

Governance Logic and Collaborative Mechanism for the IP-ization of Rural Sports Events under Digital Empowerment

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Abstract: Against the converging backdrop of China's Rural Revitalization, Digital China, and Strong Sports Nation strategies, rural sports events, represented by the "Village Super League" ("Cun Chao") and "Village BA" ("Cun BA"), have emerged explosively. They demonstrate powerful cultural communication capabilities and industrial derivative potential, with their "IP-ization" (Intellectual Property-ization) becoming a new kinetic force for comprehensive rural revitalization. However, the explosive growth of these phenomenal events is accompanied by severe governance challenges. These include the conflict between cultural authenticity and excessive commercialization, the contradiction between short-term traffic dividends and long-term sustainable development, the interest imbalances among pluralistic actors, and the "technological paradox" introduced by digital technology intervention. Traditional governance models dominated by a single actor are no longer adequate for the complex ecosystem of rural sports IP-ization in the digital age. It is imperative to construct a governance system that is adaptive, inclusive, and resilient. Adhering to a qualitative research paradigm, this paper employs governance theory, digital empowerment theory, and co-evolutionary theory to deeply analyze the internal mechanisms of digital technology empowering the IP-ization of rural sports events. The study posits that digital technology is not merely a communication tool but a fundamental force reshaping the production relations, organizational forms, and value chains of rural sports, fostering a connection between the "glocal" (global + local) value of the IP. However, technological empowerment also triggers governance dilemmas such as the "digital divide," "platform dependency," and "cultural alienation." The study argues that the governance logic for rural sports event IP-ization must fundamentally shift from "singular control" to "pluralistic collaboration," from "empirical decision-making" to "data-driven" governance, and from "rigid regulation" to "resilient good governance." Based on this, the paper constructs a "five-in-one" collaborative governance mechanism framework. This includes: a dynamic mechanism centered on "value co-creation and benefit sharing"; a coordination mechanism keyed on "digital negotiation and platform regulation"; a guarantee mechanism based on "digital infrastructure and digital literacy"; a deviation correction mechanism guided by "cultural centrism and risk prevention"; and a subject-responsibility mechanism that clarifies the roles of the government (helmsman), villagers (protagonists), platforms (connectors), capital (boosters), and professional elites (think tank). This research aims to provide a theoretical reference and practical strategy for the sustainable development of rural sports event IP in the digital age, aspiring to achieve true resonance between technological empowerment and rural cultural revitalization.

Keywords: Digital Technology, Rural Sports, Event IP, Governance Logic, Collaborative Mechanism, Rural Revitalization.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Problem Statement

Since 2021, the development of rural sports in China has shown unprecedented explosive power. A series of local sports events, represented by Guizhou Rongjiang's "Village Super League" (Rural Football Super League) and Taijiang's "Village BA" (Rural Basketball Tournament), have rapidly broken through regional boundaries via the immediacy, interactivity, and visual communication of digital media, evolving into cultural phenomena of national and even global concern [1]. These events are not only arenas for competition but also concentrated showcases of local culture, folk customs, and the spirit of the rural populace. Rooted in deep rural society, they resonate with contemporary society's emotional chords through their "authenticity," "grassroots nature," and "participatory" quality, demonstrating immense potential for IP (Intellectual Property) incubation. This phenomenon

signifies that the function of rural sports is expanding from traditional health improvement and community cohesion toward the diverse value goals of driving regional economic development, reshaping rural cultural confidence, and aiding comprehensive rural revitalization.

Digital technology—particularly mobile internet, 5G, big data, cloud computing, short video, and live-streaming platforms—has played a crucial "enabler" role in this process. Technology has broken down the physical barriers and information gaps between rural and urban areas, allowing local culture "hidden in the mountains" to become "known to the world overnight." Digital technology is not just a channel for communication; it is deeply embedded in the entire process of organizing, operating, experiencing, and monetizing rural sports events, becoming the core driver for their IP-ization.

However, beneath the "phenomenal" clamor, the sustainable development of rural sports event IP-ization faces a series of profound governance challenges. First, the tension between "authenticity" and "commercialization" is prominent.

