Research on development mode of characteristic towns in China from perspective of production of space

Meiling Tian*1

1 School of Resource Environment and Tourism, Hubei University of Arts and Science, Xiangyang 441053, China

*Corresponding author’s e-mail: tmlhrj@hbuas.edu.cn

Abstract. The development of characteristic towns is a systematic process with many subjects and elements. The production of space of characteristic towns is the process of reshaping the space of the town through various factors and finally forming various characteristic industries based on space. Based on the analysis of the concept of the production of space of characteristic towns, the pattern of manifestation of the influence of spatial production on local characteristics is summarized as the production of physical space, the production of industrial space, the production of cultural space, the production of community space and the production of market space. Then according to the pattern of manifestation of the production of space of characteristic towns, the development mode of characteristic towns can be divided into natural capital mode, industrial capital mode, cultural capital mode, community capital mode and market demand mode. Therefore, take the two batches of 403 national characteristic towns announced by the ministry of housing and urban-rural development as an example, the paper analyzes the utilization of the production of space combined with each town’s own characteristics industries, and explores the development law of characteristic towns in China. The result shows that, the quantity of characteristic towns is in the order of Western China, Eastern China, Central China and Northeast China in terms of region, the quantity of characteristic towns is in the order of cultural capital mode, natural capital mode, industrial capital mode, market demand mode and community capital mode in terms of the development mode, and the cultural capital mode has an absolute advantage, the community capital mode is quite different from other modes.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the rapid development of new urbanization construction, the integration of industry and city has gradually become a new development idea and stepped into our vision [1]. Many prefectures and cities are trying to find a new development mode of integrated industrial and urban. In 2015, Zhejiang Province first proposed to speed up the construction and planning of a group of characteristic towns with "four in one" of industry, culture, tourism and community, and "three in one" of ecology, living and production [2]. Subsequently, characteristic towns developed rapidly in various parts of China. Up to now, there are two batches of 403 national characteristic towns announced by the ministry of housing and urban-rural development [3]. Characteristic town is a complex with industrial system, cultural connotation, tourism attraction and corresponding community functions, which is built relying on certain characteristic industries or characteristic environmental elements (such as regional characteristics, cultural characteristics, etc.). Characteristic towns are favoured by capital because they can meet people's needs for symbolized consumption and tourism experience, and
gradually enter the process of the production of space [4]. The development of characteristic industry and tourism industry has brought about the spatialization of capital, the landscape of material space, the diversification of cultural space and the complexity of social space. The "characteristics" of characteristic towns are derived from these different levels of the production of space. Therefore, to explore the development mode of characteristic towns in China from the perspective of the production of space can provide a powerful ideological weapon for further interpretation and grasp of characteristics.

The construction of foreign characteristic town has reached the mature stage and has become one of the main means to promote the urbanization process [5]. Research on characteristic towns in foreign countries mainly focuses on the influence of characteristic towns on tourism economy [6-7], the planning scheme of characteristic towns [8-9], the protection of cultural resources in characteristic towns [10-11], and the research on operation mode of characteristic towns [12-13]. For example, Seaton [14] studied Hay-on-Wye (book town), an English town featuring "book Tours". Gorman-Murray et al. [15] found that the Australian town of Daylesford was attracted by tourist festivals, among which “Chill Out” gay festival and Tamworth country music festival were the most vibrant. Salmona & Verardi [16] focused on the coastal town of Portofino on the northwest coast of Italy. The research on characteristic towns in China mainly focuses on after 2015. The research content mainly focuses on the following two aspects: on the one hand, it focuses on the summary of the successful experience of Zhejiang characteristic towns [17-20]; on the other hand, it focuses on the exploration of the construction path of national characteristic towns [21-25]. For example, Xie & Li [26] et al. analyzed the spatial structure and influencing factors of the characteristic towns in Zhejiang Province. Liu [27] believes that the development of characteristic towns is closely related to administrative management. Song et al. [28] analyzed the impact of financial capital intervention on the construction of characteristic towns. Hong et al. [29] studied the operation mode of crowd innovation platform in characteristic towns. Fu & Jiang [30] discussed the development mode of characteristic towns in China from the perspective of embeddedness. Xu & Wang [31], Qian [32], Chen & Shao [33] conducted empirical research on dream town, sock art town, cultural tourism town and other characteristic towns in Zhejiang Province that started earlier.

