

Cultural Landscape and Rural Revitalization in the Villages of Mountainous Central Shandong Region, China

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Abstract

This study takes the mountainous villages in central Shandong as the research object, which becomes the entry point for studying the concepts of cultural landscape and revitalization. This study examines some villages with special cultural landscapes due to their unique physical space. Later, due to industrialization, they suffered a cultural crisis and then revitalized after restoration, and then reused it to generate value. It explores the interdependent relationship between the natural environment, people, and society in the mountainous area, including the spatial production and value reuse of the village cultural landscape. Through this study, not only the theoretical connotation of concepts such as cultural landscape and spatial production is enriched, but also the intrinsic connection between the characteristics of village cultural landscape and revitalization is revealed. At the same time, the study also proposed new knowledge about value reuse and revitalization, that is, things in the past can not only retain their old value in the present but also generate new value. This study will further enrich the content of the theoretical research on cultural landscape and revitalization and help to understand the revitalized villages worldwide.

Keywords: Mountainous Villages of Central Shandong, Cultural Landscape, Rural Revitalization, Traditional Villages.

Mountain villages are located in the central part of Shandong Province, the highest area in Shandong Province. "Mountainous" has become a typical geomorphic feature of this area. The lifestyle of mountain villagers is closely related to the natural environment of the mountains. Relying on the natural environment of the mountains, residents have created physical

space, social space, and psychological space based on their special landscape through local wisdom, which together constitute the cultural landscape of mountain villages (Shen & Chou, 2021). With the process of industrialization, mountain villages are facing shocks, and their unique cultural landscapes and meanings are being replaced by new elements, which reflects

a profound cultural crisis and change. In the cultural changes of rural areas, the government aims to restore and enhance rural landscapes with important cultural values by selecting and awarding the title of "National Traditional Villages". This move shows the importance of the state using cultural and political power to give new meaning to villages. Subsequently, the government adopted a variety of strategies such as tourism development and education promotion to promote the revitalization of villages and create new values (Diaz-Sarachaga, 2020). This process emphasizes the rediscovery of old values and adjustments in the new era to ensure that the rural cultural landscape shines in the new era.

The phenomenon of "Mountain Villages in Central Shandong" contains the above-mentioned extremely important academic views. However, the overall research on mountain village culture mainly focuses on collecting basic data on this phenomenon. "Cultural Landscape and Rural Revitalization of Mountain Villages in Central Shandong, China" is a study that provides basic information for describing and analyzing academic issues such as cultural landscape, spatial production, cultural policy, revitalization, and value reuse. In addition, this study is of great significance to the current Chinese government and the revitalized Chinese communities and can provide them with a valuable knowledge base and support.

Research Methodology

This is a basic study using qualitative research methods. The collected data mainly includes field survey data and documentary data in the central mountainous area of Shandong. The researcher's field data was collected through observation, participatory observation, general interview, key informant interview, and focus group interview: documentary data and generally related documents, paper documents, and Internet systems. Based on the research framework, the data comprehensively explores

the intrinsic connection between the cultural landscape characteristics and the revitalization of villages in the central mountainous area of Shandong. With the two main concepts of cultural landscape and rural revitalization as the "key", the results are described, analyzed, and presented through regional photos. The concept of cultural landscape comes from "The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography, Loose-Leaf Edition" published by Rubenstein, James (2019).

The research methodology employed for this study involved qualitative research methods. The data collection process entailed gathering field survey data and documentary data from the central mountainous area of Shandong. The field data was collected through various methods including observation, participatory observation, general interview, key informant interview, and focus group interview. On the other hand, documentary data was collected from various sources such as related documents, paper documents, and Internet systems. The research framework focused on exploring the intrinsic connection between the cultural landscape characteristics and the revitalization of villages in the central mountainous area of Shandong. The main concepts of cultural landscape and rural revitalization served as the key elements for data analysis and interpretation. The collected data was comprehensively analyzed to describe and analyze the results, which were then presented through regional photos. The analysis involved examining the interdependent relationship between the natural environment, people, and society in the mountainous area, including the spatial production and value reuse of the village cultural landscape. The qualitative research methods utilized in this study allowed for a deep and comprehensive exploration of the cultural landscape and rural revitalization in mountain villages in the central Shandong region. Through these methods, the study aimed to enrich the understanding of the theoretical concepts and provide valuable insights for the revitalized Chinese communities.