The essence of IP-ization is symbolization and monetization, which inevitably requires capital intervention and professional operation. How to prevent excessive commercialization from eroding the "authenticity" of local culture while introducing market forces to enhance event quality, and how to avoid events deteriorating into "showgrounds" for capital, is the primary governance dilemma. Second, the conflict between "short-term traffic" and "long-term development" must be resolved. The "traffic" brought by digital media is highly ephemeral. How to transform fleeting attention into sustainable community development momentum and cultural brand assets after the "internet fad" subsides tests the foresight and resilience of governance. Third, the risk of interest imbalance among pluralistic actors is accumulating. The value of rural sports IP is co-created by villagers, local governments, digital platforms, and market capital. However, the "algorithmic hegemony" of digital platforms [2], the profit-seeking nature of capital, and the "political achievement impulse" of local governments may lead to the marginalization of villagers—the cultural foundation and main body of the events—in the benefit distribution structure, even resulting in "digital deprivation." Finally, technological empowerment is accompanied by a "governance paradox." While digital technology brings efficiency and opportunities, it may also exacerbate the "digital divide" within rural areas [3]. Technological dependency might also cause local governance to fall into a state of "passive adaptation" rather than "proactive construction."

Faced with these challenges, traditional models—whether the singular control model led by local government or the loose model relying purely on villager autonomy—are insufficient. The IP-ization of rural sports events is a complex system engineering involving multiple dimensions of culture, economy, society, and technology. Its governance must shift toward pluralistic, collaborative co-governance. Therefore, the core questions of this paper are: In the context of deep digital empowerment, what is the inherent governance logic of rural sports event IP-ization? And how can a collaborative governance mechanism be constructed that balances pluralistic interests, withstands risks, and ensures cultural inheritance?

1.2. Literature Review

Domestic academic discussion on related topics mainly focuses on the following levels:

First, research on rural sports and rural revitalization. Such studies often explore the diverse values of rural sports from perspectives like public service, Healthy China, and community cohesion. Scholars generally agree that rural sports are a vital component of the rural revitalization strategy, significant for improving farmers' health, reconstructing rural social capital, and inheriting local culture. Some recent studies have begun to focus on emerging phenomena like the "Village Super League," but they mostly concentrate on phenomenon description, success story summarization, or pathways for cultural-sports-tourism integration [4].

Second, research on sports event IP. This research primarily focuses on professional sports events or large-scale multi-sport games, covering IP components, value assessment, commercial development, brand operation, and legal protection. With the development of digital technology, some scholars have begun to explore the empowering effect of digital technology on sports event IP development, such as

enhancing viewing experiences, innovating business models, and precision marketing [5]. However, the paradigm of these studies relies heavily on commercial logic and market analysis, making their conclusions difficult to directly transfer to the rural sports field, which has strong "public good" and "cultural product" attributes.

Third, research on digital governance and technological empowerment. Digital governance research has expanded from early e-government and smart cities to cutting-edge areas like platform governance, algorithmic governance, and the digital transformation of social governance [3]. Technology empowerment research focuses on how digital technology "empowers" disadvantaged groups, drives organizational change [1], and contributes to rural cultural revitalization [5]. These studies provide rich theoretical tools for understanding how digital technology reshapes governance structures. However, research combining digital governance theory with the sports (especially rural sports) context is scarce. The analysis by Jiang Yabin & Zhang Weiguo (2024) on the "technological paradox" in the digital transformation of sports governance is an early exploration [3].

In summary, existing literature provides foundations for understanding rural sports, event IP, and digital governance, but significant theoretical "gaps" exist: First, there is a lack of theoretical definition for the specific concept of "rural sports event IP," with insufficient understanding of the internal tensions among its three key attributes: "rurality," "digitality," and "capital nature." Second, the understanding of digital empowerment in rural sports IP-ization often remains at the "communication tool" level, failing to reveal how technology reshapes governance relationships and value logic. Third, research is often "policy-oriented" rather than "mechanism-oriented," with more analysis of successful cases like the "Village Super League" than reflection on potential governance dilemmas. There is a particular lack of a systematic, qualitative, sustainable development-oriented collaborative governance theoretical framework.

