

Defend and remould—residents’ place identity construction in traditional villages in the rural tourism context: a case study of Cuandixia village, Beijing

Defend and
remould

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Abstract

This study aims to elucidate the process and internal mechanism of place identity construction in traditional villages under the impact of tourism by taking Cuandixia village as a case. The research methods comprise participatory observation and in-depth interviews with the residents. The main results are as follows: the impact of tourism on traditional villages is mainly reflected in space reconstruction, livelihood change, social relations restructuring and culture change; under the impact of tourism, the representation of residents’ identity construction shows complexity, with positive and negative effects; and the place identity construction of residents affects their perception of and attitudes toward tourism. Moreover, self-esteem and self-efficacy principles play a key role in their perception of tourism. This study provides some reference for further investigation of the tourism development model and the mental mechanism of residents in traditional villages.

Keywords Traditional villages, Rural tourism, Heritage tourism, Place identity, Identity construction, Community participation

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

As a valuable rural heritage, a traditional village is an important carrier of Chinese agricultural civilization and a spiritual home for the Chinese people (Li *et al.*, 2017). In recent years, with the promotion of the rural revitalization strategy, tourism has been introduced to



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rural areas. It has become an important means of protecting and revitalizing the heritage of traditional villages. However, in some places, due to rapid rural urbanization and tourism development, traditional villages have faced the superimposed influence of “constructive destruction” and “exploitative destruction” and the authenticity of cultural heritage has been irreversibly damaged (Wu, 2020). According to statistics, among the six batches of the “Chinese Traditional Village List” announced by China, there are 8,155 traditional villages. Currently, there are less than 5,000 traditional villages with high protection value. There is no doubt that the protection of traditional villages is urgent.

Community residents are the owners and core stakeholders in traditional villages. They are important components of tourist attractions and inheritors and guardians of rural heritage (Guo, 2019; Kim *et al.*, 2013). Generally speaking, tourism development profoundly impacts the economy, socio-culture and environment of the local community, and local residents are the most sensitive group to these impacts, who cannot be ignored as core stakeholders (Kim *et al.*, 2013). The world of their daily life overlaps with the tourism world of tourists; tourism elements are filled in their production and lives, and they are closely interconnected and cannot be separated. At the same time, in turn, the perception and attitudes of community residents toward tourism impacts can affect the development of the local tourism industry (Lu, 2011). Among the many factors that influence the perception and attitudes of community residents toward tourism development, the role of place identity cannot be ignored.

Scholars have found that place identity directly or indirectly influences community residents’ perception and behavior toward tourism development (Wang and Chen, 2015; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012) pointed out that community residents’ resource-based career identity, environment identity and gender identity affect their support attitude toward tourism. At the same time, some scholars have proposed that if community residents have a strong sense of place and identity, they will more actively assume responsibility for protecting the local environment and traditional culture and thus better play the role of local space producers in traditional villages (Sun, 2009). Otherwise, it may lead to a decrease in the degree of community participation and lead to the phenomenon of active “marginalization” and “disempowerment” of residents (Kerstetter and Bricker, 2009; Lan *et al.*, 2019; Sun and Bao, 2006). Therefore, how to enhance residents’ sense of place identity in tourism context and transform it into an effective motivation for protecting traditional villages has become an important issue in the living protection of traditional villages. However, considering existing relevant research, it can be found that scholars have mainly focused on the analysis of urbanization and village heritage protection (Deng *et al.*, 2020; Su *et al.*, 2019), village living environment construction (Li *et al.*, 2019; Yan *et al.*, 2019), tourism community participation (Wang *et al.*, 2021; Wang and Zheng, 2016) and the “host-guest” relationship in tourism development (Li, 2020; Lv *et al.*, 2019). What impacts will tourism intervention have on the construction of place identity among community residents in traditional villages? What are representations of these impacts? What are the relationships and mechanisms involved? These questions need further exploration.

Based on this, this paper intends to select Cuandixia village in Beijing as a case to conduct an in-depth analysis of the process and mechanisms of place identity construction among community residents in traditional villages in the context of tourism through participant observation and in-depth interviews. The aim is to enrich the theoretical connotation of traditional villages and provide decision-making reference for the management practice of protection and revitalization of related village heritage. The specific research questions include the impacts of tourism intervention on the construction of place identity among community residents, the representations of the processes and results of

these impacts and the mechanisms of the impacts of tourism intervention on place identity construction.

Literature review

Traditional village tourism and community residents' perception

The academic community began to pay attention to traditional villages and the concepts similar to traditional villages in the 1960s. The International Council on Monuments and Sites successively passed a series of resolutions on protecting historic towns, such as the *Resolution on The Preservation of Small Historic Towns* and *The Charter on The Vernacular Architectural Heritage* (Wang, 2013). Since the late 20th century, systematic research on traditional villages has continued to emerge. Early research mainly focused on the subject of protecting traditional villages, the definition of protection content, and the direction of protection at the framework level (Lee, 1996; Liu, 1998; Hu, 2001). In 2012, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China, together with the former Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Finance and the National Cultural Heritage Administration, issued *Notice on The Survey of Traditional Villages* (hereafter the "Notice"), which defined the concept of traditional villages widely recognized by the tourism academia: a traditional village refers to a village that was formed earlier, has rich traditional resources and has particular historical, cultural, scientific, artistic, social and economic value, and should be protected. Before this definition was proposed, people generally used the term "ancient villages" to describe rural settlement space whose layout and style follow nature, whose artistic conception is tranquil and unassuming, and whose historical lineage and traditional customs remain relatively intact (Liu, 1998a, 1998b). Since promulgating the "Notice" and introducing the national rural revitalization strategy in 2017, research on traditional villages has experienced explosive growth. The research content mainly involves the layout (He *et al.*, 2019), spatial forms (Chen *et al.*, 2018), spatial reconstruction (Guo and Yang, 2018) and other material aspects of villages, as well as the perception of residents (Bao *et al.*, 2019), local culture (Cheng *et al.*, 2018), living protection (Ma *et al.*, 2021) and other humanistic aspects. After years of development, research on traditional villages has gradually transitioned from a relatively single qualitative description of traditional architecture and landscape to the cross-application of multidisciplines, multithemes and multimethods (Yan, 2018). During this period, tourism has become an indispensable perspective in studying traditional villages and a crucial practical path to promote the development of traditional villages.