Research Results

Part 1. Landscape and development of villages

The formation of villages in the mountainous areas of central Shandong Province is deeply influenced by its unique natural environment. As a coastal province in East China, central Shandong Province is known as the "Shandong Hills". This landform is mainly composed of the Luxi fault uplift and the Yishu fault zone. It is characterized by limestone, rock, and granite mountains and has rich stone resources. The area has a warm and humid climate, sufficient annual precipitation, and abundant underground spring water resources, making it an important source of water supply in Shandong. The central region also has more than 70% of Shandong's forest area and a forest coverage rate of more than 97%. It can be called the treasure house of natural forests in East China. It has 1,402 species of vascular plants, forming a rare natural botanical garden. These natural conditions provide unique advantages for the birth and development of villages in central Shandong (Hu Zui, 2018).

Therefore, the representation of natural landscapes in these physical spaces inspired humans to form a unique concept of village location based on mountains and rivers. According to the characteristics of the mountainous area, the villagers made full use of the terrain and settled according to the changes in the terrain, forming a flexible and changeable landscape form, creating natural nutrients for the shaping of the cultural landscape. Through interaction with nature, people find order for survival and establish social relationships in nature. It fully reflects people's dependence and respect for nature. It embodies the relationship between man and nature. Man creates villages by understanding and utilizing nature (Bajec, 2016).

The natural environment and social development influence each other. Because of the uniqueness of the physical space, in the early days of villages, mountainous villages once served as border areas with military functions.

During the national revolutionary period, they became important places for revolutionary activities. During periods of economic development, they become key areas providing industrial resources and labor. These connections and changes fully demonstrate the close connection between village development and the upper-class social environment. These show that its social space is not isolated like physical space, but is connected with the larger social environment (Esposito & Cavelzani, 2006).

Part2. Cultural landscape before becoming a "traditional Chinese village" (475 BC to 1840 AD)

2.1 Villages in the mountainous areas of central Shandong: a unique physical space

The physical space of mountain villages is simply an infinite universe, where all matter is located, and all phenomena occur. The physical space of the mountain villages in central Shandong is shaped by social practice under the influence of the natural environment. Therefore, the construction of a cultural landscape is not an isolated island, but a manifestation of the interdependence between people, social structure, and landscape. The geographical environment, topography, and landforms of the mountainous areas in central Shandong have influenced the layout, architectural style, and roads of the villages to a certain extent. It is the form of existence of natural resources infiltrating into social space, thus forming a unique physical space (Rossler, 2006).

2.1.1 The physical space created by stone is a prominent expression of local wisdom

The villagers here have long been living on stones. With the help of natural conditions and local wisdom, they have created a peculiar way of production and life and formed a unique cultural landscape. The mountainous areas in central Shandong are rich in stone resources, but the economic conditions are relatively weak, and external transportation is inconvenient. Therefore, to save transportation and construction costs, most villagers mine local

rocks nearby. Moreover, the stone itself has the characteristics of hard texture, compression resistance, wear resistance, and durability. Because these stones have characteristics that stones in other regions do not have, they have formed a unique cultural landscape through local wisdom. People in the village use these stones to build stone buildings, stone utensils (stone tables, stone benches, stone mills, stone jars, stone covers, stone hammers, stone slabs, stone troughs, stone mortars, etc.), stone shacks, stone streets, stone bridge railings, stone wells, stone caves, etc., together forming a stone world.

As an important part of mountain culture, stone is not only a natural resource but also a unique form of material cultural landscape. This material cultural landscape is mainly manifested in residential buildings, buildings for sacrificial and family activities, and life and production landscape nodes. They are outstanding manifestations of local wisdom and the material basis of cultural identity in mountain villages (Philips, 2003).

