



Research on the Coordination Mechanism between Rural Tourism Resource Development and Land Use Conflict — A Case Study of Nan'ao County, Shantou City, Guangdong Province

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Abstract: Taking Nan'ao County, the only island county in Guangdong Province, as the research object, this paper focuses on the conflict between rural tourism resource development and land use. Relying on its unique natural, cultural and fishery resources, Nan'ao County has developed rural tourism through the integrated mode of "agriculture, culture and tourism", driving economic growth. However, due to the limited land resources of the island and the concept of "no industry on the island", spatial competition has arisen between tourism construction, ecological protection and agricultural land. There are also problems such as backward planning, uneven villagers' participation and unbalanced benefit distribution. Based on theories such as stakeholder theory and coupling coordination theory, the paper explores conflict coordination paths, providing reference for island and similar regions to balance sustainable tourism development and resource protection.

Keywords: rural tourism; land use conflict; coordination mechanism

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the continuous advancement of the rural revitalization strategy, rural tourism has gradually become an important lever for promoting rural economic development. More and more rural areas have begun to rely on their own natural resources and cultural characteristics to develop the tourism industry, exploring new paths for the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism. Against this backdrop, island-type villages have increasingly attracted attention due to their unique geographical location and ecological environment. As the only island county in Guangdong Province, Nan'ao County is located at the junction of Guangdong, Fujian, and Taiwan provinces, boasting abundant marine resources, ecological landscapes, and cultural heritage, providing unique advantages for the development of rural tourism. In recent years, the local area has actively promoted the development of the "blue economy", with tourism as the leading industry, gradually forming a development pattern of industrial integration. This development model has not only driven local economic growth but also provided more employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for rural residents.

However, while the development of rural tourism resources is accelerating, land use issues are gradually becoming apparent. Due to the limited area of islands and the preciousness of land resources, there is often spatial competition between tourism facility construction, rural residential land, and ecological protection areas. In the process of promoting tourism projects, some villages have encountered the phenomenon of illegally occupying arable land, forest land or coastal zones, which has caused disturbance to the ecosystem and even triggered conflicts between villagers and development entities. In addition, Nanao County adheres to the development concept of "industry not on the island", which further exacerbates its dependence on limited land resources, making the coordination between tourism development and land use more urgent. How to scientifically promote the development of rural tourism while protecting the ecological environment and utilizing land reasonably has become an urgent practical problem to be solved.

2. Theoretical and practical significance

In this context, exploring the conflicts and coordination mechanisms between rural tourism resource development and land use has important theoretical and practical significance. Taking Nanao County as the research object can not only provide reference for the sustainable development of island villages, but also provide reference for other similar regions in balancing economic development and resource protection. It is particularly important to pay special attention to how South Australia is currently promoting infrastructure projects such as the construction of a fishing port economic zone and a smart parking system. How to optimize land allocation while ensuring people's livelihoods and ecology has become the key to coordinated development[1]. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a thorough analysis of the contradictions that exist in the current development process and explore practical and feasible coordination paths.

From the perspective of resource types, the rural tourism resources in Nan'ao County exhibit diversified characteristics.

In terms of natural landscapes, scenic spots such as Qing'ao Bay, Jinyin Island, and Huanghuashan National Forest Park constitute the core areas of coastal vacation and ecological tourism; The cultural resources include historical relics such as Song Jing, General's Mansion, and ancient fortresses, as well as unique fishing village culture and folk activities. In addition, Nan'ao County has a strong foundation in the fishing industry, and the construction of fishing port economic zones in Yun'ao Central Fishing Port and other places is constantly advancing, providing practical conditions for the integration of fishing and tourism. Some villages, such as Houhuayuan Village, rely on high mountain tea gardens and ecological agriculture to develop rural tourism projects that integrate picking experience, homestay reception, and cultural display, demonstrating strong demonstration effects[2]. These resources not only reflect the uniqueness of regional culture, but also provide possibilities for creating differentiated tourism products.

3. Challenges faced by the development of rural tourism

3.1 Land resources are limited

However, there are also many challenges in the development process. Limited land resources are one of the key factors restricting project expansion. Due to the limited space available for tourism development on Nan'ao Island, which has a total area of approximately 115 square kilometers, some projects overlap with ecological protection areas in their site selection, causing concerns about environmental carrying capacity[3]. In addition, the construction of tourism facilities often requires the occupation of agricultural or forest land, which can easily conflict with the original land use. Despite the government's advocacy for a sustainable development path, there are still situations of lagging planning and inadequate regulation in practical operations. In parallel, the uneven participation of villagers has also brought about conflicts in the distribution of benefits, and some groups have not fully shared the dividends of tourism development, which has affected the overall support of the community.

3.2 Conflicts and disputes arising from land use patterns

Against the backdrop of rapid development of rural tourism, the adjustment of land use as the core production factor inevitably leads to various contradictions and conflicts. As the only island county in Guangdong, Nanao County has relied on its unique marine ecological resources and integrated development path of agriculture, culture, and tourism. In recent years, the intensity of tourism development has been continuously increasing, and the demand for land resources is also growing. This development trend has led to the compression of limited land resources from multiple uses, resulting in different types of utilization conflicts[4]. Among them, the most prominent is the contradiction between ecological protection land and tourism construction. Nanao County adheres to the development concept of "industry not on the island" and emphasizes ecological environment protection. However, some rural tourism projects tend to occupy coastal protective forest belts or ecologically sensitive areas to expand accommodation, catering, and entertainment facilities, which poses a threat to the integrity of the ecosystem.

