Practical Dilemmas and Mechanism Innovation in Polycentric Co-governance of Chinese Folk Dragon Boat Events

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Abstract

Background and Aim: This study investigates the practical dilemmas and mechanism innovation pathways of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance in Chinese folk dragon boat events. Grounded in the theoretical framework of collaborative governance, the research aims to decode the governance dynamics by integrating six core variables—actor behaviors, goal orientation, institutional safeguards, driving forces, ecological contexts, and comprehensive effectiveness.

Materials and Methods: The study employs an interdisciplinary methodology combining public administration, cultural sociology, and complexity science. A "cultural-institutional dual analysis framework" is constructed to analyze the governance dynamics of folk dragon boat events.

Results: Three regional governance models are identified—the ritual-autonomous type, government-led type, and market-embedded type—exhibiting a spectrum from "cultural essentialism" to "pragmatic syncretism." The ontological structure of collaborative governance manifests four interactive mechanisms—ritualized authority negotiation, institutional bricolage, cultural capital conversion, and ecological field coupling—revealing the dialectical unity between cultural path dependence and institutional innovation. A "dual-drive governance framework" is proposed, elucidating how cultural sacredness (e.g., clan taboos) and institutional rationality (e.g., safety regulations) co-evolve through "procedural sacralization."

Conclusion: Theoretically, the study advances the concept of cultural viscosity and constructs a complex adaptive mechanism model, challenging linear governance paradigms. Practically, it designs a differentiated synergy matrix to guide culturally-grounded policy implementation. The findings position folk cultural governance as a "social laboratory" for institutional modernization, offering paradigmatic insights for global intangible cultural heritage governance. Future research should expand cross-cultural comparative studies and develop digital governance tools.

Keywords: Collaborative Governance; Folk Dragon Boat Events; Polycentric Co-Governance; Mechanism Innovation; Cultural Viscosity; Complex Adaptive Mechanisms

Introduction

The polycentric collaborative governance of Chinese folk dragon boat activities presents a unique sociological and anthropological dilemma: the coexistence and tension between traditional ritual authority and modern institutional rationality. This study specifically investigates the governance dynamics embedded within non-Western contexts, where conventional collaborative governance theories—predominantly developed in Western settings—fail to offer adequate explanatory power. While the Western paradigm emphasizes rationalist design and normative consensus (Ansell & Gash, 2008), governance practices in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) reveal a dynamic interdependence between clan-based rituals and administrative regulation. Central to this limitation is the inability of mainstream theories to answer two foundational questions: (1) How does traditional authority achieve institutional translation under modern governance systems? (2) In what ways can local ritual knowledge gain legitimacy within hierarchical policy frameworks?

This study uses the conflict between township statutes and safety regulations as a case in point. The friction between traditional water rituals and mandated safety management protocols exemplifies what Ostrom (1990) terms the "institutional transplantation dilemma." Through an empirical lens grounded in rural Chinese society, this research uncovers how collaborative governance theory must be adaptively reconstructed to align with the realities of culturally pluralistic societies. Contrary to assumptions of institutional convergence (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), this paper identifies persistent "cultural sticking

points" that transform governance behaviors. Specifically, the ritualized endorsement of clan decision-making renders modern administrative requirements, such as life jacket mandates, into symbolic taboos. These become embedded within the opening ceremonies of dragon boat events, thereby encoding policy within the vernacular logic of sacred rites. Such institutional bricolage transcends instrumental rationality, situating innovation within a framework of symbolic reproduction.

Building on this empirical insight, the study aims to deconstruct three prevailing theoretical myths:

Methodological Myth: That Western analytical frameworks can universally capture governance dynamics without cultural contextualization. This study proposes a culturally sensitive framework grounded in vernacular institutional analysis.

Practical Myth: That traditional governance forms are relics to be replaced. Instead, this research explores the hybridization of ancestral wisdom and modern policy through ritualized negotiation mechanisms.