2.1.2. Architecture: Material cultural landscape

1) Residential buildings

The architectural features of residential buildings are the core embodiment of the overall cultural landscape of the village. It not only carries architectural culture but also deeply reflects the life and culture of the villagers. In the mountainous area of central Shandong, residential buildings show a simple and harmonious living environment with their unique architectural style, structural methods, and decorative elements (Keitumetse, 2011).

Most of these residential buildings are courtyard-based, but the courtyard forms are eclectic, ranging from regular four-sided courtyards to three-sided, two-sided, and even scattered types, which are flexible and changeable according to local conditions. The courtyard plane is mostly rectangular, showing a variety of character shapes such as "concave, sun, eyes", which are both practical and rich in natural beauty. These courtyards are not only

living spaces but also symbols of social hierarchy, wealth, and power, reflecting the living conditions of people of different classes in ancient society.

In terms of the appearance of the building structure, the residential buildings cleverly combine elements such as the base, structural system, wall, roof, doors, and windows. The base adapts to the mountainous terrain and forms a unique transportation network. The load-bearing system combining wooden frames and walls ensures the stability of the building. The walls are built with a variety of materials, focusing on skills and construction. The roof is made of thatch and stone according to local materials, which have both practical and aesthetic value. The doors and windows are constructed with simple stone and wood materials, highlighting the unique style of mountain dwellings (Qin, 2020).



Figure 2 : Mountain village architecture in central Shandong province. These architectures are the embodiment of the villagers' wisdom in using stone. (The architectures were built during the Jiaqing period of the Ming Dynasty)

Source: Photographed by author, March 26, 2023

In the construction of residential buildings, the subjective initiative of the villagers is fully reflected. From site selection to construction, decoration, and relocation, each link follows specific customs and habits. Among them, the beam-raising ceremony is particularly important. It includes a series of folk activities such as pasting couplets, hanging red cloth, and placing auspicious items, reflecting the villagers' wishes for a better life. In addition, the earthen kang

commonly used in mountainous areas as a bed and heating tool shows the wisdom and life philosophy of the working people.

The architectural characteristics of mountain dwellings and the cultural landscape behind them are a vivid embodiment of the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, highlighting the villagers' survival attitude of using and respecting nature. This concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature eventually formed a unique mountain architectural culture and became a symbol of the identity of local villagers. It not only shows the wisdom and life philosophy of the villagers but also adds rich connotations to the overall cultural landscape of the village (Liu & Tian, 2019).

2) Buildings for sacrificial and family activities

Buildings for sacrificial and family activities play an important role as spiritual space carriers in the village, and have a profound impact on the villagers' spiritual life and ideology. In ancient times, villagers attributed many inexplicable phenomena to some superstitious phenomena. The "gods" who protected one side and the ancestors of the clan were the best spiritual support for the villagers and it became an important spiritual sustenance space for the villagers. The ancestral hall is a place for villagers to worship their ancestors, gather and handle affairs. Its architectural form is made of rock slabs, the roof of the building is a hard mountain top, the large bluestone is used as the base, the four pillars of the front building are equidistant, and the beams and columns are inlaid with wood carvings for decoration. These reflect the respect for ancestors and the strengthening of family cohesion. Temples, such as Guandi Temple, Guanyin Temple, Land Temple, etc. It is located in the Feng Shui treasure land of the village. The walls of the temple are all made of bluestone, the back wall is carved with relief, and the roof is a single slope covered with blue tiles, with exquisite carvings. In order to live in harmony with the natural environment, the villagers deified the natural

environment. These temples reflect people's awe of the natural environment and are iconic buildings in the village. The landscape features of these temples and ancestral halls are more complex in form than those of residential buildings, and also reflect people's attitude of respecting "gods" and valuing ancestors. These buildings are important places for spiritual communication between people. They not only reflect the relationship between people and nature, but also show a social relationship. For example, ancestral halls are often used as sacrificial places for specific families and can only be used by people with the same surname. From the side, it also reflects that the power of the village is in the hands of people with a certain surname. These buildings can in turn consolidate their ruling position. The people in power in the village can use these buildings to influence the villagers in spirit or ideology. Therefore, these temples and ancestral halls are carriers of social interaction and ethnic spiritual and cultural heritage. Its existence strengthens the villagers' cultural identity (Qian et al., 2012).