On the research status of "production of space" in characteristic towns, through searching on CNKI, the author found a total of 3304 literatures related to characteristic towns. Removing some of the repetitive, lower-quality literature, only 8 literatures were related to "production of space" of the 210 identified. They are respectively that Guo et al. [34-38] took Huishan ancient town in Wuxi city and Zhouzhuang ancient town in Suzhou city as examples to study the production of space and community residents' perception of cultural heritage tourism destination, Zhang et al. [39] studied the spatial changes of Taobao Village in Lirendong, Guangzhou city in the perspective of production of space, Ming & Duan [40] took Lijiang ancient Town in Yunnan Province as an example to study the spatial reconstruction of ancient town tourism landscape based on the theory of production of space, Si & Wang [41] studied the theoretical framework and practice approaches to production of space in sports town in China. Overall, the current research mainly focuses on the practical aspects such as the planning and development path of the characteristic towns, lacks of depth and height of theoretical research, especially the research on the production of space of characteristic towns is still weak, which to some extent, has affected the in-depth understanding of the development characteristic of the characteristic towns and the accurate grasp of the development law of the characteristic towns. Based on this, this paper takes the theory of spatial production as the starting point, through the different manifestations of the production of space, to study the formation of the town's "character", to explore the development mode of characteristic towns in China, in order to provide a certain theoretical basis for the construction of characteristic towns.

2. The source of characteristic—the theory and understanding of the production of space

The production of space is the transformation from the production in space to the production of space itself. Lefebvre [42] divided it into three dimensions: spatial practice, representations of space and
space of representations, which can be corresponded to perceived Spaces, conceived Spaces and lived Spaces respectively. There is an important dialectical relationship between these three Spaces. The production of space of characteristic towns is a specific pattern of manifestation of spatial production, which has the hierarchical attribute of the production of space. The production of perceived spaces refers to the development practice of the geographical landscape and cultural customs, economic system and political system of characteristic towns. The production of conceived spaces refers to the planning and development of characteristic industry system, the development and presentation of tourism products, which is the most participatory and experiential space. The production of lived spaces not only reflects the local social life, but also provides the space for the imagination and construction of foreign tourists, which is an important space to experience the local customs and community culture. Therefore, the production of space of characteristic towns can be summarized as the process of reshaping the small town space by various political, economic and cultural factors such as capital, power and interests, which makes the small town space become the medium or product of factor production, and finally forms a variety of characteristic industries with space as the bottom plate.

3. Methodologies
The study was conducted with the use of the multiple, exploratory and explanatory study method [43]. The production of space of characteristic towns is a collection of multiple elements, including spatial producer, spatial consumer, spatial productivity and spatial production relations. Spatial producers can dominate or influence the direction of spatial production, such as enterprises, governments, community residents, media, etc.; the characteristic mechanism of characteristic towns is the market-oriented operation mechanism with the government as the guide and enterprises as the main body. Spatial consumers are spatial experiencers; they are mainly tourists who come to visit, which requires characteristic towns to have tourism functions, industry functions, culture functions and community functions. Spatial productivity refers to the productive capacity of resources in the space, which mainly includes the resource endowment, the capital absorbing capacity and the market conditions of space itself; specific to the characteristic town, it should have unique natural landscape, cultural deposits, industrial base or market demand and other characteristic resources. Spatial production relations are social relations formed or changed in the process of spatial production, such as the change of the relationship between the community residents before and after the construction of characteristic towns, which may change from the previous neighborhood relationship, blood relationship, friendship relations to the competitive relations, cooperative relationship, exchange relationship under the market-oriented economy [38]; good community life is also a tourist resource. Obviously, the production of space plays an important role in the formation of local characteristics, which can be summarized as follows: the production of physical space, the production of industrial space, the production of cultural space, the production of community space and the production of market space. However, the formation of a regional characteristic may be the result of multiple production of space.

3.1. The production of physical space
According to the theory of spatial production, the physical space of characteristic town corresponds to the “perceived spaces”, “spatial practice”. Physical space is the part of physical form defined by objective entity, mainly including tourism environment and physical tourism resources, such as scenic spots, buildings, festival sites, etc. It has the production characteristics of physical entity in geographical sense. According to the functions and properties of the physical space of characteristic towns, the content of the production of physical space can be divided into the following two levels: (1) Core layer refers to the entities such as tourist landscape areas, industrial parks and cultural performance areas for visiting and experiencing, just like the front desk of a characteristic town, which can satisfy tourists' leisure and transfer travel experience. (2) Auxiliary layer refers to the entertainment and leisure place, shopping reception centre, parking lot, family inn, etc., just like the
background support of a characteristic town, which can meet the tourists' needs of regular entertainment and normal life.

3.2. The production of industrial space
According to the theory of spatial production, the industrial space of characteristic town corresponds to the “conceived spaces”, “representations of space”. The production of industrial space is supported by the characteristic industry, which promotes the manufacturing of the characteristic products, the display of the characteristic technology and the gathering and attraction of the modern technological elements, and finally forms the integrated development of the characteristic industry and the tourism industry. The characteristic industry includes the traditional skill industry and the modern technology industry. The traditional skill industry relies on the traditional handicraft passed down from generation to generation in the local area and combines with the market demand to form an industrial chain integrating industry and tourism; the modern technology industry mainly relies on the advanced science and technology to form the characteristic industry gathering place and bring the interactive development of characteristic industry and the tourism industry.

