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Production of Space in the Rural Areas around Cultural Heritage Sites in China

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Abstract

As particular type of rural areas, the rural areas around cultural heritage sites have been experienced the imbalance between the restricted physical environment brought by cultural heritage site conservation and the people's ever-growing contemporary needs. Restrictive conservation policies that have been implemented in consideration of the integrity of cultural heritage have limited the physical environment of concomitant rural areas, while the reasonable demands on physical environment of local people may pose a threat to the cultural heritage, which lead to this lose-lose situation that has plagued the rural areas around cultural heritage sites for a long time. Since the physical environment of rural areas around cultural heritage sites is being influenced and produced by the game between two opposite driving forces, it can no longer be narrowed as a mere absolute and pure space in a conventional way, so it calls for to break the stereotypes and adopt a social-space stance integrated with space and social relations. Thus by adopting the theory of 'the production of space', the research seeks to illuminate the underlying mechanism of space transformation according to triad structure from top-down and bottom-up stakeholders perspective as well as diachronic and synchronic perspective. Using the case study of Chang'an cultural heritage site in Xi'an city of China as the miniature of whole China as if under a microscope, this research tries to find a suitable path to alleviate the contradiction in these rural areas under the context of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Keywords: Chang'an cultural heritage site; social space; transformation; triad structure; underlying mechanism.