These material cultural landscapes are a new space created by people through local wisdom. Spatial production is largely the production and reproduction of spatial relations. Based on the mountainous terrain, villagers in the central mountainous area of Shandong used local wisdom to make full use of local stones to build stone buildings, showing the harmonious relationship between architecture and the natural environment (Stenseke, 2009). On the basis of this practicality-based locality, clan status and blood relationship are the basis for courtyard layout, forming material cultural landscapes such as architecture. These architectural symbols and spatial symbols constitute the representational space of the village, conveying social, cultural or historical symbols, and helping people understand and convey cultural values in space.

2.2 Social Space: Intangible Cultural Landscape

The social space of mountain villages is not just the accumulation of physical space but is shaped by social practice and the interaction between people. It is an intangible cultural landscape. These intangible cultural landscapes are an important part of social space. They can reflect the identity and sense of belonging of the village. How villagers use and shape social space, as well as the symbolic elements in social space, all affect the villagers' cultural identity (Shan, 2008).

The living customs, festivals, and traditional skills of the mountain villages in central Shandong Province constitute a unique intangible cultural landscape under the relationship between man and nature and between people. They are shaped by the social practices of villagers. For example, the living custom of mountain villages is to make a kang, and the festival activities are to make a lantern festival and play the letter. These activities not only enrich the lives of mountain villagers, but also strengthen social connections, enhance kinship, continue cultural heritage, and enhance community cohesion; festivals are not only moments of celebration but also important moments for people to connect and communicate with each other. These rituals have become a form of expression and symbolic elements of the interaction between people. There are also handicrafts with unique local characteristics, such as stone carving, root carving, paper cutting, etc., which are formed based on existing material culture and form the unique culture of mountain residents' lives and production methods. It reflects the group's values and artistic pursuits. At the same time, it reflects the harmonious relationship between man and nature and carries the symbolic mountain culture (Gao et al., 2020).

These intangible cultural landscapes that have been precipitated over time not only show the way and method of people getting along with nature, but also show the social relationship of

people's hard work, respect for tradition, ethnic unity, and harmonious neighbors. This relationship not only maintains the daily life and emotional exchanges of the villagers but also is an important cornerstone of social stability and harmony in mountainous areas (Han, 2010).

2.3 Psychological Space: Intangible Cultural Landscape

Psychological space affects people's emotions, identity, memory, and thinking, and it is the internal driving force of mountain village culture. Mountain cultural landscape space has produced many stories, novels, songs, poems, and historical stories, such as the belief culture of "Shi Gandang", the belief of "Taishan Grandma", the culture of farming and reading, the culture of Qi and the famous ancient story "The Legend of Meng Jiangnu". The belief culture of "Shi Gandang" and the belief of "Taishan Grandma" express people's respect and belief in nature, gods, and traditional culture. The culture of farming and reading emphasizes the values of diligence, thrift, respect for teachers and education, and filial piety. The culture of Qi emphasizes the spirit of practice and hard work. The Legend of Meng Jiangnu conveys the interactive relationship between the kingship and the poor in this special physical space, as well as the tenacity and indomitable spirit of Chinese women under the huge differences in social identities at that time. These are the psychological spaces created by the coexistence of people and nature, which affect the life and production ideology of residents. These ideologies, combined with local regional characteristics, in turn, give rise to many folk cultures.

The psychological space under the latitude of the intangible cultural landscape covers culture, emotion, memory, identity, creativity, and social connection. Such a psychological space shapes the life experience and meaning of mountain villagers in the village. It helps us to have a deeper understanding of the influence of mountain village culture and the importance of

intangible cultural landscape (Taylor & Lennon, 2011).