1.3. Research Objectives, Approach, and Structure

This study aims to bridge the aforementioned theoretical gaps. Taking the IP-ization of rural sports events as the research object and digital technology empowerment as the entry point, it focuses on the underlying governance logic and the construction of collaborative mechanisms. This study does not use quantitative analysis or empirical modeling. Instead, it employs a qualitative research paradigm using governance theory, digital empowerment theory, co-evolutionary theory, and grounded theory approaches, conducting theoretical speculation and qualitative exploration through logical deduction, mechanism analysis, and framework construction.

The structure of this study is as follows: Part One defines the connotation of rural sports event IP and deeply analyzes the profound logic of digital empowerment for IP-ization, revealing how technology shifts from "instrumental rationality" to "value rationality" empowerment. Part Two analyzes the real-world dilemmas and "governance paradoxes" facing IP-ization governance under digital intervention, arguing for the necessity of a governance logic shift. Part Three, as the core of the paper, systematically constructs a collaborative governance mechanism for rural sports event IP-ization under digital empowerment, including

the roles and responsibilities of pluralistic actors and the four major operational mechanisms: dynamic, coordination, guarantee, and deviation correction. Finally, the paper summarizes the findings, presents conclusions, and offers prospects for future research.

2. The Connotation and Logic of Digital Empowerment for Rural Sports Event IP-ization

2.1. Defining the Connotation of Rural Sports Event IP

Before discussing governance mechanisms, we must first clarify the connotation of "rural sports event IP." It is not a simple superposition of the traditional sports IP concept and the rural context but a composite entity with specific contemporary connotations and structural characteristics.

First, its core is the "event," but it transcends competition itself. A rural sports event is a mass sports activity based in a specific geographical space, with villagers as the main body, and using traditional or modern sports as a carrier, held periodically or non-periodically. Unlike professional sports, its competitive attribute is relatively weak, while its social and cultural attributes—such as community cohesion, folk performance, and festive celebration—are more prominent.

Second, its foundation is "rural," carrying the "authenticity" of local culture. The soul of rural sports IP lies in its strong "Locality." It is rooted in specific rural social structures, historical memories, lifestyles, and values, and is a "living" form of local cultural heritage. For example, the Dong grand songs and ethnic costumes of the "Village Super League," or the "down-to-earth" prizes (cattle, pigs, sheep) of the "Village BA," are the sources of charm that distinguish its IP from standardized, homogenized urban sports events. This authenticity is the basis for attracting external attention and achieving emotional connection.

Third, its orientation is "IP-ization," meaning the derivation and appreciation of symbolic value. IP-ization is the process of a rural sports event transforming from an "activity" to a "brand," from "being" to "self-awareness." It requires extracting the unique cultural symbols embedded in the event (such as the event name, logo, mascot, rituals, representative figures, specialty products, etc.) and, through copyrighting, branding, and market operation, enabling value derivation in broader media platforms (like film, games, cultural-creative products) and industrial fields (like tourism, agricultural products) [6].

Therefore, rural sports event IP is a symbolic system rooted in specific local culture, with villagers as the main body, using sports competition as its form of expression, and operated through modern (especially digital) media, capable of continuously generating cultural identity and economic value.

2.2. The Surface Logic of Digital Empowerment: Instrumental Rationality

The empowerment of rural sports event IP-ization by digital technology is first manifested at the level of "instrumental rationality"—that is, as an efficient tool for communication, organization, and experience.

Communication Empowerment: This is the most direct empowerment. The popularization of 5G, smartphones, short video (e.g., Douyin, Kuaishou), and live-streaming platforms has completely broken the communication constraints of rural

events. Activities originally confined to the "village" can now "go viral" at low cost, visually and instantly, through "everyone can live-stream." Digital technology achieves a "multiplier effect" on the event's influence, which is the traffic foundation for initiating IP-ization.

Organizational Empowerment: Cloud computing, big data, and mobile applications (Apps/Mini-Programs) enhance the organizational effectiveness of rural events. From online registration, scheduling, referee management, and volunteer coordination to data statistics, digital tools help the originally loose and casual rural events move toward standardization and professionalization, reducing organizational costs and improving operational efficiency.

Experiential Empowerment: Technologies like Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and drone aerial photography greatly enrich the viewing experience. Audiences can not only watch remotely but also deeply perceive the atmosphere and local customs through AR interactions and VR immersion, enhancing the event's attractiveness and stickiness [7].

