp.49-53).

4. Discussion

4.1 From "External Intervention" to "Endogenous Driving Forces": The Evolution of Art-Based Rural Development Theoretical Paradigms

A study indicated that the theory of applying art and design to catalyze endogenous rural development takes a very strong look at theoretically the development of art-based rural revitalization, moving toward an intervention-less mode toward symbiosis. The shift, which runs a path of the exterior spatial restructuring of the focus of the Lefebvrian Theory of Spatial Production, to the discovery of indigent, intersubjectivity and rationality of value becomes local. Early practices were largely aimed at isolated spatial beautification and

transplanting the symbols of the culture following a logic oriented on the tool rationality above all, as it treats art as a technical instrument for transforming the rural visual environment. Differences in the growth environment, knowledge structure, artistic accomplishments, etc., lead to different attitudes among artists and villagers toward the countryside. Artists often consider how to activate rural history and culture through their own creations to reflect the cultural value of their work 错误!未找到引用源。. However, the model that is described by the lack of such a link between external empowerment and local needs and the division that took place between short-term projects and long-term governance was based on the inherent shortcomings in practice.

The practices of Deqing and Qingtian show that the effective transformation of arts in the countryside should result in a paradigm shift between the aspect of instrumental rationality and that of cocreative rationality. Driven by rural revitalization, art in rural construction has been given the task of cultural revitalization. The premise of its implementation must be rooted in the culturally fertile soil left by the countryside, preserving the social structure of the countryside and integrating modern art and economic development characteristics 错误!未找到引用源。. As observed by scholars, the contemporary paradigm of public management is an amalgamation of instrumental and value rationality, which places networks of power–subject relationships, digital technology networks, into bureaucracy structures to create networked governance. The same applies to the concept of artistic rural development—the value of art has ceased to exist to create an exceptionable piece of art, but its ability to become a catalyst for mobilizing local resources, weaving social connections, and empowering the rural population. The so-called tripartite coconstruction model in operation in Jiangjun Village, Chongqing, is the village collective + villagers + art institutions, which is a perfect illustration of the given concept. Through a collective creation of a new entity that has been created by combining the functions of asset management, spatial planning and business operations, it moves people of the village, as planners, as subjects of action and direct beneficiaries. The model is a participatory model that is based on the idea of symbiosis, and this fits well into the theory of intersubjectivity, which places importance on the paramount dialogue and contributes among different actors. It offers both hypothetical arguments and concrete evidence for the authentic implementation of art into the lives of rural communities and the attainment of endogenous development.

4.2 The Core Hub of Endogenous Development: Activating and Transforming Cultural Capital

The study results highlight the fact that the efficient mobilization and transformation of cultural capital is a strategic focal point of the provision of endogenous rural development. With respect to both the Qingtian reconstruction of the Shao Bentan tradition and the artistic reconstruction of the migration history in the Fuliang project, their main difference is the exploitation of local cultural resources as a critical source of endogenous development. This strategy therefore creates cultural and innovative goods, experience and local brand relevance. The formation of cultural capital through design intervention can act as an endogenous driving force for rural development, thereby promoting endogenous development 错误!未找到引用源。. The present observation is more or less congruent with the theory of cultural capital proposed by Bourdieu, which includes not only material cultural products but also embodied practices, tastes and abilities, as well as institutionalized qualifications and identity acceptance. The unique value of art design is that it can concomitantly impact all three types of cultural capital: developing the aesthetic capabilities and expression of villagers during participatory design; developing local knowledge into an exchangeable commodity via cultural and creative products; and developing the cultural identity and brand image of the village during festival events.

Nonetheless, such a change process is always characterized by rooted contradictions: there is often an essential contradiction between the authenticity of cultural expression sought by art and the practical concerns of locals based on practical interests on the ground. The cultural studio practice in Qingtian, authenticity to cultural reconstruction sought by the artists, was distraught by the pragmatic issues of villagers on the basis of their living, a troubling insight into the latent imbalance of artistic logic and logic of life. According to scholars, the artistic intervention must have a noninterventionist interventionist strategy, which is the creation of an equal dialogue mechanism between external artistic forces and rural populations, without violating local traditions and sentiments and without considering the economic requirements of the population. This means that endogenous development cannot be based on the growth that is relevant to the

permanence of traditional culture or the symbolic enactment of traditional culture. Rather, it must engage in radical change through dynamic preservation that would allow cultural resources to become part and parcel of the daily life and lived worlds of the villagers.

4.3 Institutional Supply and Endogenous Order: The Institutional Foundation of Endogenous Development

The discussion further highlights that the sustainability of art and design-driven endogenous rural development largely hinges on establishing an institutional framework that aligns with the inherent order of rural communities. Deqing's successful practices powerfully demonstrate this point: the prosperity of its art-based rural revitalization did not stem from one or a few successful art festival projects but was rooted in a systematic combination of institutional innovations. Property rights reforms transformed rural “dead assets” into “living rights” Financial system reforms injected capital into industrial development. Talent cultivation systems continuously supply local professionals. Innovative business entities integrate resources across multiple villages to achieve market-oriented operations.