In short, the space of ancient mountain villages is essentially a cultural space and a cultural landscape. In China, which is based on traditional agricultural civilization, the symbolic meanings and symbol systems directly related to village social life are all based on the location layout, architectural features, customs, traditional skills and belief culture, clan culture, agricultural culture, and legends of ancient villages, and exist in the cultural space of villages. In addition to being a physical space that records, carries, and displays village cultural memories, the village cultural space is also a scene carrier for shaping the local identity of villages in the central mountainous areas of Shandong, displaying the cultural value of mountain villages and reproducing local knowledge. It is a village cultural ecological entity with both material, social and psychological attributes.

Part3. The process of villages in the mountainous areas of central Shandong becoming national-level "Chinese traditional villages" (2012-2023)

With the development of society, experts such as Feng Jicai, vice chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, and Pan Lusheng, vice chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, found that the disappearance of ancient villages in China is rapid and unstoppable. He also pointed out that the reason for the disappearance of such a large number of villages is the result of modernization. To protect traditional culture, the country has proposed a strategy of strengthening the country through culture. Under the guidance of the strategy of strengthening the country through culture, the government has used political power to intervene.

3.1 Establishing a "National Traditional Village List" is the most effective strategy to protect ancient villages

The state targets villages with obvious cultural landscape characteristics in the central

mountainous area of Shandong Province, and protects and restores the ancient villages that are about to disappear by turning them into "national traditional villages", thereby achieving the political strategic goal of a culturally strong country. The policy of "national traditional villages" is constructed through a series of plans. It includes project establishment and organization, expert argumentation and standard setting, investigation and evaluation, publicity and release, publicity and promotion, protection and management, supervision and evaluation. The traditional villages in the central mountainous area of Shandong Province were finally established after the above procedures, and it is precisely because of such cultural policies that they have become national traditional villages.

After becoming a "national traditional village", the local government, together with scholars, investment companies, and other forces, conducted in-depth research and investment in mountain villages. Its protection and restoration rely on national and local policies. For example, policies such as "Beautiful Countryside", "Rural Memory Project" and "Shandong Scenic Village Construction" have selected 28 villages from traditional villages in the central mountainous areas of Shandong as "Rural Memory" villages in Shandong Province, and invested in the construction of 20 folk ecological museums and rural community museums.



Figure 2: Traditional village signs and the "Village Memory Project" activity site. The state uses policies to support the restoration of cultural values in mountain villages.

Source:

https://www.sohu.com/a/100207207_114775
[accessed with January 16, 2023]

These policies formulated by the government have played a great role in the villages, and a series of restoration measures have been taken for traditional villages, thus changing the meaning of mountain villages. By issuing policies, laws, and regulations, such as the "Draft Amendment to the Cultural Relics Protection Law of the People's Republic of China", "Regulations on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages in Shandong Province", and "Shandong Province New Urbanization Plan (2014-2020)", guidance and support are provided to local governments, strengthening their responsibilities and roles in cultural governance.

This cultural policy intervention has injected new impetus into the protection and development of villages, while also affecting the original cultural ecology and development trajectory. The government plays an important role in this process, bringing new vitality to ancient villages in mountainous areas through political power and helping villages regain balance in development. Mountain villages have become a stage for interaction between the government, villagers, villages, and the natural environment (Atun, 2019).

3.2 Restoration measures for "national traditional villages" in the mountainous areas of central Shandong

The restoration measures for material cultural landscapes are a process from static protection to environmental renewal. Each village adopts different strategies for restoration, repair, reinforcement, maintenance, and remediation according to different categories. After the above series of operations, the restored material cultural landscape has new functions and roles. For example, first-class buildings such as Guandi Temple and ancestral hall are buildings with historical and cultural heritage. These buildings are mainly statically protected.