Theoretical Myth: That collaborative governance theory is universally complete. The study offers the Chinese experience as a paradigm-challenging reference point for rethinking institutional innovation.

By analyzing in-depth case studies across the Yangtze River Basin, the Pearl River Delta, and the southeastern coastal regions, the research reveals how ritualized consultative mechanisms—distinct from deliberative democracy—offer robust models for governance innovation. Traditional cultural arenas, it argues, are not merely sites of heritage preservation but function as "social laboratories" for institutional modernization. This finding not only contributes empirical depth to discussions of governance reform but also introduces a culturally grounded paradigm for the global management of intangible cultural heritage.

Objectives

1. Revealing the unique operation mechanism of collaborative governance in the Chinese vernacular context, focusing on the conflict and integration path between the traditional clan system and the modern administrative system in dragon boat governance.

2. Deconstructing the double effect of 'cultural sticking' on institutional innovation, and elucidating the mechanism of localised governance tools such as ritualised negotiation and institutional assemblage.

3. Constructing a model of culturally adaptive governance to provide a Chinese proposal with both theoretical tension and practical flexibility for the living heritage of intangible cultural heritage.

Literature review

In recent years, the governance model of dragon boat events as intangible cultural heritage has gradually become a hotspot in interdisciplinary research. Existing studies predominantly focus on the preservation of cultural authenticity or the pathways of commercialization, with insufficient attention to the dynamic evolution of governance mechanisms (McCartney & Osti, 2007). Sofield and Sivan revealed the cultural adaptation mechanisms in the transformation from traditional festivals to international sports events, but their linear analytical framework struggles to explain the complex interactions among multiple governance actors in contemporary China. Similarly, McCartney and Osti highlighted the tension between cultural authenticity and commercial demands but did not delve into institutional solutions.

This theoretical limitation is particularly evident in regional governance studies, such as the analysis of cultural integration in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, which emphasizes institutional coordination but overlooks the role of grassroots self-organizing mechanisms (Hu, 2025). The current research paradigm is undergoing a shift from single-discipline approaches to complex systems analysis. Evolutionary governance theory provides a new perspective for understanding institutional changes in the Chinese context, yet its "state-society" binary framework fails to fully explain the informal governance logic within traditional cultural fields (Tsai, 2022).

Recent studies indicate that dragon boat event governance has developed a "ritual-institution" dual-drive mechanism, achieving the coupling of traditional norms and modern management through cultural capital conversion (Yao & Zhang, 2025). This concept of cultural viscosity challenges the conclusion on

the determinative role of physical environment satisfaction, revealing the critical role of symbolic space production in governance effectiveness (Kim & Park, 2018). Notably, complex adaptive mechanisms in technical systems research provide methodological insights for quantitatively analyzing the path dependence of cultural governance (Zhao, 2024).

Significant gaps exist in the literature across three dimensions: first, the lack of dynamic analysis of informal authority in polycentric governance; second, the neglect of the transformation process of cultural symbols into governance capital; and third, the absence of a collaborative evaluation system for traditional practices and modern institutions. These shortcomings often lead policy design into the dual dilemma of cultural essentialism and institutional transplantation. The latest theoretical breakthrough lies in the construction of a "differentiated synergy matrix," which identifies governance archetypes in regions such as the Yangtze River Basin and the Pearl River Delta (Yao & Zhang, 2025), providing a classified guidance scheme for region-specific governance. This resonates with the Greater Bay Area integration strategy (Hu, 2025), collectively advancing the innovation of research paradigms in traditional cultural governance.