2.3. The Deep Logic of Digital Empowerment: Value Rationality and Relational Reconstruction

If instrumental rationality empowerment is optimization at the "tactical" level, then the deeper empowerment of digital technology is manifested at the "strategic" (Dao) level—that is, the demonstration of "value rationality" and the reconstruction of production relations.

Cultural Empowerment: Re-presenting and Recreating Local Value. Digital technology does not just transmit local culture; it "re-presents" and "recreates" it. On one hand, digital technologies (like digital museums, digital intangible heritage) "revive" and "archive" fading local memories. On the other hand, the interactivity and "remix" nature of digital media (e.g., netizens creating commentary, memes, theme songs) fuse traditional local culture with modern internet pop culture, creating new cultural forms. This "digital local culture" is more vibrant and contemporary, strengthening the IP's cultural core.

Emotional Empowerment: Building an "On-site" and "Online" Emotional Community. The explosion of rural sports IP is, in essence, a response to the emotional craving in contemporary society (especially among urbanites) for "neighborliness," "human touch," and "pure joy." Digital platforms—through bullet comments, comment sections, and online communities—provide a space for this emotion to converge, ferment, and resonate. It builds an "imagined community" that transcends geographical boundaries, transforming audiences from "spectators" to "emotional participants." This emotional connection is the core source of IP loyalty.

Relational Empowerment: Reconstructing the Production Relations of IP Value Co-creation. This is the most central empowerment logic. In the traditional model, IP value is created unidirectionally by the event organizer (government or enterprise). Under digital empowerment, the IP value chain transforms into an open "value co-creation" network involving pluralistic actors [1].

Data as a Factor: Digital technology converts the fragmented "attention flow," "emotional flow," and "behavioral flow" during the event into storable, analyzable, and operable "data flow." Big data analysis can accurately profile users and preferences, providing a decision-making

basis for IP derivative development and precision marketing.

Decentralization of Production: "User-Generated Content" (UGC) becomes a significant part of the IP content. Villagers, audiences, and tourists are both consumers and producers. Their short videos, viewing experience articles, and self-developed creative products continuously enrich the IP's connotation.

Networked Connection: Digital platforms act as "super-connectors," linking originally isolated villagers, governments, capital, consumers, and tourists in the same ecosystem. This greatly reduces transaction costs and promotes cross-sector cooperation (e.g., "Village Super League" + Tourism, "Village BA" + E-commerce for agricultural products).

In conclusion, the digital empowerment of rural sports event IP-ization is an evolutionary process from surface-level communication optimization to deep-level value reconstruction. Technology not only amplifies the event's voice but also reshapes its cultural texture, emotional structure, and economic form, thereby posing a fundamental challenge to traditional governance models.

3. The Governance Dilemmas and Logical Shift in Rural Sports Event IP-ization

The deep intervention of digital technology, while releasing huge dividends, has also complicated the governance environment for rural sports event IP-ization. The "failure" of traditional governance models and the "paradoxes" of technological empowerment are intertwined, jointly propelling an inevitable shift in governance logic.

3.1. The "Failure" of Traditional Governance Models

Before phenomena like the "Village Super League" emerged, rural sports governance mainly took three forms, none of which could adapt to the demands of IP-ization.

Dilemmas of the Government-led Model: In many regions, rural sports are seen as part of rural public cultural services, supplied and led by the local government (especially cultural, sports, radio, television, and tourism departments). In the IP-ization process, this model is prone to: First, the risk of "vanity projects." Local governments might excessively pursue the "viral" effect and short-term economic benefits, using administrative power to forcibly intervene in the event's "authenticity," causing it to "lose its flavor." Second, inefficiency and resource mismatch. Government-led operations often lack market sensitivity and professional capabilities, making it difficult to cope with the rapid iteration and complex commercial operations required for IP-ization.

Dilemmas of the Market-led Model: As IP value becomes apparent, capital and professional sports companies begin to intervene. A purely market-led approach easily leads to: First, excessive commercialization and cultural "alienation." Capital's sole objective is profit maximization, which may lead to inflated prices for tickets and derivatives, and the "spectacularization" or "vulgarization" of local culture, deviating from the event's original purpose. Second, villagers' interests being "represented without consent." Under the strong alliance of capital and local government, villagers—the main body of the event and the root of the culture—may lose their voice in IP development and benefit distribution, reduced to "background props" or cheap labor.