After repair, they have become monumental buildings in the village and are important nodes in the village landscape. The second-class buildings, ancient dwellings, are all traditional style buildings built in the Ming and Qing Dynasties or before the Liberation Period. These buildings are restored to their original appearance. After repair, they have architectural appreciation value. The third-class buildings, ordinary dwellings, are newly built brick and stone buildings. These buildings are updated as much as possible to the style of ancient buildings so that they have the spatial experience function of ancient buildings.

When restoring and renewing traditional residential buildings, modern technologies and methods are utilized to address the shortcomings of the original structures. For instance, steel structures and reinforced concrete frames are used to replace the original stone wall load bearing, enhancing safety and creating more indoor space. To combat weathering of brick walls, strategies like local repair or replacement of damaged bricks are implemented. In roof restoration, modern wheat straw forms made of improved technology and PVC materials are used instead of traditional methods, balancing ornamental value and durability. The renewal of traditional mountain dwellings' decoration integrates traditional elements into contemporary designs, preserving historical charm while adding new meaning.

Restoring intangible cultural landscapes involves translating cultural phenomena into tangible visual features, showcasing traditional culture for others to appreciate and understand. Enhancing the village's landscape characteristics and preserving intangible culture are key goals. Measures such as improving the registration system for intangible cultural heritage, promoting academic exchanges, establishing folk museums, and annotating cultural characteristics help explore and showcase intangible culture. Government restoration efforts have not only transformed the physical

space of villages but also impacted their cultural significance and social function. Through government protection and restoration, ancient villages in Shandong's central mountainous area have seen their value reshaped and enhanced. These villages have regained their cultural allure while gaining new contemporary values, serving as engines for economic development and vital hubs for cultural exchange.

Part4. Revitalization of villages in the mountainous areas of central Shandong in the context of traditional Chinese villages

4.1 The cultural landscape value of the mountainous areas of central Shandong after becoming "national traditional villages"

Traditional villages are a kind of living cultural landscape heritage, a unique form of human settlement, and a comprehensive social system. Due to their obvious regional differences, diverse spatial types, unique traditional resources, and profound heritage value, we can divide the cultural landscape value of "national traditional villages" in the central mountainous area of Shandong into two categories: psychological value and emotional value.

4.1.1 Psychological Value

Psychological value is crucial in the tourism development of traditional villages, as it enhances tourists' identification and respect for culture and history. To fully utilize this value, it is important to explore the historical and cultural significance of traditional villages and create a comfortable tourism environment. By integrating agricultural civilization with modern elements and showcasing regional and national characteristics, traditional villages can offer a unique and enriching experience for tourists. This approach allows for the preservation of traditional culture while promoting adaptation and innovation.

4.1.2 Emotional value

Emotional value is crucial for traditional villages in the tourism economy. It enhances tourists' satisfaction and loyalty by creating a warm and peaceful environment. The artistic and

aesthetic values of these villages contribute to emotional value, reflecting historical and cultural significance. Reproducing scenes from festivals and celebrations through performances in villagers' actual living spaces is essential. This immersive experience allows tourists to appreciate the beauty and charm of traditional village life.

4.2 Revitalization through the reuse of the value of "national traditional villages"

Through the above value analysis and exploration of traditional villages, mountain villages will eventually gain emotional benefits and commercial benefits. These two benefits are achieved through tourism development, traditional cultural education, and film and television publicity.

4.2.1 Reuse the value of traditional villages through tourism

Tourism development is a key strategy for revitalizing traditional villages by leveraging their cultural heritage. Through thoughtful planning and design, traditional village landscapes can be repurposed to offer tourists a rich experience that includes natural beauty, unique architecture, and insights into the village's history and culture. This not only satisfies tourists' aesthetic and emotional needs but also generates positive economic benefits for the village through ticket sales and tourism-related revenue.