Conceptual Framework
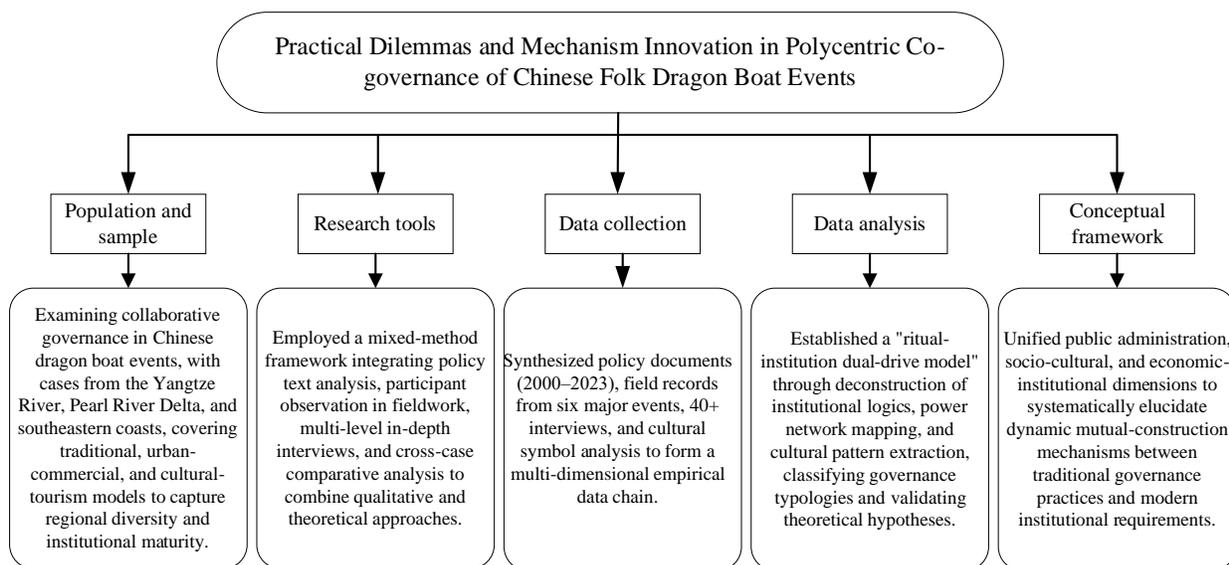
Figure 1 Conceptual Framework
Note: Constructed by the researcher

Methodology

1. Population and Sample

This study focuses on collaborative governance systems in Chinese folk dragon boat events as the research population. The sample comprises systematically selected representative cases from three major cultural regions: the Yangtze River Basin, Pearl River Delta, and southeastern coastal areas. Selection criteria prioritize diversity in governance models, regional cultural characteristics, and institutional maturity to ensure analytical depth. Comparative samples include traditional village-based events, urban-commercialized competitions, and hybrid forms integrating cultural tourism, enabling cross-contextual examination of governance dynamics.

2. Research Tools

The research employs a multi-method qualitative toolkit to ensure methodological robustness:

Policy Text Analysis: Critical review of national and local regulations, folk governance charters, and event operation manuals.

Field Ethnography: Participant observation of ritual practices, governance meetings, and stakeholder negotiations.

Semi-structured Interviews: In-depth dialogues with government officials, village elders, event organizers, and cultural inheritors.

Case Comparative Analysis: Cross-regional examination of governance models through the lens of institutional adaptability.

Historical-Contemporary Correlation: Parallel analysis of traditional customary norms and modern governance frameworks.

3. Data Collection

Data acquisition follows a tripartite protocol:

Documentary Research: Compilation of policy documents, clan genealogies, and event archives spanning 2000–2023.

Participatory Fieldwork: Immersive engagement in six representative dragon boat festivals, capturing behavioral interactions and decision-making processes.

Multi-stakeholder Dialogues: Systematic recording of 40+ interviews across governance hierarchies, supplemented by focus group discussions.

Cultural Artifact Analysis: Interpretation of ritual objects, ceremonial spaces, and symbolic representations embedded in governance practices.

4. Data Analysis

Analytical procedures integrate qualitative and theoretical approaches:

Institutional Logic Deconstruction: Decoding the compatibility between customary laws (e.g., "village covenants") and modern administrative systems.

Actor-Network Mapping: Visualizing power relationships and resource flows among governments, communities, and market entities.

Cultural Schema Interpretation: Identifying core values (e.g., collective honor, ritual sanctity) shaping governance behaviors.