Regarding the relationship between tourism development and traditional villages, Biyu Wu and Xiaobo Xu (Wu and Xu, 2017) have suggested that tourism development provides a new driving force for revitalizing traditional villages and can guide the orderly integration of modernity and tradition in rural space. However, Jun Zou *et al.* (2018) have pointed out that tourism development can also lead to negative impacts, such as the destruction of village buildings and the disappearance of the traditional cultural atmosphere. Sun *et al.* (2019) have argued that protective and activating development is the sustainable path for a traditional village to continue its cultural mechanism. Currently, research on the dual nature of authenticity-commerce and revitalizing development in traditional villages mostly starts from the perspective of community participation or community empowerment, emphasizing the relationship between community residents and other stakeholders (Kong *et al.*, 2019; Wang and Huang, 2013; Yao *et al.*, 2020) and has explored the development model of rural tourism from the perspective of community participation, taking Nanji Village in Nanchang as a case. Jun Li and Jiang (2020), taking Xijiang Miao Village in Guizhou as a sample, have pointed out that the distribution rights of tourism benefits for community residents can be guaranteed through the reconstruction of destinations' economic space. The issues of

traditional village residents after tourism intervention have attracted more and more attention from scholars because residents are essential stakeholders in traditional villages, and their perception of the impact of tourism will affect their attitudes toward tourism development (Wang *et al.*, 2020). In general, when residents perceive the effects of tourism more positively, their attitudes toward tourism development tend to be more positive; conversely, residents have more negative attitudes (Yu *et al.*, 2021; Vargas-Sánchez *et al.*, 2011). In specific studies, some scholars have demonstrated the specific impacts of tourism intervention on residents' perception from various perspectives, such as the physical landscape of traditional villages (Zhang and Yang, 2020), spatial genes (Zhang *et al.*, 2020) and cultural transmission (Dou *et al.*, 2020). In addition, scholars have also found that residents' perception and attitudes toward the impact of tourism are affected by factors of residents themselves, such as age, residence duration, education level and income (Xu and Zeng, 2019), and are also related to external factors such as the destination's geographic location and investment in tourism development (Dou *et al.*, 2020; Jackson and Inbakaran, 2006; Xu and Zeng, 2019).

Against the background of rural revitalization, the protection and revitalization of traditional villages have become a topic of the times. It is necessary and has begun to shift the focus of academic research to the revitalizing development of traditional villages (Xu, 2019). At the same time, as the owners of traditional villages, community residents have gradually become important subjects of related academic research. Considering the existing relevant studies, we found that scholars have conducted in-depth research on the relationship between tourism development and community development (Zou *et al.*, 2018), tourism empowerment (Wang and Huang, 2013), community participation (Yao *et al.*, 2020) and residents' perception and attitudes (Wang *et al.*, 2020). However, the influencing factors, meaning representation, and mechanism of place identity construction of traditional village residents under tourism intervention have not received widespread attention and need to be further clarified. Therefore, exploring how to examine the relationship between tourism development in traditional villages and the local community (residents) from a more profound perspective of place identity is necessary.

Place, identity and place identity

Wright (1947) proposed the concept of place in 1947. He pointed out that place is a region that carries subjectivity and should be rerecognized from the perspective of its subjective meaning. However, this viewpoint did not attract widespread attention from geographers (Yu and Gu, 2000). In the 1980s, human geographers began to pay attention to place again and believed that it would reconstruct the ways and forms of space and place on a larger scale, and the relationship between people and place would be reshaped as a result (Harvey, 1989). Scholars also have pointed out that in local practice, places are endowed with cultural meaning and are the center of perceived value for residents (Eyles, 1989). The evolution from space to place requires a "humanization" process endowed with cultural meaning. When local residents belong to a particular place, they will have a sense of belonging or a sense of place (Zhou *et al.*, 2011). Place has become one of the core concepts in cultural geography since the 1970s and has provided a theoretical basis for other branches of human geography (Gregory *et al.*, 2009).

Identity is another core concept in cultural geography. Generally speaking, identity has two connotations: individual identity represented by personality, age, etc.; and social identity that reflects ethnic and social characteristics. Both emphasize the attributes of individuals or groups, considering that identity refers to "a set of standards or reference attached to the meaning of self and used to guide the subject's behavior in a specific context"

(Stets and Biga, 2003). This definition of identity is used in the term “identity construction” or “the construction of identity” in this study. In cultural geography, identity and identification are twin concepts often combined and used as identity. At the same time, identity and identification originate from the same English word, “identity,” but their specific connotations and applicable situations are different. Identity is the basis for clarifying the social status of an individual or group, such as gender and race, while identification is the seeking and confirmation of identity for an individual or a group, and it has the property of a verb (Yan, 2006). Therefore, identity answers the question of self-definition of “who am I,” while identification is the modification of identity (Marchand and Parpart, 1995). However, in existing research, the term identity is commonly used to refer to identification, and this definition will be followed in subsequent parts of this study.

Place and identity are inextricably linked in the bidirectional relationship between society and space. There is a dynamic and mutual construction relationship between place and identity. Individuals or groups absorb the material and spiritual connotation of place as part of their identity, endowing place with new meaning through continuous spatial practices (Marchand and Parpart, 1995; Soja, 1989; Stets and Biga, 2003; Yan, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to study identity from the perspective of placeness. Placeness, as one of the constituent elements of place identity, plays a vital role in its construction (Wester-Herber, 2004), which leads to the concept of place identity: by integrating the meaning of place into the overall socialization process, individuals or groups continue their ideas and values, realize their dignity and goals, and finally form a place identity while distinguishing self from other (Zhu *et al.*, 2012). Individuals or groups construct the meaning of place in their interaction with the place and then analyze their own identity and existence through this meaning (Harner, 2001). Therefore, different from other perspectives on identity, place identity mainly emphasizes the connections and meaning developed in “man-land” interaction (Bott *et al.*, 2003).