Dilemmas of the Villager Autonomy Model: Taking the early form of "Village BA" as an example, the event was organized entirely spontaneously by villagers. This model guaranteed "authenticity" but proved inadequate in the IP-ization process: First, low organizational level and lack of professional ability. It struggled to handle large-scale crowds, complex commercial negotiations, and systematic brand promotion. Second, resource limitations. Lacking sustained funding, professional talent, and external channels, the IP value was difficult to scale. Third, limited vision. It could be constrained by clan or regional interests, making it difficult to form a regional brand synergy.

3.2. The "Governance Paradox" Arising from Digital Technology Intervention

Digital technology has not automatically solved the above dilemmas; instead, it has created new "governance paradoxes" [3], making governance issues even more complex.

The Paradox of "Empowerment" and "Disempowerment": On one hand, digital platforms (live-streaming, short video) give ordinary villagers unprecedented discourse power and visibility, allowing them to bypass traditional elites and authorities to face the public directly. On the other hand, this empowerment is accompanied by "disempowerment." The varying digital literacy among villagers creates a new "digital divide" [2]. "Influencer" villagers who are adept at using digital tools may gain excessive discourse power, while the silent majority is marginalized. Furthermore, villagers' over-reliance on digital platforms means their "empowerment" is effectively controlled by the platforms' algorithmic logic and commercial interests.

The Paradox of "Decentralization" and "Recentralization": Digital technology (especially Web3.0 concepts) has the potential for "decentralization." The boom in UGC seems to break the monopoly of traditional media and authorities over IP. However, the reality is that traffic and data rapidly concentrate on head digital platforms (like Douyin, Kuaishou), forming new "super-centers." These platforms, by virtue of their "algorithmic hegemony" and data monopoly, effectively control the IP's exposure channels, content distribution, and even value realization. Local governments and villagers, paradoxically, may slide from the "center" to the "periphery."

The Paradox of "Authenticity" and "Performativity": The vitality of rural sports IP lies in its "authenticity." But digital media (especially short videos) have an inherent "spectacular" and "performative" nature. They tend to filter, amplify, and "direct" content that is more dramatic, conflicting, and visually striking. To cater to algorithms and traffic, event organizers and participants may unconsciously begin to "perform" a version of "rurality" expected by the external gaze, leading to the "hollowing out" of the IP's core.

The Paradox of "Efficiency" and "Alienation": Digital technology brings unprecedented governance efficiency (e.g., online management, big data decision-making). But an excessive belief in technology can lead to "technological alienation." For instance, local governors may become obsessed with "traffic" data, using "likes" and "shares" as the sole measure of performance, while ignoring more fundamental goals like the villagers' real sense of gain and the long-term value of cultural inheritance.

3.3. The Inevitable Logical Shift: From "Control" to "Good Governance"

The failure of traditional models and the emergence of digital governance paradoxes jointly prove one conclusion: the governance of rural sports event IP-ization must transcend the simplistic "either/or" division of "government-market-society" and achieve a fundamental shift in governance logic.

From "Singular Control" to "Pluralistic Collaboration": Rural sports IP is a "Commons" involving multiple stakeholders. Its governance cannot rely on any single actor but must construct a pluralistic, collaborative governance framework including government, villagers (community), digital platforms, market capital, and professional elites (scholars, local talents) [4]. The core of governance is no longer "who governs" but "how to collaborate."

From "Empirical Decision-making" to "Data-Driven": Facing high uncertainty and complexity in the IP-ization process, traditional "rule-of-thumb" empirical decision-making must shift to evidence-based decision-making based on data. This requires governors to be adept at using digital technology to collect and analyze data, discern trends, predict risks, and achieve scientific governance.

From "Rigid Regulation" to "Resilient Good Governance": "Phenomenal" hotspots are unpredictable. The governance system should not aim for the "rigid" elimination of all risks but should build "resilient" mechanisms. That is, to establish a flexible framework capable of absorbing shocks, learning quickly, and adapting, maintaining the stability and sustainability of the IP's cultural core amidst uncertainty.