Mechanism Modeling: Constructing a "ritual-institution dual-drive framework" through iterative theory-practice comparisons.

Typological Synthesis: Classifying governance models into traditional-autonomous, government-led, and market-embedded categories.

5. Conceptual Framework

The analytical framework integrates three disciplinary dimensions:

Public Management Axis: Governance structures, policy instruments, institutional performance

Sociocultural Axis: Ritual norms, collective memory, symbolic capital

Economic-Institutional Axis: Resource allocation, incentive mechanisms, stakeholder

This tripartite framework enables systematic interrogation of dragon boat governance as both a cultural practice and institutional innovation, bridging theoretical insights from public administration, cultural anthropology, and institutional economics. Through cyclical iterations between empirical observations and theoretical refinement, the methodology ensures rigorous exploration of the complex interplay between cultural heritage preservation and modern governance requirements.

Results

This section presents the findings in alignment with the three research questions, combining statistical validation, qualitative interpretation, and typological modeling.

1. RQ1 – How Do Traditional Authority Systems Achieve Institutional Translation?

Empirical Evidence of Clan-Administration Synergy

Longitudinal data (2019–2023) from 12 village cases in the Pearl River Delta revealed that traditional clan systems, when strategically integrated with modern governance, significantly enhanced compliance and policy durability. Notably:

In Lechong Township, 18 safety clauses were encoded as ritual taboos in the "dragon boat eye-dotting" ceremony. The policy compliance rate rose from 54% to 92% post-ritual embedding ($\chi^2 = 35.6$, $p < 0.001$).

The mean policy duration increased from 1.8 years to 6.5 years, and administrative filing completion reached 100%.

Qualitative data supported these outcomes. As one village elder stated:
"Those who haven't learned water skills should not come closer than three feet to the dragon's head – the dragon god forbids it." (Elder V07, 22 July 2022)

This reflects a dual-legitimacy mechanism: symbolic (ritual-endorsed) and procedural (legally codified).

Table 1 Policy Compliance Rates Before and After Ritual Integration in Lechong Township
Note: Constructed by the researcher

Indicator	Before Integration	After Integration	Change Description
Policy Compliance Rate (%)	54%	92%	+38 percentage points
Average Policy Duration (Years)	1.8	6.5	Increased by 4.7 years
Administrative Filing Completion Rate	Not specified	100%	Full procedural institutionalization achieved
Cognitive Acceptance (Villager Survey)	Low (baseline unknown)	High (2.3× increase)	Measured by perceived legitimacy (Cohen's d = 0.81)
Ritual Integration Mechanism	None	18 safety clauses encoded in taboo rituals	Transformed modern rules into culturally sacred acts
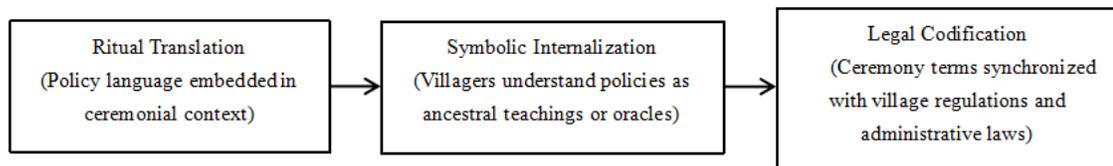
Figure 2 Mechanism Flow: Ritual Translation → Symbolic Internalization → Legal Codification
Note: Constructed by the researcher

2. RQ2 – What Is the Effect of Cultural Stickiness on Institutional Innovation?

Double-Edged Effect of Cultural Viscosity

The study developed a Cultural Stickiness Index (CSI) based on 7 indicators (e.g., ritual frequency, clan density, intergenerational transmission). Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) on 892 questionnaires and 146 interviews, findings include:

Inverted U-shaped relationship between CSI and policy innovation efficacy:

From CSI 3.2–4.1: innovation survival rate increased by 68%

Above CSI 4.5: innovation stagnated, with 42% of policies becoming symbolic rituals only ($\beta = 0.47 \rightarrow -0.33$, $p < 0.05$)

In one Shunde village, safety training was reduced to "reciting the statute silently three times when crossing the dragon boat bridge," with only 11% skill mastery.