Among many theories related to place identity, the identity process theory (IPT) has promoted further development in this field. Breakwell proposed the IPT theory in 1986. The theory pays attention to the process of emotion generation in man-land interaction, tries to gain in-depth insights into how individuals’ social situation and social resources (such as symbols, concepts and language) participate in identity construction (Breakwell, 2015a, 2015b; Luo *et al.*, 2018) and explains for the first time the strategies for individuals or groups in the face of identity threats. The theory conceptualizes two dimensions of content and value/emotion:

- (1) the content dimension, that is, self-identity or identity definition; and
- (2) the value/emotion dimension corresponds to the positive or negative value cognition or emotional expression of the content dimension.

At the same time, the theory also points out that the two dimensions are conditioned in the assimilation/accommodation process and the evaluation process. The assimilation/accommodation process refers to the absorption of new information in identity construction and adjustment so that it becomes a part of identity construction. In contrast, the evaluation process refers to the process of giving meaning and value to identity content (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2012).

The IPT theory has been widely applied in research on social identity, ethnic identity construction and other related studies (Low *et al.*, 2013; Kalfoss *et al.*, 2018). However, it was not introduced into tourism research until the beginning of the 21st century, and the process of exploring the place identity of tourism destinations’ residents was relatively short (Yu *et al.*, 2020). Nunkoo and Gursøy (2012) analyzed the relationship between residents’

place identity factors such as occupation, environment and gender and attitudes and behavior toward tourism. Wang and Chen (2015) and Wang and Xu (2015) took Indianapolis in the USA and Zhuhai in China as cases. Based on Breakwell's principles of identity, they further confirmed the correlation between community residents' place identity, residents' perception, and their attitudes and behavior toward tourism with the place identity scale. Based on existing research, we have found that the IPT theory can provide effective theoretical support for analyzing complex and diverse identity construction phenomena and is a powerful tool for analyzing the issues of man-land relationships in the context of tourism intervention (Luo *et al.*, 2018).

Research design

Overview of the case site

Cuandixia village is located in Zhaitang town, Mentougou district, Beijing, about 90 km away from the main urban area of Beijing, with an elevation of about 650 m and an area of 5.3 km². The village is surrounded by green mountains and has a serene and ancient atmosphere, with a unique sense of vicissitude and history of traditional rural dwellings. The village has a history of more than 500 years, and now there are more than 70 sets of relatively complete and representative quadrangle courtyards of the Ming dynasty and the Qing dynasty. The village started tourism development in 1995 and was awarded the first batch of "Historical and Cultural Village" title in 2003. In 2006, it was listed as a national key cultural relic protection unit and became one of China's first selected traditional villages. In 2009, through the integration of resources, Zhaitang town took Cuandixia village as the "leader." It cooperated with three surrounding villages to register and establish the Beijing Cuanbai Scenic Spot Management Center, forming a tourist resort and leisure area represented by ancient village culture. In December 2012, Cuandixia village was awarded the "Chinese Traditional Village" title by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the former Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance. In protecting traditional villages and developing cultural heritage tourism, the exploration and practice of Cuandixia village have typical significance.

Data collection and analysis

This study adopted qualitative methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews. From February to June 2019 and August 2022, research team members visited the case site several times for field research. First, through participatory observation, the research team gained a subjective understanding of social and cultural phenomena such as the architectural layout of Cuandixia village, residents' daily life and business behavior and interactions between host and guest. Then, while being participants, the researchers experienced the village atmosphere and the differences in tourism management between the peak and off-peak seasons by living, eating, visiting and shopping in the village.

At the same time, based on the local situation and the principle of theoretical saturation, the research team selected 17 interviewees and conducted in-depth interviews with them (Table 1). Most respondents are villagers engaged in tourism operations and services, and a few are not involved in tourism operations. The young people in the village have not lived there for a long time due to reasons such as migrant workers and migration (to the urban city), resulting in a relatively severe "hollowing" phenomenon in the community. Although, with the development of tourism in recent years, some people have begun to return to the village and make positive contributions to the development of rural tourism, the residents are still mainly middle-aged and elderly people. Therefore, the overall age composition of the interviewees is relatively older.

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Occupation
A-01	Female	48	Agritainment operator
B-02	Female	43	Agritainment operator
C-03	Male	49	Scenic area sanitation worker
D-04	Male	68	Beekeeper
E-05	Male	42	Local specialty operator
F-06	Male	64	Agritainment operator
G-07	Female	73	Farmer
H-08	Male	66	Agritainment operator
I-09	Male	51	Scenic area traffic coordinator
J-10	Female	64	Agritainment server
K-11	Male	46	Agritainment operator
L-12	Female	60	Agritainment server
M-13	Female	56	Local specialty operator
N-14	Male	52	Scenic area traffic coordinator
O-15	Male	70	Farmer
P-16	Male	42	Tourism cultural creation shop operator
Q-17	Female	44	Self-employed driver

Table 1.
Sample of in-depth interviews

Source: Created by authors

The interview questions mainly revolved around two themes: residents' perception of the impact of tourism intervention and residents' perception of the sense of place and place identity. Based on the specific feedback from the interviewees, the researchers made appropriate adjustments to the content and direction of the interviews to ensure the acquisition of complete and valid information. Finally, in the process of translating the interview speech into text, the researchers made a written arrangement of the spoken expressions of the interviewees to facilitate understanding and analysis.

In this study, we analyzed the content of the interviews using the thematic analysis method. First, after becoming familiar with the data, two coders independently coded the interview data to ensure coding reliability. Then, we compared the results of the two coders, and thorough discussions were conducted on the divergent themes to reach a consensus. Based on field surveys and previous research by scholars (Guo, 2019; Kong *et al.*, 2019; Sun *et al.*, 2019; Wu and Xu, 2017; Zou *et al.*, 2018), this study proposes four dimensions of impact representation: space reconstruction, livelihood change, social relations reconstruction and culture change. At the same time, combined with the analysis framework of this study (see "Analysis framework"), three core themes were further summarized:

- (1) residents' perception of the impact of tourism intervention;
- (2) residents' participation and attitudes toward tourism development; and
- (3) community residents' cognitive changes of place identity construction and its meaning representations, that is, how residents' identity changes in the relevant situations of (1) and (2), and how it is externalizing through the four principles of IPT theory (distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy).

