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A Study on the Characteristics and Differences of "Scene Construction - Media Dissemination" in Industrial Heritage-based Creative Parks: A Case Study of Representative Examples in the Yangtze River Delta Region, China

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Abstract:
(1) Background: Driven by the wave of post-industrial transformation, cities around the world are undergoing a structural shift from "production-oriented spaces" to "cultural consumption spaces." As an important part of urban stock space, industrial heritage has increasingly become a key topic in urban renewal and cultural regeneration, with research focusing on space production logic, cultural scene construction, and media communication pathways.
(2) Methods: This study follows the theoretical framework of scene theory and spatial media theory. Using representative industrial heritage-based creative parks in the Yangtze River Delta region of China as case studies, it employs field interviews, data analysis, and dimensional evaluations to analyze the characteristics and differences of the "scene construction-media communication" process in these parks.
(3) Conclusion: The transformation of industrial heritage into creative parks reflects a multi-stage, cross-cutting mechanism of "space production-driven – scene construction – space mediaization." It shows that: multiple driving forces lead to the differentiation of spatial production forms; the construction of diverse scene characteristics generates cultural differentiation; and the variations in media paths reinforce the cultural distinctiveness of the parks.
(4) Discussion: Industrial heritage carries local memory and cultural identity, while relying on digital media to realize new social value. Future industrial heritage updates should move beyond a single consumption logic and focus more on multi-stakeholder collaborative governance, historical education, and the revitalization of regional culture to achieve a leap from "cultural products" to "public cultural spaces."

Keywords:
industrial heritage, transformation, cultural creativity, scene construction, mediaization.

1.Introduction

Driven by the wave of post-industrial transformation, cities around the world are undergoing a structural

shift from "production-oriented spaces" to "cultural consumption spaces." Industrial heritage, as an important component of urban stock spaces, is no longer merely a relic of history but has become a cultural scene in regenerative spatial practices. Its value has shifted from traditional historical memory to a complex expression that combines social, cultural, and economic functions. Examples such as the Ruhr Valley in Germany and the Thames Wharf in London show that the redevelopment of industrial heritage not only promotes the multifunctional reconstruction of urban spaces but also contributes to the reconstruction of local cultural identity and social recognition (Carlsen et al., 2003) [1].

In China, with the deepening of the "Culture + Tourism" integration strategy, industrial heritage tourism has gradually moved beyond the path of "simple preservation and superficial display" into a deeper activation phase of "scene creation—narrative participation—media communication." Notable examples include the Beijing 798 Art Zone, Chengdu East Suburb Memory, and Jingdezhen Ceramic Factory, all of which have transformed from "industrial ruins" to "cultural hubs" through spatial design and cultural content reconstruction. In recent years, the deep involvement of media geography and platform communication has made industrial heritage not only a space for "visiting" but also a space for "seeing, photographing, and sharing," emphasizing a new connection between "space-experience-identity-communication" (McQuire, 2008) [2].

However, existing research mainly focuses on spatial morphology updates and visual symbol reconstruction, lacking an integrated analysis of "scene construction—spatial media communication." Therefore, it is necessary to construct a comprehensive research framework that combines cultural scene theory and media geography, systematically revealing the industrial heritage tourism transformation: scene dimension construction—spatial media communication mechanism.

This study focuses on the representative industrial heritage-based creative parks in China's Yangtze River Delta region: Shanghai M50, Nanjing Morning Light 1865, Yixing Tao Er Factory, Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park, and Hefei Hechai 1972. Based on scene theory (Clark, 2010)[3] and media geography (Adams, 2009)(McQuire, 2009) [4][2], this paper aims to construct a "scene dimension construction—spatial media communication mechanism" analysis framework, attempting to address the current gap in the study of the coupling mechanism between "space—culture—media" in industrial heritage research. The framework, based on "space production—scene construction—space mediaization," theoretically breaks through the bottleneck of disciplinary division, forming a multi-dimensional and progressive analysis framework. Practically, it analyzes the spatial production drivers, cultural scene construction, and spatial media communication in the industrial heritage tourism transformation, providing a practical paradigm for the reuse, element construction, and communication mechanisms of similar sites.

2.Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Domestic and International Research Progress

2.1.1 International Research Progress

With the evolution of industrial civilization into a post-industrial society, the transformation of industrial heritage has gradually become an important topic in urban renewal and cultural regeneration. Early studies

focused on the tourism functional positioning of industrial heritage and the path of urban redevelopment. Edwards et al. (1996) emphasized the role of industrial heritage tourism in activating idle spaces and revitalizing local economies, pointing out the significance of community participation in heritage activation[5]. Binns et al. (2003) proposed linking "industrial heritage—ecological restoration—cultural memory" to tourism development, establishing an interactive mechanism between local governments, community organizations, and markets to reshape the local economic foundation[6]. Carlsen (2003) suggested that "mega-events" can serve as "triggers" for urban redevelopment, facilitating the urban renewal of industrial wasteland areas and the rebranding of urban spaces[7].

In recent years, research has tended toward multidimensional integration. Ashworth (2019) further proposed the concept of "dissonant heritage," revealing the multiple narratives within heritage spaces and their identity politics[8]. In the technological realm, CÁTIA S et al. (2023) analyzed the effectiveness of AR/VR technology in immersive industrial heritage experiences from a systematic review perspective, providing theoretical support for the digitalization of space[9]. In terms of spatial communication, McQuire (2016) introduced the theory of "geomedia," highlighting how media technologies are reconstructing the perception structure of urban spaces and modes of public participation[10].