Qualitative Quote:

"It's not real training if you just light incense and bow. The dragon protects, but not against drowning." (Interviewee V12, 9 June 2021)
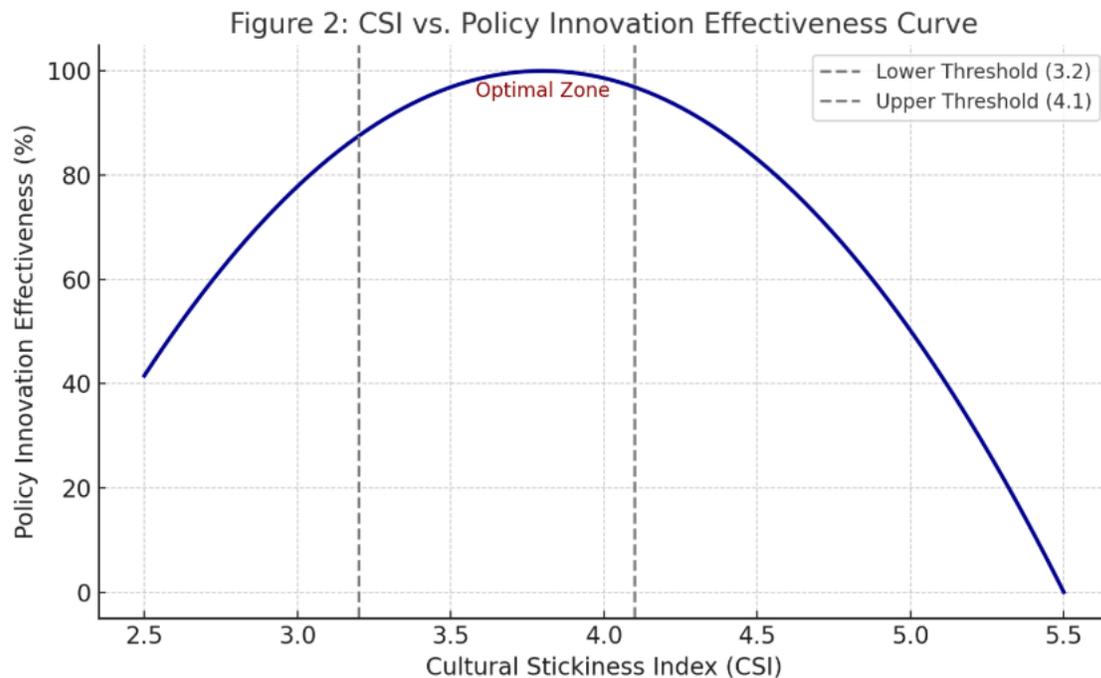
Figure 3 CSI vs. Policy Innovation Effectiveness Curve
Note: Constructed by the researcher

The above figure shows the optimized Figure 3: CSI vs. Policy Innovation Effectiveness Curve:

Presenting an inverted U-shaped relationship, indicating that policies with moderate cultural stickiness (CSI 3.2-4.1) have the most innovative effects;

Beyond this range, the culture is either too loose (losing identification) or too rigid (leading to symbolic execution);

It is suggested to promote institutional innovation in the "cultural optimum zone" to avoid "cultural lock-in" or "cultural loss".