Analysis framework

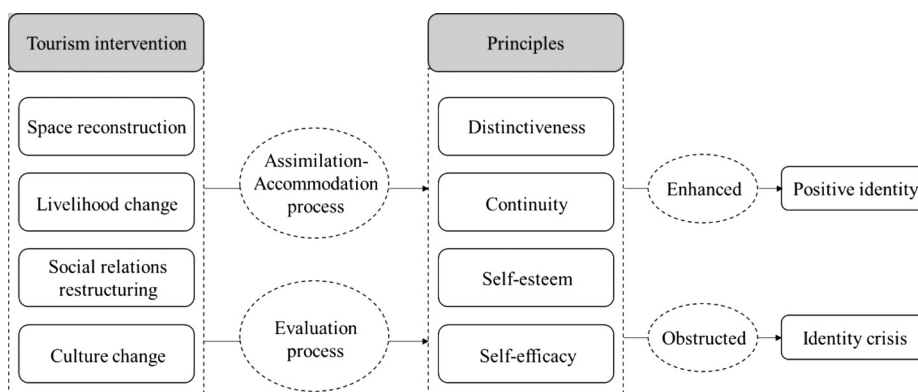
Based on the IPT, this study explores the influence mechanism of place identity construction of residents in traditional villages under the tourism intervention. In the 1980s,

Breakwell (2015a, 2015b) proposed the IPT theory and explained in detail four principles (referred to as the “four principles”) guiding the process of place identity construction, including distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy. The theory points out that violating any of the above principles can lead to an identity crisis (Breakwell, 2015a, 2015b). The specific explanation of the four principles is as follows:

- (1) The principle of distinctiveness has universality beyond a specific culture and is a necessary condition for constructing individual and group identity meaning. Western scholars proposed this principle, and it was first applied to the study of Western populations, but the principle is also applicable to non-Western cultural systems. Distinctiveness has three sources, namely, location, difference and separation. People create different self-identities through the above three sources and feed back this identity characteristic in their actions (Vignoles *et al.*, 2000);
- (2) The continuity of place identity consists of two parts: place referentiality and place consistency. Place referentiality emphasizes that place, as a bridge connecting people and historical memory, can endow the past and present with special self-significance; place consistency refers to personal habits and values related to and influenced by place characteristics (Luo *et al.*, 2018);
- (3) Self-esteem is the formation of a positive evaluation of self-worth through social comparison (Luo *et al.*, 2018). It embodies the evaluative significance of self-awareness and is also a positive self-emotional experience; and
- (4) Self-efficacy is the integration of an individual’s assessment and confidence in one’s own abilities. When individuals face challenging tasks in specific situations, they will preevaluate and judge their self-efficacy, which ultimately manifests as different execution abilities. This study focuses on the change and adjustment of residents’ self-identity when facing identity threats (Breakwell, 2015a, 2015b).

IPT theory can effectively explain issues related to social identity and identity construction, and it has been widely applied in social psychology (Kalfoss *et al.*, 2018; Low *et al.*, 2013). Based on the framework of IPT theory, Luo *et al.* (2018) compared and analyzed the differential influence of foreign food culture on the identity construction of different generations of residents in Guangzhou. Chen *et al.* (2017) also applied this theory to analyze the attitudes of residents in Yingxiu Town, Sichuan, toward tourism development after an earthquake. They found that place-based self-esteem and self-efficacy significantly influenced residents’ tourism perception and support for tourism development, while distinctiveness and continuity indirectly influenced residents’ attitudes through self-esteem. Canovi *et al.* (2020) analyzed the impact of wine tourism on the place identity construction of wine estate owners in Langhe, Italy, through IPT theory and pointed out that the different attitudes and participation levels of estate owners toward tourism would have different effects on their place identity construction. At the same time, Bao and Bai (2019) analyzed tourism’s heterogeneous role and characteristics in different stages of identity construction of “Tibetan drifters” through IPT theory. They explained the nature of tourism intervention’s positive and negative effects on identity construction. The IPT theory has good applicability to the identity study in the general sense and the specific tourism context. However, its application in rural tourism, especially in the construction of place identity for residents in traditional villages, is still insufficient.

Based on existing relevant research (Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012; Wang and Chen, 2015; Wang and Xu, 2015), this paper constructed a research framework that includes tourism intervention, place identity construction and the interaction between the two (Figure 1).



Source: Created by authors

Figure 1.
Research framework

Tourism intervention is an important driving force for constructing place identity for residents in traditional villages. Generally, tourism intervention profoundly impacts the economy, socio-culture and environment of the tourism community (Guo, 2019). To further focus on the research topic, based on the field surveys and the development characteristics of traditional village tourism (Kong *et al.*, 2019; Sun *et al.*, 2019; Wu and Xu, 2017; Zou *et al.*, 2018), from the perspective of community residents' identity, this study refined and extracted the impacts of tourism intervention on the three aspects mentioned above (economy, socio-culture and environment), with a particular focus on four aspects: space reconstruction, livelihood change, social relations reconstruction and culture change. By further assessment and "assimilation-accommodation" of these aspects, community residents modulate the distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy of place identity. Meanwhile, the results of positive identity or identity crisis are formed under the action of a series of internal psychological mechanisms (enhancement/inhibition).

The application of IPT theory in the study of traditional village tourism development has expanded researchers' horizons in the relationship between man and land in tourism communities and helped researchers and developers gain a deeper understanding of the psychological processes of community residents in the face of complex rural tourism practice in China today.

Research analysis

Generally speaking, tourism intervention has a multifaceted impact on the material and humanities of traditional villages. Therefore, to clarify the process of resident identity construction and its representation under tourism intervention and to establish a clear correspondence with the four principles of IPT theory, this study refined the comprehensive impact of tourism intervention into four aspects: space reconstruction, livelihood change, social relations reconstruction and culture change. These aspects are the logical basis for the impact of tourism intervention on the place identity construction for community residents. At the same time, considering the possibility that the changes in the above four aspects have a cross-impact (nonlinear relationship) on the four principles of IPT theory, this study attempts to elicit and describe the meaning representation (process and result) of place identity construction of community residents from the perspective of the impact of tourism intervention.