These institutional forms combine to create a framework for development that incorporates the utilization of external and internal resources. This allows for the benefits of development to be realized by wider groups of villagers through the utilization of institutionalized forms of benefit distribution as opposed to the benefits accruing to a select elite or external forms of capital. With the diversification of rural construction forms and increasing expectations for rural life improvement, artistic rural construction has gradually developed and is being practiced in China 错误!未找到引用源。. The “Guantianjia” cultural tourism enterprise is an example of this type of composite form of governance. This composite form is jointly created by the village collective, villagers, and an art institution in Jiangjun Village in Chongqing. This composite form incorporates diverse functions, such as asset management, fundraising, planning, spatial design, art exhibitions, village governance, and revitalizing traditional culture.

This discovery engages in dialogue with the “endogenous institutions” theory in institutional economics: effective institutional arrangements should not be externally imposed on “designed objects” but rather on “evolved entities” gradually generated within specific social contexts. Institutional innovation in art-based rural revitalization fundamentally seeks an “institutional interface” capable of reconciling external resource inputs with internal order generation, neither simplistically transplanting urban experiences or international models nor rigidly adhering to traditional village endogenous orders but rather finding a dynamic equilibrium between the two.

4.4 Reconstructing Subjectivity and Endogenous Development: Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications of Research

With the above discussion in mind, this study argues that the core tenet of art and design-induced endogenous rural development is “human revitalization”, namely, the reconstruction of villagers’ agency and the stimulation of internal motivation. Intervening in the revitalization and development of art villages is one of the ways to develop regional brands in rural areas, fit in with contemporary aesthetics, and meet the needs of modern people for diversified life 错误!未找到引用源。. This understanding aligns closely with the core tenets of endogenous development theory: it emphasizes that the fundamental driving force of development originates from the development actors themselves rather than external inputs or control; the goal of development is not only economic output growth but also the enhancement of community capacity and the affirmation of agency.

Three significant areas show the theoretical contributions of this study. First, it builds a four-dimensional analytical framework—cultural capital activation—subject capacity reconstruction—industrial ecosystem construction—institutional environment reengineering, offering an integrated theoretical approach for understanding art- and design-driven endogenous rural development. Second, it reveals the mutually related structural barriers—institutional, cultural, and economic—that endogenous development faces, strengthening the academic understanding of the sustainability problems in art-based rural revitalization. Third, it distills a four-dimensional pathway system made up of subject cultivation, resource conversion, industrial chain construction, and institutional safeguards, providing theoretical guidance that is actionable for addressing practical challenges.

In terms of practical implications, the role of art and design in rural revitalization requires a fundamental paradigm shift: art should not be an external “decoration” or “surgical tool” imposed on villages but rather a “catalyst” that activates local resources, weaves social networks, and empowers rural communities. Rural endogenous development can gain an inexhaustible source of momentum only when art and design are truly integrated into the very core of rural communities, becoming daily practices that villagers can understand, engage in, and benefit from. For future policy formulation and project design, institutional innovation, talent cultivation, and evaluation-system building should be top priorities. It is going to form a multistakeholder governance framework of “government guidance—midfield operation—social participation”, providing stable institutional security for rural development endogenously driven by art and design elements.

5. Conclusion

In this research, an analytical framework of the four dimensions of cultural capital activation, subject capacity reconstruction, industrial ecology construction, and institutional environment reconfiguration was developed to explore the driving role of artistic design in promoting endogenous rural development. Through the exploration of the Deqing and Qingtian County cases, it was found that the key to successful endogenous rural development in China was the integration of the four dimensions of the analytical framework, where institutional innovation was the key to transforming isolated successes into replicable mechanisms. Moreover, this research also revealed that artistic design needed to transform from external intervention to endogenous catalysis, where the value of artistic design was not to exhibit products but to integrate them into villagers' lives in a way that was understandable, participatory, and beneficial to villagers.

In terms of contributions to theory, this research extends the theories of cultural capital and endogenous development to the rural dimension by revealing the specific mechanism through which artistic design can activate local knowledge, empower rural subjects, and construct value transformation chains. In terms of contributing to practice, this research provides a diagnostic tool for identifying structural barriers in the construction of artistic rural spaces and provides evidence-based guidance for multistakeholder governance and benefit distribution.

In the future, it is necessary to explore the differentiated patterns of endogenous development in different types of rural spaces, develop quantitative evaluation systems to assess the outcomes of artistic rural construction, and explore how digital technology can reconstruct the pattern of endogenous development.

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Conflicts of Interest

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