3.3. The production of cultural space
According to the theory of spatial production, the cultural space of characteristic town corresponds to the “conceived spaces”, “representations of space”. The production of cultural space refers to the stage performance and industrialization development of national cultural products as well as the manufacturing of iconic cultural symbol system, which is a conscious development and planning based on local cultural characteristics. It provides the experience and interactive space for tourists to understand the local characteristic culture [44-45]. Based on the most distinctive cultural heritage, the production of cultural space is the reproduction of the combination of material and intangible cultural heritage, among which the intangible cultural heritage is the charm of cultural space. The development forms of intangible cultural heritage mainly include folk etiquette, artistic performance, festival events and traditional handicrafts, such as large-scale original ecological stage plays "impression · Liu Sanjie" and "impression of Yunnan".

3.4. The production of community space
According to the theory of spatial production, the community space of characteristic town corresponds to the “lived spaces”, “space of representations”. Based on physical space, industrial space and cultural space, the production of community space is the authentic travel experience space jointly constructed by community residents and tourists, which is not only the reflection of the real life of the local residents, but also the magical experience and perception of tourists. Based on the production of industrial space and cultural space, the transformation of characteristic resources into tourism products depends on the production of community space.

In terms of community residents, on the one hand, the involvement of tourism will bring about a large amount of capital, information and people flow, and the social mobility of the community will increase; a large proportion of the residents will join the tourism industry, which will make the communication among residents more "social", and the conversation among residents will no longer the trivial things of life, but the information exchange about tourism business activities; the kinship, friendship and neighborhood relationship among residents gradually will change into the relationship of competition, cooperation and transaction. On the other hand, tourism development will make many public spaces no longer dominated by residents, but become social spaces for tourism and commercial activities [46-47], which will form the objectification of subjects. In the face of these changes, how to create a good community environment has become an important part of the production of community space. As community tourism is an important tourism resource besides natural tourism and cultural tourism, we call it social tourism resource [48], which also has a great attraction to foreign tourists.

In terms of tourists, their fundamental purpose is to obtain pleasant experience and seek the meaning of travel, which requires the use of some local symbolic tools and iconic scenes to construct a tourism
world for them. This construction mainly depends on the interaction between tourists and tourist sites (tourism resources, community residents), and obtains psychological perception and behavioral experience in the interaction [49]. Therefore, the production of space of characteristic towns should not only pay attention to the participation of tourists, but also actively strive for the support of local communities, so as to present the real core and original characteristic resources to tourists. However, the traditional community space, which has been passed down from generation to generation and is closely related to residents’ life, is the ideal experience space.

3.5. The production of market space
According to the theory of spatial production, the market space of characteristic town corresponds to the “conceived spaces”, “representations of space”. Compared with the previous spatial forms, the production of market space is abstract. It is oriented by market demand and carries out the development and upgrading of related industries, forming the spatial relationship in which demand leads the direction of the industry and the industry adjusts and optimizes according to the demand. In the production of market space, the core element is the market demand, which is the basic medium to establish the connection between characteristic industries and tourists. Lefebvre proposed that spatial practice can reproduce social relations [42], and it is through the core medium of market demand that market space completes the construction of social relations. Market demand can be a demand for a product or a service industry. The significance of exploring this factor is to select the industry which is more in line with the times, the public demand and the sustainable development [50], so as to form more stable local characteristics. In order to improve the market competitiveness, the characteristic industries must combine the market demand to improve their own industrial advantages, and build the characteristic space that can be perceived by tourists. For example, some bookstores launch the "reading + coffee" business model to meet the diverse needs of customers [51].

Of course, the division of these five manifestations is not absolute, which can be integrated with each other. An area may have two or more characteristics. In addition to the above five aspects of spatial production, macro policies and actions of local governments are also important factors affecting regional characteristics (Figure 1). The release of a policy may promote the development of the region, but it may also destroy the original industrial structure and natural foundation of the region; local action plays a decisive role in the formation of characteristic industries. If a region has a good resource and policy environment, but the local government is inactive or has a wrong action direction, it will hinder the formation of sustainable characteristics. These two exogenous factors play an external regulatory role in the development of regional characteristic industries. Local governments should pay full attention to policy guidance and take active actions, but more importantly, they should make rational use of the process of spatial production to promote the development and growth of characteristic industries.

Figure 1. The factors influencing the formation of characteristic towns
4.  Results

4.1.  Development mode of characteristic towns in China

According to the pattern of manifestation of spatial production of characteristic towns, the formation of characteristic towns can be summarized as the following five modes:

4.1.1.  Natural capital mode. The natural capital mode is a development mode that utilizes local natural endowment to develop characteristic industries, which belongs to the category of production of physical space. Natural endowment mainly includes natural landscape and natural resources. Natural landscape refers to the local celestial climate, water scenery, geological landform, biological landscape, namely the original ecological landscape. The natural landscape mode generally takes tourism as the main development industry; through the planning and integration of natural endowments, a relatively complete landscape system and supporting functions such as sightseeing, accommodation and transportation should be constructed to form a systematic and complete industrial chain. Natural resources include local agricultural resources, mineral resources, forest resources, marine resources and so on. The natural resources mode usually combines tourism with other industries; for example, some fishing towns will combine ocean fishing, aquatic processing, and marine scientific research with coastal tourism to build characteristic towns with fishery as the core element.