Space reconstruction: the reshaping of identity meaning caused by the intertwining of residence and tourism

With the intervention of tourism, the form, function and symbolic meaning of traditional village space changed (Chen and Bao, 2018; Wang and Zhao, 2001). Currently, the ancient village buildings in Cuandixia village are well preserved, and their physical space has high integrity and authenticity. Therefore, the space reconstruction caused by tourism is mainly reflected in its function and symbolic significance. In this process, although the transfer of the community residents' right to dispose of living space reduces their self-efficacy, tourism still reshapes the positive significance of their place identity, and the distinctiveness of residents' identity construction is further highlighted.

On the one hand, from the perspective of the users of the village space, the former community residents as the absolute subject have changed to residents and tourists sharing, which has led to the transformation of the village space from a single living function to a mixed function of living and traveling. Some interviewees expressed a sense of powerlessness after the transformation of space function:

We used to have a shed in the courtyard for meals, but the government tore it down to unify the landscape. There is nothing we can do. (A-01)

Houses and the public space that originally belonged to residents' "private property" have become "public property" for tourism (attractions). Many daily life behaviors of local residents are restricted, and the business activities carried out in it are supervised and managed by different departments, making it difficult for them to accept and adapt in a short period. This sense of powerlessness caused by the intersection and even conflict between life and business space reduces the self-efficacy of community residents to a certain extent, and the sense of control over self and place is gradually disappearing.

On the other hand, as the interaction between tourists and community residents becomes more frequent and in-depth, the two sides show different understanding of the meaning of space, and community residents gradually accept tourists' cognition of the place. As an external discourse that introduces economic resources to traditional villages, tourist cognition is in a strong position in the relationship between host and guest. Therefore, to ensure the continuous input of external resources, community residents often adjust the construction of place identity through emotional assimilation/accommodation and evaluation. Interviewee O-15 expressed the residents' understanding of the meaning of space before tourism development:

Before 1995, this place didn't even have a road. Later, leaders came here for a visit and thought it could be developed for tourism. Then, movies were filmed here, and that's how tourism developed.

Since the 1990s, film and television works such as "Mobile Phone" and "Tai Chi Master" have been filmed in Cuandixia village, rapidly increasing the village's popularity, and the tourism industry has also developed accordingly.

In the investigation, the author also found that many teachers and students from art colleges come to the village for sketching from June to November every year, and there are also famous calligraphers, painters and photographers who affirm the unique and beautiful local landscape. With the continuous development of tourism activities, local residents have gradually adapted to and accepted external discourse and actively participated in tourism reception service and business activities. At the same time, through the intervention of external discourse, community residents gradually realize the unique meaning and commercial value of village space. Interviewee J-10 proudly said:

For all of China, Cuandixia village is unique [...]. Many foreigners have come to China to see Cuandixia village.

The reconstruction of spatial symbolic meaning by tourism enhances residents' positive recognition of the village's distinctiveness and self-esteem of their own identity.

In conclusion, the local space reconstruction caused by tourism is mainly reflected in the functions and symbolic meanings. The former transforms the traditional "production-living" space exclusively enjoyed by residents into a mixed space for living and traveling shared by "host and guest." Residents' original private space has been endowed with certain public attributes, and the partial loss of residents' right to dispose of space has reduced their self-efficacy. The latter helps residents realize the precious value and significance of local space through external discourse and enhances residents' positive cognition of the distinctiveness of the place.

Livelihood change: diverse identities promote self-efficacy

Tourism development in traditional villages has led to a change in the livelihood of community residents. Cuandixia village is located at the junction of the mountainous areas in the west of Beijing and Huailai, Hebei. The local aboriginal people's agricultural production method of "working at sunrise and resting at sunset" for generations is only practiced by some elderly people or a few residents who are not engaged in tourism. The author's investigation found that since the implementation of tourism planning in 1995, along with over 20 years of tourism development, the majority of families or individuals have chosen to adapt to the development of rural tourism by engaging in activities such as operating farmhouse restaurants and selling local specialties, gradually abandoning the traditional agricultural livelihood. In this process, most local residents have undergone a transformation from a single identity as farmers to multiple identities such as businessmen and employees, and the continuity of traditional inherent identities of community residents was disrupted unprecedentedly. Some residents expressed concerns about this change:

Nowadays, most people are engaged in business, and no people are farming the land anymore. The children are also in the city. I'm afraid they won't even recognize farming tools in the future. (H-08)

"Farmer," the most unique and traditional place identity, gradually faded after the tourism intervention and became a false identity label.

At the same time, some villagers who have gone out or migrated also returned to villages that were originally "hollowed" due to the continuous development of rural tourism. Although only a few villagers have returned to the village and the aging phenomenon among residents is still relatively serious, leaving the countryside is no longer the only choice for villagers. Most returning community residents have improved their family income through participation in tourism development. Many interviewees recognized the positive impact of tourism and expressed a certain degree of affirmation and satisfaction with improving their family's economic conditions and quality of life:

Nowadays, people who used to work outside have also come back. It's better to work in tourism than to work outside. (F-06)

We don't farm anymore. It's better to do business. A farmhouse restaurant can make several hundred thousand yuan a year. Isn't it better than doing something else? (Q-17)

Through field investigations, the researchers found that the changes in the production methods and increased income of community residents caused by tourism have greatly

enhanced their self-efficacy. During this process, community residents have also reduced the negative impact of the interruption of the continuity of inherent identity (farmers) through emotional assimilation/accommodation. When the author asked whether the community residents have any attachment to their traditional identity (as farmers), most respondents showed a broad-minded and open-minded attitude.

In summary, from the perspective of livelihood transformation, most residents have increased their income and changed their production modes through participation in tourism development. Their identities have shifted from farmers to service industry practitioners, significantly enhancing their self-efficacy. Although tourism intervention has changed the original production mode of community residents, they have weakened the negative impact of the interruption of identity continuity through self-regulation.