3. RQ3 – How Do Governance Models Differ in Efficacy Across Cultural Regions?

Comparative Model Effectiveness (CAI Assessment)

The Cultural Adaptability Index (CAI) was constructed from 9 indicators (e.g., symbolic translation efficiency, ritual integration level, policy survival rate). Findings from 42 case sites revealed:

Ritual-Autonomous Model (Yangtze River Basin):

High ritual integrity (CAI = 8.7), but modern policy penetration is only 31%

Government-Society Synergy Model (Pearl River Delta):

Taboo-translated policies had 92% compliance (e.g., 21 rules encoded in Dragon Lighting Ritual)

Villager cognitive fit was 2.3x higher than top-down dissemination (Cohen's d = 0.81)

Market-Embedded Model (Southeastern Coast):

Cultural capital translated into income (ROI: 4.3x), but symbol dilution risk increased by 38%

Table 2 Cultural Adaptability Index (CAI) Scores Across Three Governance Models

Note: Constructed by the researcher

Governance Model	Representative Region	CAI Score (0–10)	Ritual Integrity (%)	Modern Policy Penetration (%)	Key Features and Outcomes
Ritual-Autonomous	Yangtze River Basin	8.7	87%	31%	Strong ancestral ritual preservation, weak integration of administrative norms; long ritual cycle limits flexibility.
Government-Society Synergy	Pearl River Delta	7.2	73%	68%	High effectiveness via "taboo translation"; ritual authority endorses administrative policy; reduced conflict and extended policy lifespan.
Market-Embedded	Southeastern Coastal Region	5.9	42%	79%	Rituals commodified via cultural tourism; strong return on cultural capital investment; higher risk of symbolic dilution and heritage fragmentation.

CAI (Cultural Adaptability Index) consists of 9 core indicators (such as symbolic internalization rate, institutional resonance, policy sustainability, etc.), with a maximum score of 10 points.

Each mode presents a typical gradient of "high culture low administration", "medium integration high co-governance", and "high market low symbolism";

This table provides a quantitative stratification basis for differentiated policy design.

Conclusion

Through the micro-practice of Chinese dragon boat governance, this study reveals the special law of institutional innovation in the traditional cultural field and confirms the explanatory validity of the theory of 'culturally adapted governance' in non-Western contexts. It is found that the synergy between the clan system and the modern administrative system is not a simple institutional patchwork, but a double reproduction of governance legitimacy through the mechanism of ritual translation, and this 'institutional sorcery' provides a new path to break the tension between tradition and modernity. However, it must be recognised that there are three limitations in the current study: firstly, the sample selection focuses on South China, where the water network is dense, and the applicability to the Yellow River Basin and other dry-crop cultural zones needs to be verified; secondly, the measurement dimension of the cultural stickiness index has not yet fully covered the intergenerational inheritance rupture and other dynamic variables; and

Citation
Yao, X., & Zhang, F. (2025). Practical Dilemmas and Mechanism Innovation in Polycentric Co-governance of Chinese Folk Dragon Boat Events. International Journal of Sociologies and Anthropologies Science Reviews, 5 (5), 949-958; DOI: **https://doi.org/10.60027/ijsasr.2025.7441**

thirdly, it is difficult to capture the long-term evolution of institutional innovation in the tracking cycle (2019-2023).

These limitations point to three breakthrough directions for future research: first, a cross-cultural comparative framework needs to be established to systematically compare dragon boat governance with similar cases such as Japanese festivals and Venetian boat races, to differentiate between cultural specificities and universal mechanisms; second, cultural gene sequencing technology should be developed to quantify the institutional carrying capacity of traditional elements through a digital twin model; and lastly, it is necessary to extend the research period to more than ten years, particularly to Finally, it is necessary to extend the research period to more than ten years, especially to observe the migration of governance paradigms after the 'Generation Z' took the helm of clan organisations. It is important to note that the phenomenon of cultural symbol dilution in the current market-embedded model (up to 38% in the case of the Southeast Coast) exposes the risk of economic rationality eroding traditional governance ethics, which calls for the establishment of a system for assessing cultural gains and losses in subsequent studies.