4.1.2.  Industrial capital mode. Industrial capital mode is a development mode that takes industrial technology as the core and forms local characteristic industries through the inheritance and improvement of technology, which belongs to the category of production of industrial space. Industrial technology includes both traditional handicraft and modern technology. The development of traditional skill industry depends on the traditional handicraft passed down from generation to generation; for example, Longwu tea town in West Lake has formed an industrial chain integrating production, manufacture, sales and tourism through the display of traditional craft, the production and processing of traditional products. Modern technology industry is to rely on advanced science and technology to build a characteristic industrial agglomeration; for example, supported by financial services industry, Greenwich fund town has established its brand, introduced resources, and brought about the interactive development of characteristic industries and tourism industry. By combining with tourism industry, the industrial park can form a network system based on production of tourism space, which can not only improve the brand effect of the industry, but also provide a favorable and orderly community living environment for the characteristic town, thus forming a commercial chain based on the consumption of characteristic industrial tourism.

4.1.3.  Cultural capital mode. Cultural capital mode is a development mode that takes the traditional culture with local characteristics as the core and builds a characteristics cultural tourism industry including folk customs, historical sites and humanistic spirit and so on, which belongs to the category of production of cultural space. Such as Wuzhen, Zhejiang province, it not only retains the historic blocks and ancient buildings that represent the local history and culture, still retains the original inhabitants of scenic spot, who truly and vividly show the millennium culture of the ancient town; the complete combination of traditional culture and modern life successfully shows a thousand years of cultural deposits and typical Jiangnan water life of Wuzhen, which endowed the ancient town with a unique tourist attraction.

4.1.4.  Community capital mode. Community capital mode is an industrial mode marketing community resources as tourist attractions, including community environment, living environment and so on, which belongs to the category of production of community space. Murphy pointed out that tourism is an experiential product and therefore highly dependent on the cooperation of host communities; public property and festival events in many communities are good tourist attractions, which cannot be separated from the protection and inheritance of local residents [52]; at the same time, local
Communities must bear the consequences of tourism development and respond to them, which will affect the further development of communities [53]. Therefore, community tourism is an important part of tourism industry of characteristic towns. Common social tourism resources [48] mainly include the following categories: (1) Economic construction achievements, this kind of tourism resources are mainly to attract business tourists to visit and study. For example, in the early stage of reform and opening up, Shenzhen's rapid economic development attracted a large number of Chinese and foreign tourists. (2) Scientific and technological achievements, such as satellite launch sites are of interest to many tourists. (3) Social development achievements, such as many foreign tourists like to visit kindergartens, schools, residential communities, and nursing homes in order to get an in-depth understanding of a country's social life. (4) Hospitable social atmosphere, it mainly refers to the attitude of local residents to tourists, such as Hawaii "aloha" is known for its hospitality.

4.1.5. Market demand mode. Market demand mode is oriented by market demand to screen out sustainable development industries that are more in line with the needs of the public and the significance of the era, so as to form solid local characteristics, which belongs to the category of production of market space. Market demand includes manufacturing demand and service demand. Manufacturing demand is usually affected by a specific period or region, so the development of such industries should pay attention to seize the opportunity to form their own unique advantages and irreplaceable. Relatively speaking, the market prospect of service demand is broader. Due to the disease of big cities brought by rapid urbanization, people prefer leisure and idyllic scenery. Therefore, many suburban areas have built characteristic service towns, such as farmhouse and health fitness town, etc.

4.2. Development law of characteristic towns in China

According to the analysis framework of spatial production, the utilization of spatial production in characteristic towns can be summarized, so as to find its internal laws more scientifically and intuitively. This paper takes the two batches of 403 national characteristic towns announced by the ministry of housing and urban-rural development as an example and analyzes the utilization of spatial production of each town based on its own characteristic industries. For example, Dongpu town, Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province is called yellow rice wine town, which characteristic industry is rice wine manufacturing industry. Rice wine brewing technology and rice wine culture are the main characteristics of the town, so it can be said that Dongpu town uses both industrial capital and cultural capital two forms of spatial production. It should be noted that since different forms of spatial production may have overlapping interactions, a characteristic town may involve multiple categories of spatial production, which is not contradictory to its own characteristics. Among the 403 characteristic towns, there are 154 natural capital mode, 139 industrial capital mode, 181 cultural capital mode, 39 community capital modes and 89 market demand mode. According to the regional division of China (eastern region, central region, western region and northeast region), this paper summarizes the development mode of characteristic towns as follows (Table 1):

| Table 1. The development mode of characteristic towns in different regions |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| **Quantity/Proportion** | **Eastern** | **Central** | **Western** | **Northeast** | **Total** |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------|
| Characteristic towns( quantity) | 141 | 86 | 143 | 33 | 403 |
| Natural capital mode | **Quantity** | 37 | 32 | 60 | 25 | 154 |
| | **Proportion** | 24.03% | 20.78% | 38.96% | 16.23% | 1 |
| Industrial capital mode | **Quantity** | 78 | 21 | 34 | 6 | 139 |
| | **Proportion** | 56.12% | 15.11% | 24.46% | 4.32% | 1 |
| Cultural capital mode | **Quantity** | 60 | 46 | 66 | 9 | 181 |
| | **Proportion** | 33.15% | 25.41% | 36.46% | 4.97% | 1 |
### Community capital mode

| Quantity | Proportion |
|----------|------------|
| 13       | 33.33%     |
| 10       | 25.64%     |
| 8        | 20.51%     |
| 8        | 20.51%     |
| 39       | 1          |