Social relations reconstruction: identity self-esteem with a difference between inside and outside

The reconstruction of social relations in traditional villages triggered by tourism intervention has explicitly been embodied in two aspects. First, due to the emergence of new means of production (tourism resources) and production methods (tourism), the existing neighborhood relationships in traditional villages will face challenges of cooperation or competition. Second, the intervention of tourists adds a new dimension to local social relationships, that is, the transformation from a purely local neighborhood network to a relationship pattern in which neighbors, hosts and guests coexist. However, the reconstruction of the above two kinds of social relations has different influences on the place identity construction of community residents.

Regarding neighborhood relations, some interviewees expressed a sense of powerlessness regarding the uneven distribution of tourism income and resources in the community.

We only earn a fixed monthly salary of 2,000 yuan. We can't afford to buy a house in our lifetime, while others can make three to four hundred thousand yuan in a year. (I-09)

In the field investigation, the author also found that due to the limitation of some villagers' own "resources," the distribution of benefits was uneven.

Some people cannot engage in tourism. If the house left by their ancestors has a large space, they can do it, but if the space left is small, they cannot. (P-16)

This accumulation of powerlessness naturally pushes neighborhood relations toward competition rather than cooperation. The most basic neighborhood relationship that connects community groups is gradually weakened, even to the brink of conflict and disintegration. At the same time, some residents expressed their helplessness regarding the consolidation of a money-oriented mindset, the decline of social morality driven by interests and their nostalgia for the originally simple community relationships (D-04). The unequal distribution of benefits can lead to a sense of powerlessness among vulnerable residents. Meanwhile, the overall negative attitude of residents toward current neighborhood relationships weakens the continuity of their identity construction and respect for traditional community relationships.

At the same time, frequent host-guest interaction may also trigger conflicts between community residents and tourists. However, when faced with uncivilized tourists, most interviewed operators are disdainful of arguing with them. This reflects residents' recognition of their quality and confidence in their lifestyle after tourism intervention.

The emergence of new host-guest relationships further stimulates community residents' positive place identity. I-09 stated:

Although we're farmers, we have to receive tourists daily in the scenic area every day. In the service industry, we must have a good service attitude.

Although tourist consumption is the main source of income for community residents, most interviewees do not excessively cater to the unreasonable demands of tourists and still demonstrate respect for their own identities:

I generally don't get into conflicts with tourists. (M-13)

We have a peaceful transaction. You can choose not to eat or stay if you think it's expensive. I won't force you. (K-11)

In the host-guest relationship, community residents have developed stronger self-esteem and used this positive identity to better adapt to the logic of the market economy.

In summary, community residents present a different identity-constructing representation of the neighborhood and host-guest relationships. On the one hand, the income inequality caused by the market weakens the self-efficacy of residents in a relatively disadvantaged position in the distribution of benefits but also pushes the originally simple neighborhood relationship into a competition vortex. The above phenomena reduce the continuity of residents' community-based identities and reduce their sense of self-esteem. On the other hand, to better meet the needs of tourists, residents have established a more positive (active) identity in dealing with host-guest relationships, manifested in the pride of community residents as local hosts. Undoubtedly, tourism intervention has made community residents realize the distinctive significance of their place identity.

Culture change: external discourses activate place identity

After the intervention of tourism, the change in cultural customs is mainly expressed in two aspects: the inheritance of "us" culture and the sharing and integration of culture between hosts and guests. The former refers to the preservation of traditional village culture and the characteristic crisis of the decline of local culture; the latter refers to the interaction and integration of "us" culture of traditional villages with external "other" culture, and this cultural interaction activates community residents' positive place identity.

On the one hand, the continuity and discontinuity of the inheritance of "us" culture can positively and negatively affect residents' identity. First, most respondents recognize the distinctiveness of the historical context of Cuandixia village, which is beneficial for residents to construct positive identity. Through tracing back to the source, it is known that the local residents in Cuandixia village are all surnamed Han and have nearly 20 generations. Some interviewees hold clear views on the legend of their ancestral origin, among which the more representative view is the "Shanxi Immigrant Theory." As interviewee C-03 stated:

In the beginning, we came here from Shanxi, and our ancestors were surnamed Han.

Some interviewees also expressed that the "Shanxi Immigrant Theory" echoes others' opinions, and they hold an "unverifiable theory" view on the origin of their family surnames but still have a clear attitude toward the origin of their ancestors. In their cognition, Cuandixia village originally belonged to a "military pass," and due to the needs of garrison and warfare, "participate in the war when there is a war, and cultivate the fields when there is no war," a village with the Han family as the main body gradually developed (N14, P-16). Although there are differences between the two views, the interviews' content reflects the

interviewees' cognition of the distinctiveness and continuity of their historical context (unified family names or military culture).

However, Cuandixia village is still facing the crisis of the gradual disappearance of traditional culture and customs. Although Cuandixia village has had distinctive local traditional folk arts in history, most interviewees' relevant cognition and memory have faded. We have found that only a few residents have a relatively clear understanding and impression of the local traditional folk culture, such as the traditional sacrificial activity of "Turning Lanterns." However, they regretted that they could not completely preserve and inherit folk activities such as embroidered shoes and "Turning Lanterns":

At that time, older people could still introduce some content to you orally, but now some of them have passed away, so the oral inheritance method is no longer available. (D-04)

Young and middle-aged people generally seldom mention such folk activities and lack corresponding cognition. At the same time, some residents also express anxiety about the dialect being gradually forgotten:

Children have been speaking Mandarin since kindergarten and have forgotten the dialect of Zhaitang Town. They can only understand a few sentences. (I-09)

The "instrumentalization" use of residents' place identities has also exacerbated the crisis of traditional culture and customs, which is specifically reflected in the seasonality and "stage-oriented" tourism reception and business activities. Residents' business strategies and daily habits have already matched seasonal tourism. Returning to hometowns to sweep graves during the Qingming Festival marks the beginning of tourism business activities for residents in the new year. After working until the "National Day" Golden Week in October, they go down to the city to rest and repeat this pattern all the time with regularity. Therefore, most residents "migrate in the off-season and return in the peak season." They only spend half the year living in Cuandixia village, turning their homecoming life into a profit-oriented production mode. Undoubtedly, under the space and time scale, the separation between residents and places can aggravate the death of traditional culture and customs and weaken their cognition of the distinctiveness and continuity of identity.