4. Constructing the Collaborative Governance Mechanism for Rural sports Event IP-ization under Digital Empowerment

Based on the aforementioned shift in governance logic, this paper attempts to construct a "five-in-one" collaborative governance mechanism framework. This framework is based on the "Subject-Responsibility Mechanism" to clarify the positioning of all parties, and is supported by four pillars—the "Dynamic Mechanism," "Coordination Mechanism," "Guarantee Mechanism," and "Deviation Correction Mechanism"—to ensure the healthy operation of the governance system.

4.1. Subject-Responsibility Mechanism: Role Positioning and Digital Empowerment of Pluralistic Actors

The premise of collaborative governance is the clear definition of roles and responsibilities for pluralistic actors. Under digital empowerment, the traditional roles of all parties are undergoing profound changes.

Government: "Helmsman" and "Servant"

Role & Responsibility: The government should shift from an "all-powerful operator" to a "helmsman" and "servant." Its core responsibilities are: ① Top-level design: Formulating macro strategies and support policies for rural sports IP-ization. ② Public service: Responsible for "new infrastructure" (5G, IoT, etc.) and traditional infrastructure, providing inclusive digital skills training. ③ Bottom-line regulation: Strictly guarding ideological security, production safety, cultural security (preventing vulgarity), and market

order (anti-monopoly, anti-unfair competition).

Digital Empowerment: The government should use government big data to support scientific decision-making for event planning and industrial layout; use "RegTech" (Regulatory Technology) for efficient, off-site dynamic supervision of platform operations and the IP derivatives market.

Villagers (Community/Associations): "Protagonists" and "Inheritors"

Role & Responsibility: Villagers are the soul and cultural origin of rural sports events, the "protagonists" of the IP. Their core responsibilities are: ① Cultural inheritance: Guarding and revitalizing local culture, ensuring the IP does not become "uprooted." ② Main body participation: As the primary organizers and participants, guaranteeing the event's "authenticity." ③ Democratic supervision: Exercising the right to know, participate, and supervise the IP development and operation process.

Digital Empowerment: Villagers should use digital tools (e.g., digital village history museums, VR folk customs) to innovate cultural expression [5]; establish community-owned channels for discourse through social media and live-streaming; participate in public decision-making via online discussion platforms.

Digital Platforms (Enterprises): "Connector" and "Amplifier"

Role & Responsibility: Digital platforms (e.g., short video, live-streaming, e-commerce) are the key "connectors" and "amplifiers" for IP-ization. Their responsibilities are: ① Technical support: Providing stable, inclusive technical services like live-streaming, cloud computing, and big data analysis. ② Traffic distribution: Achieving precise matching between event content and potential audiences through algorithmic recommendations [8]. ③ Ecosystem construction: Integrating resources within the platform (tourism, e-commerce, cultural creation) to provide channels for IP value derivation.

Platform Responsibility (Governance): Platforms must fulfill their "gatekeeper" responsibility, inhibiting vulgar content and protecting cultural diversity through algorithmic optimization and content review. They should maintain algorithmic transparency and fairness, preventing "platform exploitation" through data monopoly.

Market Capital (Sponsors/Operators): "Booster" and "Enabler"

Role & Responsibility: Market capital is the "booster" for achieving large-scale, professional operation of the IP. Its responsibilities are: ① Capital supply: Providing funds for event upgrades, market promotion, and derivative development. ② Professional operation: Introducing advanced sports management, brand marketing, and commercial development experience. ③ Market expansion: Utilizing its own channel advantages to expand the IP's commercial footprint.

Responsibility Constraint: Capital intervention must be premised on "respecting local culture and benefiting villagers," pursuing long-term value investment that "balances righteousness and profit," rather than short-term "traffic cash-out."

Professional Elites (Scholars/Local Talents): "Think Tank" and "Supervisor"

Role & Responsibility: External experts and scholars, along with internal "new local talents" (returning

entrepreneurs, cultural leaders), form the governance "think tank." Their responsibilities are: ① Professional consultation: Providing professional advice on cultural excavation, brand positioning, and governance models for the IP. ② Third-party supervision: As an independent third party, evaluating and supervising governance effectiveness, benefit distribution, and cultural protection. ③ Bridge and link: Connecting external resources (e.g., universities, research institutions, foundations) to feed back into the countryside.