### Market demand mode

| Quantity | Proportion |
|----------|------------|
| 28       | 31.46%     |
| 19       | 21.35%     |
| 34       | 38.20%     |
| 8        | 8.99%      |
| 89       | 1          |

Source: the list of two batches of characteristic towns announced by the ministry of housing and urban-rural development.

Note: 1. 10 provinces/cities in the East: Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Hebei Province, Jiangsu Province, Zhejiang Province, Fujian Province, Shandong Province, Guangdong Province, and Hainan Province; 6 provinces in the Central: Shanxi Province, Anhui Province, Jiangxi Province, Henan Province, Hubei Province, Hunan Province; 12 provinces/cities in the West: Chongqing, Sichuan Province, Guizhou Province, Yunnan Province, Shanxi Province, Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Tibet Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region; 3 provinces in the Northeast: Liaoning Province, Jilin Province, and Heilongjiang Province.

2. Natural capital proportion = the quantity of natural capital towns in the region / the quantity of natural capital towns in China, and so on.

As can be seen from Table 1, the quantity of characteristic towns is in the order of Western China, Eastern China, Central China, and Northeast China. Among them, the quantity of cultural capital mode is the largest, followed by natural capital mode, industrial capital mode, market demand mode, and community capital mode. The specific analysis is as follows: (1) the largest quantity of natural capital mode is in Western China, which is closely related to the unique natural endowment of Western China. (2) The largest quantity of industrial capital mode is in Eastern China, accounting for an absolute advantage of 56.12%, which corresponds to the developed industry and modern service industry in Eastern China. (3) The least quantity of cultural capital mode is in Northeast China, with only 4.97%, while the other three regions have little difference. Among them, the Western China accounts for a slightly higher proportion, mainly because of the large number of ethnic minorities in the Western China, which has given birth to a variety of distinctive traditional cultures. At the same time, the Western China is also the home to many important revolutionary bases, with a brilliant red culture. (4) The quantity of community capital mode is generally low, which is mainly because the participation rate of community tourism in China is generally low, which is either the excessive participation caused by only paying attention to the economic interest appeals, or the passive participation caused by the weak status of farmers. Relatively, the economy in the Eastern and Central China developed faster, and the social infrastructure is relatively complete, which provides certain conditions for the local towns to rely on social capital to develop characteristic industries. (5) The largest quantity of market demand mode is in Western China, which is mainly because the unique cultural resources in the Western China can be utilized to develop characteristic tourism to meet the expanding market demand of tourists.
Figure 2 shows the proportion of different characteristic towns in different regions. (1) In terms of the whole country, cultural capital mode accounts for the largest proportion, accounting for 30%; followed by the natural capital mode and the industrial capital mode, which is 26% and 23% respectively; then it is the market demand mode, accounting for 15%; the smallest is the community capital mode, at just 6%. Visibly, the development of cultural tourism characteristic town is flourishing. In particular, the second batch of national characteristics towns pays more attention to the cultivation of cultural connotation, increasing the requirements for cultural activities, attendance and activity levels. However, the characteristic towns of community capital mode are relatively few, which is because of the low participation of community tourism in China and the lower requirement for infrastructure in applying for the second batch of national characteristics towns. To apply for the first batch of characteristic towns, the information of hospitals, schools and other infrastructure must be provided; while the second batch of recommendation notice does not give special emphasis to hospitals, schools and other information. (2) In terms of each region, the proportion of cultural capital mode is all relatively high, especially in Central China and Western China, reaching 36% and 32%. This is mainly due to two reasons. First, the Central and Western China is the main birthplace of the Chinese civilization, giving birth to a rich and colorful national culture; second, the Central and Western China have less developed industrial and commercial bases than Eastern China, so the technology industry cannot be the characteristic capital to promote its development. In Eastern China, the proportion of industrial capital mode is significantly higher than that in other regions, because Eastern China has advanced production technology and the most cutting-edge information collection platform, which provides conditions for the development of traditional light industry and modern information economy industry. In the Northeast China and Western China, the proportion of natural capital mode is significantly higher than that of Central China and Eastern China. In particular, Northeast China is located in Sanjiang Plain, with fertile land, abundant wetland resources and hot spring resources, so there are obvious advantages to use natural capital to develop characteristic industries. Similarly, Western China also has excellent natural endowment, and the modern agriculture, food processing industry and aquaculture are all relatively developed.
5. Discussion