On the other hand, the interaction and blending of the host-guest culture newly generated after tourism intervention play a positive role in residents' identity construction. The unique natural and cultural tourism resources of Cuandixia village have attracted many scholars, film crews and tourists to come for research, photography and sightseeing. P-16 mentioned:

At that time, Guanzhong Wu came here, and the day after he returned, he published an article in the Beijing Evening News titled "Do you know Cuandixia?" Since then, some film and television crews have come one after another.

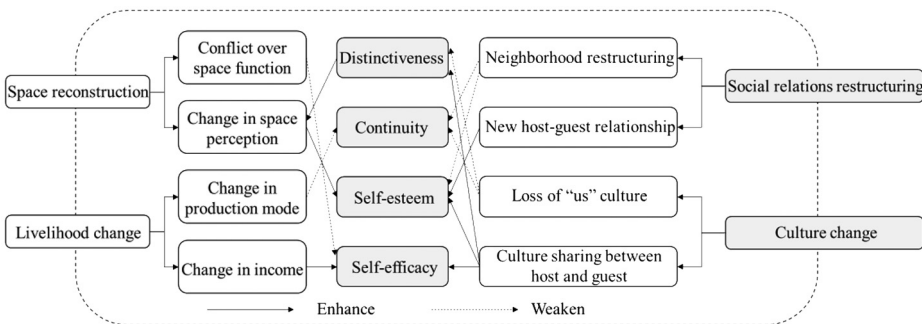
Most residents deeply remember the framing and shooting of many film and television works, and they show a strong sense of pride. In their minds, this has become a local business card and cultural symbol. Undoubtedly, relying on the natural and cultural resources of the village, social groups have promoted the integration of foreign cultures and local culture, realizing the sharing of "us" culture and "other" culture. The cultural integration brought about by the interaction between host and guest not only enhances residents' pride in their native land but also makes them realize the value of their resources to the outside world. This sense of control over the unique means of production stimulates the community residents' recognition of the distinctiveness of the place and effectively enhances their self-efficacy and self-esteem.

In conclusion, the loss of local culture in traditional villages and the fusion of the host-guest culture occur in parallel under the intervention of tourism. First, although the vast majority of residents can orally express their understanding of the distinctiveness and continuity of the historical context of Cuandixia village, there is a phenomenon of amnesia for the practical traditional folk customs and ethnic culture (such as dialects). The disappearance of local culture and customs has somewhat weakened residents' sense of continuous identity. However, the interaction and integration of the host-guest culture brought about by tourism intervention positively affect residents' place identity. Specifically, the external cultural producers integrate external cultural forms and contents with the natural and cultural resources of Cuandixia village and promote the development of local social culture and regional economy. Tourism intervention not only plays a positive role in the inheritance and revitalization of traditional village culture to a certain extent but also makes community residents realize the distinctiveness of the place, thereby enhancing their self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Conclusion, discussion and outlook

Conclusion

From the perspective of community residents, this study explores the impact mechanism of tourism intervention on the construction of place identity (Figure 2), taking Cuandixia village in Beijing as a case, based on the four principles of IPT theory (distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy). Tourism intervention has profoundly impacted the economy, socio-culture and environment of traditional villages, manifested as space reconstruction, livelihood change, social relations reconstruction and culture change. At the same time, community residents, as the core subjects of traditional villages, are subtly affected by tourism intervention, especially their place identities are constantly shaped. It is reflected explicitly in: the transformation of local spatial functions caused by the interweaving of residential and tourist space leads to the loss of residents' right to dispose of space and weakens their perception of self-efficacy, while the intervention of external discourse strengthens their sense of self-esteem and cognition of the distinctiveness of spatial meaning; changes in multiple identities and production methods have interrupted the construction of residents' continuity identity, but the increase in income has a certain mitigation effect on the formation of potential identity crises; the reshaping of neighborhood relations by the uneven distribution of interests hinders the construction of residents' continuity and self-esteem identity, but from the perspective of the host-guest relationship,



Source: Created by authors

Figure 2. Influence mechanism of tourism development on residents' place identity construction

the construction of positive place identity is strengthened; the loss of “us” culture weakens the distinctiveness and continuity of identity, while the interaction with “others” under tourism intervention promotes residents’ recognition of the distinctiveness of local production resources and the improvement of their perception of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Discussion

Through the above research, we have found that tourism intervention has both positive and negative impacts on the construction of community residents’ place identity, and the two are intertwined, reflecting the complexity of the representation of residents’ identity construction. This is consistent with the relevant research conclusions of scholars. For example, Minmin Zhang and Fu (2020) found that tourism has a profound impact on residents’ rural cognition, rural identity self-confidence and sense of community identity. Similarly, Meng Li *et al.* (2022) also found a complex influence relationship between nostalgia, collective memory and place identity of community residents in tourism destinations. In addition to identifying the complex features of the scholars’ conclusions, this study further examines the specific representation content and the microimpact relationship, especially based on a critical perspective, to explain the negative effects of tourism intervention on the change of residents’ place identity. It is mainly manifested in the following three aspects: first, conflicts among neighbors due to unequal distribution of resources and income, leading to a decrease in residents’ awareness of community continuity and sense of respect for the community; second, spatial conflicts between tourism and residential space limit residents’ right to dispose of space and reduce their self-efficacy; and third, instrumentalized identity-using behavior such as the seasonal migration of community residents has caused the interruption of their lifestyle and geographic continuity. In addition, it should be emphasized that tourism intervention’s positive and negative effects on the community do not exist in isolation but in a state of interweaving. Although residents’ recognition of the distinctiveness of the historical context has been strengthened, their memory of traditional folk customs has been weakened, reducing the distinctiveness and continuity of residents’ identity. At the same time, the intervention of tourists as external cultural producers enhances residents’ understanding of unique local production materials, thereby strengthening their self-efficacy. It can be seen that the combination of representations of residents’ identity construction may also change to a certain extent with different situations and times. Therefore, in the process of tourism development, it is necessary to examine residents’ identity from a dynamic and comprehensive perspective, and one should not lose sight of the other to enhance the positive role of tourism in the construction of place identity as a whole.