Various tourism projects, such as homestays, farming experiences, and cultural events, can help traditional villages realize both emotional and commercial benefits. For example, Shandong Mengquan Tourism Development Co., Ltd. successfully transformed old stone houses into boutique B&Bs, attracting tourists with the charm of rural living. This initiative has not only boosted the village's economic growth but also earned it recognition as a national agricultural tourism demonstration site and a scenic spot. Additionally, villages can enhance their economic prospects by selling cultural and agricultural products. For instance, Yongquan Village turned the character of "Meng Jiangnu"

into cartoon images printed on gift boxes, while Zhujiayu Village capitalized on its Wenchang Pavilion culture to create bookmarks for tourists. These initiatives have not only increased the villages' economic standing but also provided employment opportunities for residents.



Figure 3: Rural tourism. Under the guidance of the policy, mountain villages in central Shandong have realized rural revitalization through tourism and other measures.

Source: NetEase. <https://www.163.com>
[accessed with February 24, 2023]

4.2.2 Reuse the value of traditional villages through cultural education

Traditional cultural education is the second way to reuse value. Through the development of cultural education, rural residents' interest and love for traditional culture can be stimulated, their cultural quality and cultural identity can be improved, and it is helpful to achieve rural revitalization. In schools and communities, various forms of cultural education activities can be carried out. The imparting of traditional cultural knowledge is an important part of it. By teaching traditional cultural knowledge, such as the origin of traditional festivals and the characteristics of local customs, rural residents can understand the profound heritage of their own culture. In addition, traditional musical instrument learning and opera performance training can be organized to allow rural youth to participate in person and cultivate their love and understanding of traditional art forms. At the same time, cultural exchanges and interactions with cities are also important links in strengthening rural cultural education. Organizing rural students to visit museums, art exhibitions, and cultural activities in cities can allow them to understand a broader cultural

world and broaden their horizons. In addition, training and competitions in art such as painting, calligraphy, and photography can be carried out to stimulate the creativity and artistic talents of rural residents. This deep participation and cultural experience can enhance tourists' sense of identity and pride in traditional culture, thereby enhancing their emotional benefits. At the same time, traditional cultural education has also brought more business opportunities to the villages, such as the development and sales of cultural products, further promoting the economic development of the villages.

For example, the traditional villages in Ezhuang Township have become a nationally recognized art and photography sketching base, attracting more than 120,000 sketching troops from all over the country every year. For this reason, the Ezhuang Township Government regards art sketching as one of the pillar industries of the township.

The Cultural and Tourism College of Ziboshizhuan has set up a cultural training camp, and the camp has carried out research and study in the camp such as "Practicing Labor Education, Inheriting Taoliu Culture", "Intangible Cultural Heritage Paper Cutting", "Sports Technology and Natural Ecology". Research and study activities on routes such as "Intangible Cultural Heritage", "Red Research and Study of Two Mountains and Two Museums", "Qi Culture", "Liaozhai Culture", and "Yellow River Culture" have also been carried out. More than 23,000 students from primary and secondary school research and study teams have been organized and received, and more than 8,000 individual research and study students have been received.

The Shandong "Rural Revitalization Qilu Model" Digital Product Design Competition held in Yiyuan County in July 2023 is a successful case. 16 teams from 13 colleges and universities in the province collected materials on-site in Longziyu Village and created creative digital media works, showing the innovative practices and achievements of rural revitalization in Shandong. This way of spreading traditional

culture through creative competitions not only stimulated creative enthusiasm but also injected new vitality into rural development.

4.2.3 Reuse the value of traditional villages through media communication

In recent years, film and television publicity has emerged as a new way to showcase the beauty and cultural significance of traditional villages to a broader audience. By producing and broadcasting film and television works set in traditional villages, this method can effectively increase the popularity and appeal of these villages, attracting more tourists to visit. The growing popularity of such works and positive word-of-mouth can further boost tourism in traditional villages, leading to increased commercial benefits. Additionally, film and television publicity can spark audience interest in traditional culture, enhancing emotional connections.