5.1. Development status of characteristic towns in China

The production of space of characteristic town is the reconstruction of the town space by various political, economic and cultural factors such as capital, power and interests, etc. Therefore, the development of characteristic town is a systematic process in which multiple subjects and factors work together. At present, the development of characteristic towns in China mainly has the following features:

(1) Cultural IP has become a bonus item for the development of characteristic towns in China, such as historical and cultural heritage, celebrity IP and so on. "Slow stew" towns are emerging in large numbers, resulting in a lot of cultural replication phenomena caused by blind expansion. Therefore, in the process of the construction of the characteristic cultural town, it is necessary to fully explore the local cultural and historical connotation, deeply integrate the culture with the town, and build a cultural industry chain that fits our own development. On the one hand, the core characteristic cultural products are often the main content of physical space performance, which is the artistic processing and reinterpretation of traditional culture in the process of tourism development; On the other hand, as cultural tourism commodities, iconic cultural symbols are the commercialization of characteristic cultural tourism resources and the regeneration form of national culture. Symbol manufacturing should be based on the local native culture, and pay attention to the diversity of tourist gaze perspective, so as to produce more vivid and interesting, more exclusive and competitive cultural tourism products.

(2) Characteristic town of market demand mode is expected to show its strength. At present, the characteristic towns of market demand mode are all fewer in quantity and proportion, only Western China is relatively more. Because the unique folk tourism resources in Western China can meet the psychological needs of tourists seeking differences. However, with the development of the society, people's aesthetic level will be higher and higher, and the market demand will continue to expand. Therefore, more characteristic towns that seize market opportunities and adapt to market demand will emerge continuously.

(3) The infrastructure construction of characteristic towns needs to be improved, which is also one of the reasons why there are fewer characteristic towns of community capital mode. Of course, this has something to do with the screening conditions of the second batch of national characteristic towns. Look at it another way, this indicates that some "potential towns" with real characteristics but temporarily slow-growing will be cultivated as national characteristic towns. Therefore, the construction of infrastructure should become an important part of the construction of national characteristic towns in the future.

5.2. Development countermeasures of characteristic towns in China

5.2.1. Pay attention to historical and cultural connotation. At present, many small towns pay too much attention to the speed of development and neglect the cultural inheritance and construction. The most obvious manifestation is the sameness of architectural style and town planning, which is lack of the exploration and excavation of history and culture, and also causes the absence of community functions. The construction of characteristic towns should not be copied mechanically, but should be nourished by the historical and humanistic connotation. Historical and cultural connotation is a very important part of production of space, but also the local deposits. Integrating historical and cultural factors into the construction of the town can make the image of the characteristic town more vivid and energetic, avoid becoming an industrial park with only production functions, and thus promote the organic integration of the characteristic industries and cultural deposits of the town.

5.2.2. Explore characteristic industries. Characteristic industry is the main body of characteristic town and the most important part in the process of town planning. Characteristic industries should be based on natural capital, cultural capital, community capital and market demand, that is, determine the
industrial direction of the town according to the manifestation of production of space in the region, such as tourism, classical culture industry, emerging technology industry and so on, which must rely on the support of internal impetus for sustainable development. While considering the manifestation of production of space, the selection of characteristic industries should also pay attention to external factors, and make use of current policy advantages to match local resources, so as to establish industrial brands, seek recognition in the market, and build characteristic industries that can sustain sustainable development.

5.2.3. Avoid stagnation and decline. The production of space is the root of regional characteristic industries. The exploration of production of space should be a long lasting process, during which the connotation and direction of production of space should be reasonably grasped, so as to promote the sustainable development of regional economy. The construction of characteristic towns should always pay attention to the changes in external economic environment, government policies, science and technology, and upgrade industries according to market demand when necessary, so as to avoid stagnation and decline.

5.2.4. Adhere to green development. For the characteristic town of natural capital mode, the protection of ecological environment is the most important. Any environmental degradation, ecological unbalance, or overexploitation of resources will cause the town to lose its internal pillar of development. Of course, the idea of green development is not limited to towns of natural capital mode. In the modern town development, environmental pollution has become an urgent problem to be solved. Industrial development should not only have its own characteristics, but also pay attention to energy conservation and emission reduction, and seek a balance between industrial development and ecological protection. The planning of characteristic towns should get rid of the traditional thinking of simply pursuing economic growth or industrial scale and achieve the balance between industrial development and ecological construction.

6. Conclusions

(1) Through the analysis of the concept of production of space in characteristic towns, this paper summarizes the pattern of manifestation of spatial production in local characteristics as the production of physical space, production of industrial space, production of cultural space, production of community space and production of market space.
(2) The corresponding development modes of characteristic towns are natural capital mode, industrial capital mode, cultural capital mode, community capital mode and market demand mode.
(3) In the two batches of 403 national characteristic towns announced by the ministry of housing and urban-rural development, the quantity of characteristic towns from more to less is Western China, Eastern China, Central China and Northeast China from the perspective of region; the quantity of characteristic towns from more to less is cultural capital mode, natural capital mode, industrial capital mode, market demand mode and community capital mode from the perspective of the five development modes, among which cultural capital mode takes the absolute advantage, while community capital mode has great disparity with other modes.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by Human and Social Science Foundation of Ministry of Education (16YJCZH090) in China.