At the same time, through comparative analysis, we have found that self-esteem and self-efficacy play a leading role in community residents’ perception of tourism. Although the construction of residents’ place identity shows a certain degree of complexity, residents’ tourism perception affected by it is relatively consistent. Tourism development has led to a substantial increase in residents’ self-esteem and self-efficacy, which makes local residents generally have positive perception and attitudes toward tourism. Community residents believe that tourism intervention has created job opportunities for the village, increased residents’ income and promoted the transformation of residents’ production mode and lifestyle. These conclusions also confirm the views of Wang and Xu (2015), that is, when community residents have strong self-esteem and self-efficacy, they usually tend to have a more positive attitude toward tourism development.

However, this study found that residents of Cuandixia village have a positive attitude toward tourism development and active participation in tourism development, which may make them ignore the adverse effects caused by tourism, dispelling some identity principles to a certain extent. With the continuous development of tourism, the vast majority of residents will put short-term economic interests first, and they usually eliminate the negative impact of tourism on their distinctiveness and continuity identity through assimilation/accommodation and evaluation. However, the loss of authenticity represented by the distinctiveness of places and the continuous identity is not conducive to the continuation of local tourism attraction. In the field survey, the author found that although the interviewees expressed regret about the loss of traditional folk customs, they were still indifferent in actual actions. For example, apart from a cultural and creative shop and the mass replication of landscape symbols, no other commercial forms with deep local culture have been found in the village. As Ruiping Chen said:

Tourists come to the countryside because the countryside itself has its unique charm. They expect to find visual symbols left by culture, history, craftsmanship, and nature in this land. (Chen, 2017)

Therefore, for the revitalization and protection of Cuandixia village and the protection of residents' rights and interests, it is of great practical significance for all parties to explore the local culture deeply.

Marginal contribution

The possible marginal contribution of this research is mainly reflected in the following three aspects. From the perspective of place identity of traditional village residents, it enriches the research on tourism community participation and the research ideas related to the development and activation of traditional villages. At present, most of the research on tourism community participation focuses on the balance of interests among stakeholders and community empowerment, while research on the place identity of traditional village residents from the perspective of tourism needs to be further improved. It reveals the complexity of residents' place identity construction in the context of tourism, in which positive and negative impacts coexist. This helps to arouse the attention of the academic community to the inner psychology of residents in traditional villages. It confirms the decisive influence of the principles of self-esteem and self-efficacy in place identity construction on residents' perception of tourism. Also, it points out that tourism development that is in line with the above two principles can cause residents to ignore the negative effects caused by tourism, dispelling other identity principles. However, this phenomenon is not conducive to the sustainable development of traditional villages.

Practical implications

Cuandixia village has evolved from an unknown village to a popular tourism destination in the suburbs of Beijing, and the living standards of community residents have significantly improved over the years. However, tourism intervention has negative effects on the identity of residents, such as the disappearance of distinctiveness, the interruption of continuity, the decrease in self-esteem and the weakening of self-efficacy. Ignoring the above phenomena may lead to problems such as homogenization of development and spatial fragmentation, dramatically accelerating the loss of village authenticity and the demise of placeness. Therefore, this article proposes the following recommendations:

- Restructure the local cultural scene and enhance awareness of the village's distinctiveness. The above research found that the loss of "us" culture in traditional villages has weakened the distinctiveness of the place. This recommendation

attempts to cope with the distinctiveness crisis of homogeneous tourism development in traditional villages by producing and distributing local cultural scenes. First, villages should strengthen the excavation of local cultures, produce more diverse and profound cultural products and scenes with the help of external forces and enhance the tourism attraction of villages while inheriting culture. Second, through negotiating with village committees and other stakeholders, the produced cultural scenes should be distributed within the village, and the business forms in the village should be planned and laid out so that the businesses operated by residents have a certain degree of differentiation. This not only helps to enhance the tourism appeal of the village and weaken the low-efficiency competition of homogeneity but also enables residents to have a deeper understanding of the cultural significance contained in their self-operated businesses and strengthen their cognition of the distinctiveness of villages while improving economic benefits;

- Collective planning and coordinated development, cohesive internal community identity. This study found that the natural inequality in community residents' possession of tourism production materials leads to large differences in their income. This not only increases the sense of powerlessness of vulnerable villagers but also weakens their recognition and respect for the continuity of inherent community relations. Combined with the research of Jigang Bao and Yang (2022), this study attempts to promote the relatively fair income distribution of residents in traditional villages and bridge the neighborhood conflicts caused by income gaps in the villages by redistributing the "rights to tourist attractions" and then restore residents' continuity of cognition and respect for community relations. First, the local government and relevant departments can use administrative means to tilt the public part of tourism resources toward the community's disadvantaged groups to reduce the income gap. Second, reform the existing tourism income distribution system and gradually divide villagers' rights to tourist attractions in a gradient according to household registration, residence duration, and other means, so that they can fully enjoy the dividends brought by tourism; and
- Encourage community participation and enhance residents' sense of control over their lives. Undoubtedly, the determination and action of the local government of Cuandixia village to protect the village heritage are worthy of recognition. Still, its strict management and control measures have also weakened community residents' sense of ownership and responsibility for local development to a certain extent. The loss of community residents' sense of control and belonging will further weaken their self-efficacy. Therefore, local governments should encourage villagers to participate in the process of tourism decision-making and management and enrich the channels for residents to express their opinions through lectures, regular visits, and other measures with humanistic care to enhance their sense of control over life and sense of ownership of the place, and thus reduce the adverse effects of villagers' self-efficacy reduction.

Research shortcomings and prospects

This study has certain limitations but provides new directions for future related research. On the one hand, the analysis of a single case has certain limitations, lacks the macro vision of multicase comparison, and fails to reflect the overall picture of the impact of tourism on the identity construction of residents in traditional village communities to a certain extent. On the other hand, the data collected in this study are cross-sectional data, the period is

insufficient, and there is a lack of follow-up observation and interviews of the case site and interviewees. In future research, the research team will adopt a comparative research method to conduct comparative studies on multiple cases, trying to have a more comprehensive and systematic analysis of the residents' identity in traditional village communities. At the same time, with the follow-up of subsequent research, the author will conduct follow-up investigations on the case site and residents, then cover the population of multiple age groups and dynamically examine the evolution of the man-land relationship.

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