The development of rural tourism resources has not only promoted local economic growth, but also had a profound impact on land use patterns. The resulting contradictions have gradually emerged, and have brought complex effects to the social structure and economic development of Nan'ao County. On the one hand, the expansion of tourism projects has prompted some agricultural and ecological land to be converted into commercial or service facility land. This transformation cannot be denied as it can improve the economic output efficiency of land in the short term, but it may also lead to problems such as the loss of arable land resources and ecological environment degradation, thereby weakening the foundation of regional sustainable development. In addition, with the acceleration of the construction of facilities such as homestays, parking lots, and scenic spots, the contradiction between supply and demand of construction land has become increasingly prominent. Some villages have illegally occupied forest land and coastal zones, which not only damages the integrity of the natural landscape, but also may cause long-term ecological risks.

3.3 Uneven distribution of benefits

The adjustment of land use is often accompanied by uneven distribution of benefits, which can easily exacerbate internal conflicts within the community. Some farmers obtain short-term benefits from land expropriation or leasing, but lose their original means of production. Without stable alternative livelihoods, their long-term livelihood security will face challenges. In the process of project development, it is common for foreign capital to dominate, and local residents have limited participation, which leads to a weak sense of income from tourism and even a feeling of marginalization. If this situation is not effectively addressed, it may affect social harmony and reduce public trust in government planning.

From an economic perspective, although the tourism industry has brought about job opportunities and service income

growth, the trend towards a single industrial structure has intensified, increasing the dependence of local economies on external tourist markets and reducing their ability to resist risks. Once encountering epidemics, extreme weather or other emergencies, tourism activities are restricted, which will quickly spread to multiple links such as catering, accommodation, transportation, etc., causing overall economic fluctuations. What needs special attention is that excessive commercialization may erode traditional cultural spaces, causing traditional festival customs and architectural styles with local characteristics to gradually lose their authenticity, weakening the cultural appeal of rural areas. The ultimate solution is to reverse the development potential of tourism itself. Therefore, finding a balance between safeguarding people's livelihoods, maintaining ecology, and promoting development has become a key issue for Nan'ao County to meet the rigid demand for rural revitalization.

4. Establishment of coordination mechanism

4.1 Support from theoretical foundation

The construction of coordination mechanisms cannot be separated from the support of theoretical foundations, especially in the context of multiple tensions between rural tourism resource development and land use. It is even more necessary to clarify the relationships between all parties from a multidimensional theoretical perspective. The stakeholder theory provides a relatively systematic analytical framework, which holds that in the process of rural tourism development, different entities such as the government, residents, enterprises, and tourists have their own interests and demands. Without effective coordination mechanisms, it is easy to lead to uneven resource allocation and even intensified conflicts. As the only island county in Guangdong, Nanao County's unique geographical location and ecological sensitivity determine that the rigid demand for development activities is reflected in a balance between protection and utilization. In this process, clarifying the boundaries of rights and responsibilities of each party and establishing a communication and negotiation platform have become important paths to alleviate land use conflicts.

4.2 Research on coupling and coordination relationship

The coupling coordination theory further reveals the interactive logic between rural tourism and public resources. Research shows that there is a significant coupling and coordination relationship between rural public services and rural tourism, which is not a one-way support, but a process of mutual promotion and dynamic evolution. Extending this theory to the field of land use, it can be found that there is a similar coupling mechanism between tourism facility construction, agricultural land preservation, and ecological protection space delineation[5]. For example, in some villages on Nan'ao Island, the integrated development model of agriculture, culture, and tourism not only enables traditional farmland to undertake production functions, but also endows it with new uses such as sightseeing and experience. This functional combination requires the land management system to have higher flexibility and adaptability.

4.3 Research on social participation and benefit distribution mechanism

In the process of rural tourism development, social participation and benefit distribution mechanisms are important links in coordinating resource development and land use conflicts. As the only island county in Guangdong, Nanao County has gradually formed an industrial pattern dominated by tourism industry, relying on its unique ecological and tourism resources. However, behind the rapid development of tourism, how villagers can effectively participate and whether the development dividends can be fairly shared have become key issues affecting sustainable development. In reality, although some villages have introduced tourism projects, ordinary farmers are often marginalized due to information asymmetry and low level of organization, which leads to a lack of identification and even resistance towards development activities. Therefore, it is particularly important to establish a governance model that involves multiple stakeholders.

4.4 The role of community residents

Community residents are not only carriers of rural culture, but also direct beneficiaries or affected individuals of tourism development. Improving their participation ability requires starting from institutional design, such as establishing village level tourism cooperatives or discussion committees, allowing villagers to have a say in project planning, land use decisions, and other aspects. The practice of Nan'ao Houhuayuan Village shows that by promoting the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism, encouraging villagers to participate in homestay operations, local specialty sales, and cultural exhibitions, not only have channels for increasing income been expanded, but also awareness of local resource protection has been enhanced. This bottom-up participation approach helps alleviate the problem of excessive land commercialization caused by foreign capital dominance.

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