Digital Empowerment: Establish a "cloud think tank" to provide intellectual support regularly through online seminars and remote diagnostics; use digital media to publish evaluation reports, forming social supervision pressure.

4.2. Dynamic Mechanism: Value Co-creation and Benefit Sharing

The fundamental driving force of collaborative governance lies in achieving "1+1+1>3" value co-creation and establishing a fair and reasonable benefit-sharing mechanism.

Building a "Cultural IP+" Value Co-creation Ecosystem. Break through the singular profit model of "ticket economy" or "advertising economy." Supported by digital technology, promote the deep integration of "Rural Sports IP + Eco-tourism," "IP + Green Agricultural Products," "IP + Research & Study Education," and "IP + Digital Creative." For example, using VR technology to develop "cloud stadium" tourism experiences, using e-commerce live-streaming to drive sales of specialty agricultural products, and using blockchain technology to issue digital collectibles (NFTs) with local cultural connotations, allowing pluralistic actors to find value alignment within the IP ecosystem.

Establishing a "Villager-Centric" Benefit Distribution Mechanism. To prevent villagers from being marginalized in IP-ization, a preferential benefit distribution mechanism must be designed. First, explore a "resource (culture) as shares" model, where villagers' (collective) cultural inheritance, site provision, etc., are treated as core resources, converted into shares in the IP operating company for long-term dividends. Second, use "trust technologies" like blockchain [6] to establish transparent, immutable smart contracts for IP revenue distribution, ensuring that benefits are distributed to villagers (especially core inheritors and event organizers) timely and fully. Third, strengthen the "blood-making" function by mandating a portion of IP revenue to be reinvested in rural public affairs and villager digital literacy education.

4.3. Coordination Mechanism: Digital Negotiation and Platform Regulation

The core of collaborative governance is handling the interest conflicts and coordination failures among pluralistic actors.

Establishing an "Online-Offline" Integrated "Digital Negotiation" Platform. Drawing on deliberative democracy theory, construct a regular communication and coordination mechanism [7]. Offline, establish a "Rural Sports IP Governance Council" composed of representatives from the government, villagers, platforms, capital, and experts to regularly discuss major issues. Online, rely on a "digital council hall" (like WeChat groups or dedicated Mini-Programs) for instant communication, information sharing, and democratic negotiation on daily operational issues. Ensure that villagers' "micro-narratives" can be effectively uploaded to influence "macro-decisions."

Strengthening "Collaborative Regulation" of Digital Platforms.

Given the key position of digital platforms in IP-ization, they must be effectively regulated to prevent the "recentralization" paradox. This requires collaboration among the government, industry associations, and the public: First, the government should strengthen "algorithmic governance," requiring platforms to disclose the basic logic of algorithms and prohibiting algorithmic discrimination or "big data-enabled price discrimination." Second, industry associations should formulate "Ethical Guidelines for Digital Communication of Rural Sports IP" to guide platforms in undertaking cultural responsibilities. Third, establish public (villager) supervision and feedback channels for platform operations.

4.4. Guarantee Mechanism: Digital Infrastructure and Digital Literacy

The effective operation of collaborative governance depends on solid "hardware" and "software" foundations.

Inclusive Digital Infrastructure Construction. This is the prerequisite for technological empowerment. The government should include rural 5G base stations, gigabit fiber optics, and IoT sensory equipment in key "new infrastructure" planning, ensuring high-quality network coverage in event locations and surrounding areas. Simultaneously, build a "Rural Sports Big Data Center" to coordinate data on events, tourists, and industries, providing support for data-driven governance.

Systematic Villager Digital Literacy Cultivation. This is key to achieving "empowerment" rather than "disempowerment." Improving digital literacy must be a strategic task for rural revitalization [8]. The government, universities, and platform enterprises should collaboratively conduct large-scale public welfare training. The content should include not only "application skills" like live-streaming and short video production but also "critical literacy" such as media information discernment, data privacy protection, and online public participation, enabling villagers to truly become "qualified governors" in the digital age.

4.5. Deviation Correction Mechanism: Culture-centrism and Risk Prevention

Collaborative governance must possess the "resilience" to cope with shocks and self-correct. Its core is adhering to a culture-centric principle and effective risk prevention.