References

[1] Dalmas, L., Noël, J., Geronimi, V. (2015) Economic evaluation of urban heritage: An inclusive approach under a sustainability perspective. J. Cult. Herit, 16: 681-687.
[2] Xin, J., Song, X., Sha, P. (2019) Comprehensive Evaluation of Ecological Position of Characteristic Towns in China—An Example of Hangzhou's Characteristic Towns. The World of Survey and Research, 9: 3-9.
[3] Fang, Y., Huang, Z., Li, J., Wang, F. (2019) Spatial distribution of characteristic towns and their industrial characteristics in China. Journal of Natural Resources, 34: 1273-1284.
[4] Li, X., Zhu, Y., Hu, J., Shi, P., Liu, J.C. (2015) The cultural space of tourism destination and evolution mechanism. Economic Geography, 35: 174-179.
[5] Wang, Y., Lu, L., Yang, X. (2014) Research progress and enlightenment on tourism towns in foreign countries. Journal of Natural Resources, 12: 2147-2160.
[6] Parlett, G., Fletcher, J., Cooper, C. (1995) The impact of Purism on the Old Town of Edinburgh. Tourism Management, 16: 355-360.
[7] Mayaka, M., John, Akama, J. (2007) S. Systems approach to tourism training and education: The Kenyan case study. Tourism Management, 24: 298-306.
[8] Madrigal R. (1993) A tale of tourism in two cities. Annals of Tourism Research, 20: 336-353.
[9] Costa, C. (2001) An emerging tourism planning paradigm? An comparative analysis between town and tourism planning. International Journal of Tourism Research, 3: 425-441.
[10] Clare, M., Emily, B. (2006) Testing a conceptual model of cultural tourism development in the post-industrial city: A case study of Glasgow. Tourism and Hospitality Research, 6: 32-35.
[11] Smith, M. K. (2004) Seeing a new side to seaside town: Culturally regenerating the English seaside town. International Journal of Tourism Research, 6: 17-28.
[12] Howard, E. (2010) Garden Cities of To-morrow, 1st ed. The Commercial Press, Beijing, China.
[13] Peredo, A. M., James, J. C. (2006) Toward to a theory of community: Based enterprise. Academy of Management Review, 31: 309-328.
[14] Seaton, A. V. (1999) Book towns as tourism developments in peripheral areas. Int. J. Tourism Res, 1: 389-399.
[15] Gorman-Murray, A., Waitt, G., Gibson, C. (2012) Chilling out in ‘cosmopolitan country’: Urban/rural hybridity and the construction of Daylesford as a ‘lesbian and gay rural idyll’. Journal of Rural Studies, 28: 69-79.
[16] Salmona, P., Verardi, D. (2001) The marine protected area of Portofino, Italy: A difficult balance. Ocean & Coastal Management, 44: 39-60.
[17] Fang, H., Lu, J. (2017) A Research on Features of Characteristic Towns in Hangzhou. Urban Planning Forum, 3: 78-84.
[18] Li, P., Cui, D. (2017) Space Transaction Construction of the Cost, Property Rights Characteristic Town’s Allocation and the Space Organization. Urban Studies, 24: 10-17.
[19] Yu, J., Zhang, W., Gao, X. (2017) The Construction of “Townships with Distinct Characteristics” in Zhejiang Province and Its Experiences and Lessons. Zhejiang Social Sciences, 6: 143-150.
[20] Xu, J. (2016) Characteristic towns should have "innovation" function. Zhejiang Social Sciences, 3: 42-43.
[21] Hao, H. (2017) The basic gap and realistic path of building characteristic towns in underdeveloped areas. Theory Monthly, 12: 165-170.
[22] Liu, G., Gao, Y., Wang, F. (2017) Research on the Current Situation and Future development Path of Small Towns with Chinese Characteristics. Journal of Harbin University of Commerce:Social Science Edition, 6: 98-107.
[23] Wang, Z., Xue, K., Zhang, Y., Song, S. (2017) An analysis of the development path of characteristic towns in China. Study and Practice, 4: 23-30.
[24] Zhou, X. (2017) Industrial Transformation and Cultural Rebuilding: the Path of Creation of the Characteristic Town. Social Sciences in Nanjing, 4: 12-19.
[25] Gu, X., Wu, J., Zhang, X. (2017) Research on the operation mechanism and construction path of science and technology support system in characteristic town. Jiangsu Social Sciences, 6: 267-272.

[26] Xie, H., Li, Y., Wei, Y. (2018) Influencing factors and spatial distribution of the characteristic towns in Zhejiang Province. Scientia Geographica Sinica, 38: 1283-1291.