For instance, Zhujiayu Scenic Area started filming small-scale film and television projects in 2006. The success of the drama "Crossing Guandong" in 2008 brought national attention to Shandong opera, with the phrase "I am from Zhujiayu, Zhangqiu" becoming well-known. Following its designation as a "national traditional village," Zhujiayu continued to attract attention by producing acclaimed works like "Going South" and "Old Farmers." The popular series "Sanquanxi Nuan" was also filmed there, showcasing the humanistic and contemporary aspects of Zhangqiu. Zhujiayu Scenic Area collaborated with Shandong Noon Sunshine Film and Television Group to attract more projects, enhance film and television shooting facilities, and establish a northern mountain village film and television base. Leveraging social media platforms like Weibo, WeChat, and live broadcasts, they created an online presence to promote folk culture and increase the appeal of traditional villages. The combination of tourism development, traditional cultural education, and film and television publicity has been instrumental in revitalizing traditional villages in Shandong's central mountainous

region. These efforts not only preserve cultural heritage but also drive economic growth and emotional connections. By integrating these strategies, traditional villages in Shandong have experienced a revival, contributing positively to local economic and social development.

This study provides a theoretical contribution because of the mentioned aspects and the discourses on cultural landscape, spatial production, and rural revitalization. Therefore, comparing the natural environment with the cultural and historical landscapes and people's actions within their interconnectedness increases the epistemological value of these concepts. Furthermore, it could be helpful within methodology since it contributes to the issue of the role of values following its preservation in a post-industrial society, as well as with regards to a systematic investigation of values that are relevant for economic and social change, which could be necessary for practical use inside policy and community management. Moreover, ideas of the creation of new value and the concern facing the renewal of the old traditions when discussing the potential sustainable upgrade of the villages also state the possible development of the central part of the Shandong Province and the reviving villages worldwide. In this capacity, this nibbles the Chinese government and revived communalities pertinent to apposite cultural policy, tourist attraction, and educational promotion. Therefore, the work may constitute a synthetic time-space analysis of opportunities and threats of rural reactivation and the protection of cultural land mosaics that can be informative for further operative actions in other rural-like territories globally. Certain disadvantages of the provided content arising from the method used include the following: The content lacks reference to primary data sources and research results generated by the above qualitative research methods. Also, the study does not examine the challenges that may likely be experienced during the process of rural revival policy. Less is understood about identifying villages as the research objects and

the attested built-in bias in the data collection methods. Further, the study does not exhaustively expound the generalization of all the observations done in other parts of the world but only focuses on the central mountainous area of Shandong.

The scope for future research in this area could include a comparative analysis of rural revitalization efforts in different regions of China to understand the varying strategies and their effectiveness. Additionally, investigating the long-term sustainability and impact of the revitalization efforts on the economic and social development of these mountainous villages would be valuable. Furthermore, exploring the role of technology and innovation in preserving cultural landscapes and promoting rural development could be an interesting avenue for future research. Lastly, conducting longitudinal studies to track the evolving cultural landscapes and the challenges faced by revitalized villages over time would provide valuable insights for policymakers and researchers.

Conclusion:

This study focuses on exploring the concepts of cultural landscape and revitalization, and "mountainous villages in central Shandong" is the starting point of this study. The study found that human self-adjustment ability enables humans not only to adapt to the natural environment but also to have the wisdom to change the natural environment. This process

reflects the profound interaction between humans and the natural environment, that is, humans use local wisdom to make the natural environment better serve themselves. This interaction not only forms a specific cultural space, but each space contains the cultural characteristics of a specific period, environment, and people, and interacts between these special cultures. In these interactive relationships, villages are not only connected with internal members but also have close relations with regions and countries. Especially in the context of rural revitalization, the country has constructed a "representational space" through institutional design, policy planning, and other means. In this space, the government, investors, tourists, and indigenous villagers participate together to jointly shape a brand-new cultural landscape. These traditional mountain villages, while maintaining their original residential functions, have also been given new meanings and functions. They are no longer just residential spaces but have become cultural landscapes that carry new cultures and new functions and have become national villages, shared by tourists and the public. As time goes by, these villages will continue to adapt to new demands, retaining their original form while injecting new cultural connotations to meet the needs of people in the new era.

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