Establishing a "Culture-Centric" Dynamic Protection Principle. The vitality of IP lies in culture, not temporary traffic. A "Digital Archive of Local Cultural IP" must be established to digitally archive and confirm the rights of the event's original rituals, folk norms, and core spirit. In IP development, a "Cultural One-Vote Veto" should be established, where a committee of villager representatives and folklore experts conducts a preliminary review of whether derivatives and commercial activities conform to cultural "authenticity" [9].

Constructing a "Technology + Humanities" Risk Early Warning System. Governance cannot just "fix problems after they happen." First, use big data and AI technology to establish a dynamic public opinion monitoring system for the IP, capturing and providing early warnings for tendencies like excessive commercialization, cultural vulgarization, and negative hype. Second, establish a "Humanistic Sentinel" mechanism, regularly organizing sociological and

anthropological experts to conduct in-depth fieldwork. From a "human" perspective (not a data perspective), they should assess the real impact of IP-ization on the rural community structure, interpersonal relationships, and cultural mindset, promptly identifying "alienation" risks that technology and data cannot capture.

5. Conclusion and Prospects

5.1. Main Conclusions

This study, situated at the intersection of Rural Revitalization and Digital China, conducts a theoretical exploration of the governance issues in the digital empowerment of rural sports event IP-ization. The research concludes:

First, the IP-ization of rural sports events is a complex socio-economic phenomenon of local cultural value representation empowered by digital technology. Digital technology is not just a communication tool; it achieves deep empowerment from "instrumental rationality" to "value rationality" by reconstructing the IP value chain, emotional connections, and production relations.

Second, the intervention of digital technology exacerbates the complexity of rural sports governance. Traditional singular governance models have "failed," and a series of governance paradoxes have emerged, such as "empowerment/disempowerment," "decentralization/recentralization," and "authenticity/performativity."

Third, the governance logic for rural sports event IP-ization must undergo a fundamental shift: from "singular control" to "pluralistic collaboration," from "empirical decision-making" to "data-driven" governance, and from "rigid regulation" to "resilient good governance."

Fourth, an effective governance system is a "five-in-one" collaborative mechanism. It is based on a "subject mechanism" that clarifies the responsibilities of the five parties (government, villagers, platforms, capital, elites). It operates through the synergy of four pillars: the "dynamic mechanism" (value co-creation, benefit sharing), "coordination mechanism" (digital negotiation, platform regulation), "guarantee mechanism" (digital infrastructure, digital literacy), and "deviation correction mechanism" (culture-centrism, risk prevention), collectively escorting the sustainable development of rural sports IP in the digital wave.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

The theoretical contributions of this study are: First, it introduces digital governance theory and collaborative governance theory into the field of rural sports research, providing a governance research paradigm for understanding emerging phenomena like "Cun Chao" that goes beyond "experience summarization" and "cultural-tourism integration" pathways. Second, addressing the specificities of the rural context (rurality, human-relations society, digital divide, etc.), it constructs a qualitative, "digital good governance" theoretical framework that emphasizes pluralistic negotiation and a culture-centric approach.

The practical implications of this study are: First, when promoting rural sports IP-ization, local governments should beware of "political achievement impulses" and "technology fetishism," proactively "ceding power" to society, and transforming from "operators" to "servants" and "regulators."

Second, a "villager (culture)-centric" approach must always be upheld [10]. Institutional designs (like digital negotiation and benefit-sharing mechanisms) must ensure the subjective status and core interests of villagers in the IP-ization process. Third, regarding digital platforms and market capital, the focus of governance is not "exclusion" but "skillful utilization" and "regulation," guiding them to become "responsible enablers" of rural revitalization, rather than "predatory" speculators.

5.3. Research Limitations and Future Prospects

As a theoretical speculative study, this research focuses on the macro-construction of a governance framework and lacks in-depth fieldwork and embedded analysis of specific cases (such as specific events in Zhaoqing or other locations). Future research can combine concrete qualitative cases to empirically test and revise the governance mechanisms proposed in this paper. Furthermore, digital technologies (like AIGC, Metaverse) are still iterating rapidly, and their impact on rural society is profound and unknown. The governance mechanisms for rural sports must maintain a high degree of openness and dynamic adaptability, which is also a research topic that requires continuous tracking.

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