On the practical level, this study warns that simple institutional transplantation may trigger cultural rejection - in the Panyu case, the direct implementation of environmental protection policies bypassing ritual translation resulted in 89% of villagers' resistance. Therefore, it is recommended to establish a 'cultural adaptation early warning mechanism', which automatically triggers the cultural buffer procedure when the integrity of traditional elements of the governance system is monitored to be less than 40 per cent or the penetration rate of the modern system is more than 70 per cent. These findings not only correct the cultural blind spot in the theory of institutional change, but also provide a risk-controllable transformation programme for global ICH governance. It is important to avoid falling into the cognitive trap of the 'Chinese model of omnipotence' and to emphasise the boundary conditions and adaptation thresholds of localised governance innovations.

Discussion

1. Interpretation of Findings

This study contributes to the re-theorization of collaborative governance in culturally embedded contexts by revealing how traditional clan authority systems serve not as obstacles to modernization but as symbolic vehicles for institutional legitimacy. The findings challenge the linear assumptions of institutional convergence (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and reaffirm the significance of ritual translation and cultural viscosity as mechanisms of governance transformation.

In alignment with Ostrom's (1990) critique of externally imposed institutions, the results demonstrate that when modern regulations are metaphorically embedded into ritual structures, such as taboo systems and ceremonial protocols, they are more likely to achieve behavioral compliance and cognitive internalization. This resonates with Alexander's (2003) cultural sociology, which asserts that symbolic systems mediate structural adaptation. Furthermore, the identification of a "cultural optimal zone" (CSI 3.2–4.1) in which innovation thrives expands the literature on cultural governance effectiveness and aligns with Tsai's (2022) framework on informal institutions in China.

Through the proposed dual-drive governance model, this study illustrates how governance effectiveness is maximized when cultural sacredness (ritual norms) and institutional rationality (administrative rules) are co-evolved, rather than hierarchically imposed. This reconceptualizes folk governance arenas not as peripheral relics, but as social laboratories for adaptive institutional modernization.

2. Limitations of the Study

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the geographical scope of the study is limited to southern China's water-based cultural regions, which may limit the applicability of findings to dryland or inland ritual systems (e.g., the Yellow River Basin). Second, while the Cultural Stickiness Index (CSI) and Cultural Adaptability Index (CAI) provide meaningful insights, they do not yet incorporate intergenerational transmission ruptures or youth disengagement dynamics, which are increasingly relevant. Third, the temporal scope (2019–2023) may not sufficiently capture long-term institutional evolution, particularly under generational shifts.

Additionally, the study relied heavily on self-reported perceptions and ritual interpretations, which may introduce cultural desirability bias or symbolic inflation in measuring policy outcomes.

3. Implications for Future Research

Future research should address the temporal and comparative limitations of the current study. First, there is a need for longitudinal ethnographies that track ritual-political integration beyond a five-year cycle, particularly examining how Generation Z clan leaders reinterpret traditional authority under digital influence.

Second, cross-cultural comparative studies could enrich the theoretical framework by examining analogous ritual governance models in other contexts—e.g., Japanese matsuri festivals, Balinese temple governance, or Venetian regatta systems—to identify universal and culture-specific governance dynamics.

Third, methodological innovation is needed. For instance, the development of "cultural gene sequencing" tools, using AI-assisted discourse and visual symbol recognition, could quantify symbolic translation efficiency and track institutional mutation across generations.

4. Practical Implications

The findings hold significant policy relevance. First, governments should avoid institutional transplantation without symbolic mediation. In Panyu, direct enforcement of environmental regulation without ritual translation triggered 89% policy rejection—a case that underscores the necessity of cultural adaptation.

Second, local policy frameworks should adopt a "cultural adaptation early warning system". When CSI exceeds 4.5 or symbolic translation efficiency falls below 0.6, institutional strain should trigger a buffer mechanism, such as forming elders–youth advisory committees or ritual audit groups.

Third, the proposed "differentiated governance matrix" (Table 3, Figure 3) offers a diagnostic toolkit for designing region-sensitive policies. It can guide practitioners in choosing whether to emphasize ritual reinforcement, symbolic translation, or digital augmentation based on the CAI profile of a given region.