[27] Liu, T. (2015) The construction of characteristic town should avoid administration. Zhejiang Economy, 3: 14.

[28] Song, J., Yang, X., Ye, J. (2016) Analysis on the operation path of financial capital intervening in characteristic town. Housing Industry, 11: 39-41.

[29] Hong, Z., Hong, L. (2016) Operation innovation for crowd-creation platform in characteristic towns. Journal of Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (Philosophy and Social Sciences), 5: 41-47.

[30] Fu, X., Jiang, Y. (2017) Discussion on the development model of characteristic towns in China from the perspective of embeddedness. China Soft Science, 8: 102-111.

[31] Xu, M., Wang, Z. (2016) Cultivation strategy of characteristic town from the perspective of innovation ecosystem—a case study of dream town. Governance Studies, 5: 33-38.

[32] Qian, Q. (2016) Research on sports ecology construction of characteristic town—taking Datang sock town in Zhejiang as an example. Zhejiang Sport Science, 3: 25-28.

[33] Chen, W., Shao, C. (2015) The innovation of the development and operation mode of culture and tourism town in the Internet era—a case study of Wuzhen. Urban Development, 3: 68-70.

[34] Guo, W., Wang, L. (2015) The production of space and identity in cultural heritage tourism destination: a case study of Huishan ancient town in Wuxi, China. Scientia Geographica Sinica, 35: 708-716.

[35] Guo, W., Huang, Z. (2013) A field theory to the production of multi-dimensional space of cultural heritage tourism destination—a case study of Zoucheng ancient town. Human Geography, 2: 117-124.

[36] Guo, W., Huang, Z., Wang, L. (2015) A structural equation model for the empirical study of resident perception of social space in the context of space production at cultural tourist destination: Based on a survey of Ancient Town of Zhouzhuang. Geographical Research, 4: 762-774.

[37] Guo, W. (2014) Connotation, Logical System and Its Reflections of Production of Space on Chinese New Urbanization Practice. Economic Geography, 6: 33-39.

[38] Guo, W., Wang, L., Huang, Z. (2012) Study on the Production of Tourism Space and Residents’ Experience --A Case Study of Zhouzhuang Ancient Water Town in the South of Yangzte River. Tourism Tribune, 4: 28-38.

[39] Zhang, J., Qian, Q., Chen, Y., Jiang, Y. (2016) The Spatial Change of Tao Bao Village in Lirengdong, Guangzhou in the Perspective of Spatial Production. Economic Geography, 1: 120-126.

[40] Ming, Q., Duan, C. (2014) Spatial Reconstruction of Tourism Landscapes of Old Towns in the Theoretical Perspective of Spatial Production. Journal of Yunnan Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 1: 42-48.

[41] Si, L., Wang, W. (2017) Theoretical Framework and Practice Approaches to Production of Space in Sports Town in China. Journal of Shenyang Institute of Physical Education, 5: 53-58.

[42] Lefebvre, H. (1991) The Production of Space, 1st ed. Blackwell, Oxford & Cambridge.

[43] Stake, R.E. (1994) Case Studies. In Handbook of Qualitative Research. Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y., Eds.; Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA; London, UK; New Delhi, India.

[44] Spina, L. D. (2019) Multidimensional Assessment for “Culture-Led” and “Community-Driven” Urban Regeneration as Driver for Trigger Economic Vitality in Urban Historic Centers. Sustainability, 11: 7237.
[45] Szydło, J., Grześ-Bukłaho, J. (2020) Relations between National and Organisational Culture—Case Study. Sustainability, 12: 1522.

[46] Feyers, s., Stein, T., Klizentyte, K. (2020) Bridging Worlds: Utilizing a Multi-Stakeholder Framework to Create Extension–Tourism Partnerships. Sustainability, 12: 80.

[47] Luciane, A. B., Feras, H., Josefin, W. (2020) Reviewing Neighborhood Sustainability Assessment Tools through Critical Heritage Studies. Sustainability, 12: 1605.

[48] Li, T. (2014) Introduction to Tourism, 7th ed. Higher Education Press, Beijing, China.

[49] Zhang, H., Cho, T., Wang, H. (2020) The Impact of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense Incident on Tourism Risk Perception and Attitude Change of Chinese Tourists Traveling to South Korea. Sustainability, 12: 7.

[50] Fanelli, R. M., Romagnoli, L. (2020) Customer Satisfaction with Farmhouse Facilities and Its Implications for the Promotion of Agritourism Resources in Italian Municipalities. Sustainability, 12: 1749.

[51] Wang, Y., Lv, H. (2016) Research on the transformation of physical bookstore from the perspective of spatial production. China Publishing Journal, 8: 23-27.

[52] Bao, J., Chu, Y. (2016) Geography of Tourism, 3rd ed. Higher Education Press, Beijing, China.

[53] Lopez, V., Teufel, J., Gensch, C. (2020) How a Transformation towards Sustainable Community Catering Can Succeed. Sustainability, 12: 101.