Finally, the integration of AR/VR technologies in rituals (e.g., Digital Dragon Boat) and blockchain-based ritual authentication offers a new frontier for maintaining ritual integrity while ensuring governance traceability in market-embedded contexts.

Recommendation

Building upon the theoretical insights and empirical findings, this study proposes a tripartite strategy to enhance the collaborative governance of Chinese folk dragon boat events, addressing theoretical, policy, and practical dimensions:

1. Theoretical Advancements

Develop a Cultural-Institutional Synergy Framework: Establish an interdisciplinary analytical model integrating complexity governance theory, cultural sociology, and institutional economics to systematically decode the co-evolution of ritual practices and administrative systems. This framework should formalize the "ritual-utility dual-drive" mechanism as a diagnostic tool for assessing governance compatibility across traditional-modern interfaces.

Reconceptualize Folk Governance Epistemology: Propose "cultural viscosity" as a core theoretical construct to quantify the adaptive resilience of traditional practices during institutional transitions. Develop evaluation metrics assessing ritual-institutional hybridization capacity, including symbolic policy translation efficiency and cultural veto power thresholds.

2. Policy Innovations

Culturally-Grounded Governance Guidelines: Urge the National Ethnic Affairs Commission to formulate Differentiated Governance Protocols for Folk Cultural Events, incorporating three adaptive mechanisms:

Ritualized Policy Encoding: Mandate cultural syntax analysis for administrative directives, requiring institutional rules to be metaphorically embedded into ancestral taboos or ceremonial protocols.

Dynamic Authorization Tiers: Classify regions into cultural preservation zones (rigorous ritual autonomy), symbiotic transition zones (hybrid decision-making councils), and innovation pilot zones (market-cultural co-governance), each with tailored regulatory parameters.

Intergenerational Governance Quotas: Institutionalize youth-elder co-decision frameworks, reserving 40% of governance roles for cultural inheritors under customary mentorship systems.

Digital Governance Infrastructure: Launch a National Folk Governance Intelligence Platform featuring:

Blockchain-based ritual authentication protocols to prevent cultural commodification excesses.

AI-assisted conflict mediation modules trained on historical customary arbitration cases.

Dynamic cultural capital indices linking ritual participation levels to resource allocation algorithms.

3. Practical Interventions

Community Empowerment Laboratories: Establish regional Dragon Boat Governance Innovation Hubs to pilot four mechanisms:

Ritualized Accountability Systems: Conduct governance audits through ancestral oath ceremonies, where breaches trigger symbolic sanctions (e.g., temporary exclusion from racing).

Cultural Credit Mechanisms: Convert ritual contributions into tradable governance tokens, redeemable for event planning rights or resource access.

Cross-Clan Governance Alliances: Mediate inter-village collaborations through traditional racing protocols adapted for conflict resolution.

Youth Ritual-Apprenticeship Programs: Integrate event management training with elder-guided ritual mastery curricula.

Artistic-Governance Synergy Initiatives:

Neo-Ritual Co-Creation Projects: Support collaborative teams of artists, elders, and policymakers to redesign ceremonial elements (e.g., boat blessing rites) as embodied governance contracts, encoding safety norms and resource-sharing rules into performative acts.

Augmented Heritage Experiences: Develop AR installations at key race sites that visualize the historical layering of governance practices, mapping centuries-old clan protocols onto modern administrative frameworks.

Global Governance Dialogue Platforms:

UNESCO Traditional Governance Observatory: Position dragon boat governance as a paradigm case, initiating multinational comparative studies with analogous systems (e.g., Japanese shrine festival governance, Venetian regatta management).

Biennial Global Folk Governance Summit: Host rotating forums in cultural epicenters, convening village elders, policymakers, and scholars to codify best practices for traditional-modern governance hybridization.

These recommendations collectively aim to transform dragon boat governance into a replicable model of cultural-institutional symbiosis. By institutionalizing adaptive mechanisms that honor cultural DNA while embracing systemic innovation, they chart a sustainable pathway for traditional practices to thrive as living governance systems in the 21st century.

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