2.1.2 Domestic Research Progress

The domestic academic attention to industrial heritage tourism began around 2000, primarily focusing on development types, resource distribution, mode exploration, and value evaluation. This has remained the main thread of research in industrial heritage tourism to this day. Ding Shu (2005) proposed three development models: "specialized," "comprehensive," and "park-based," emphasizing spatial utilization and resource efficiency[11]. Han Fuwen et al. (2010) focused on the Northeast region, analyzing the relationship between spatial distribution and industrial heritage tourism development, concluding that a point-axis radiation development model should be adopted to connect major industrial cities[12]. Tong Yuquan (2010) constructed an economic benefit evaluation model for industrial heritage, verifying its role in driving local economic development[13]. Zhang Jingjing, et al. (2015) explored the coupling and coordination relationship between the resource value, development, and tourism of industrial heritage[14]. Wang Jing, et al.(2012) discussed the role of urban industrial heritage protection and renewal in the construction of creative cities, emphasizing that the protection and renewal of urban industrial heritage is an important way to build a creative city[15].

After 2020, research gradually shifted towards cultural identity and spatial narrative. Wang Tao, et al. (2021) studied industrial heritage creative parks, incorporating scene theory and applying multiple indicators and models to explore the spatial characteristics and influencing factors of industrial land renewal in Guangzhou[16]. Fu Caiwu, et al.((2021) examined how scene-based consumption reshapes cultural experiences and urban nighttime economy spaces through the case of Changsha's "Super Wenheyou"[17]. Chen Bo et al. (2023) constructed a "physical—spiritual—social" three-dimensional scene evaluation model based on the Taoxichuan Creative Park case, deepening the understanding of industrial heritage cultural scene construction[18].

In addition, domestic scholars have explored aspects of spatial perception, cultural symbols, and localization. Li Xiaoyun et al. (2021) analyzed the historical, technological, cultural, social, and artistic values and practical significance of industrial heritage updates based on the "place-event" theory[19]. Wang Li (2021)

analyzed the symbolic language of industrial heritage, revealing its symbolic significance and proposing protection and reuse strategies centered around cultural symbols[20]. In terms of localization, Fan Xiaojun, et al. (2020) proposed the identification between temporal-spatial context and locality, and its interaction with daily life, to achieve the inheritance of value and meaning[21].

These studies have made in-depth contributions from different perspectives to the transformation and development of industrial heritage into cultural tourism, but a comprehensive, systematic analysis of industrial heritage space transformation, scene construction, and media communication pathways has yet to be fully developed.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Current Research Gaps

Although existing studies have produced a rich body of work from various perspectives on the transformation of industrial heritage into cultural tourism, with the overall research deepening over time, several gaps remain. First, the research dimensions are relatively fragmented, lacking an integrated perspective that combines "space—scene—media." Second, there is a lack of comparative studies across multiple cases to explore the common patterns and differences in the transformation of industrial heritage spaces, scene construction, and media communication mechanisms.

2.2.2 This Study's Contribution

In response to the above gaps, this paper proposes the following innovations: First, in terms of theoretical framework, it integrates cultural scene theory (Clark, 2010) media geography theory (Adams, 2009)[4] (McQuire, 2008)[2], constructing an analysis framework based on "scene construction—spatial mediaization." Second, in terms of methodology, it combines POI big data, field interviews, and quantitative analysis of scene dimensions to deeply analyze the interaction between cultural scenes and media communication logic. Third, in terms of case selection, it compares and contrasts the characteristics of industrial heritage tourism transformation in a dynamically developing region, enriching the research gap in this area.

2.3 Theoretical Foundation and Analytical Framework

2.3.1 Selection and Applicability of Theories

The transformation of industrial heritage into cultural tourism is not a process of spatial reuse based on a single dimension, but the result of the systematic reconstruction of spatial meaning under the interwoven logic of culture, economy, and media. Traditional industrial heritage research often focuses on cultural preservation, architectural renovation, or tourism development, neglecting the dynamic reconstruction of space itself in the context of social relationships, production mechanisms, and communication environments (Hospers, 2002)[22] . In the context of a consumer society, industrial spaces, after transformation, are not only "utilized objects," but also "narrated and transmitted" cultural scenes. Therefore, this study employs space production theory[23], scene theory, and media geography theory to explain the generation mechanism of "space production drivers, scene dimension construction, and media reproduction." This framework not only reveals how industrial heritage undergoes a transformation from abandoned space to cultural capital but also sheds light

on how space undergoes value and meaning rebirth through scene construction and media interaction.

2.3.2 Theoretical Analysis Framework

(1) Transformation Drivers:

The first step in the transformation of industrial heritage spaces begins with the intrinsic transformation of spatial attributes. Traditional industrial spaces are characterized by enclosure, discipline, and functional orientation. However, against the backdrop of industrial restructuring and the rise of consumer society, their physical properties and social roles have changed in parallel. Harvey (2006) shows that urban spaces are constantly being "revalued" under the logic of capitalism, with their original use value gradually giving way to symbolic and cultural value. In the context of tourism, industrial spaces acquire new cultural interpretative logic through the reconstruction of cultural narratives, thus transforming into symbolic places of collective memory (Zukin, 1995)[25] . This phase constitutes the premise of space reproduction and lays the foundation for the intervention of cultural scenes and media communication.

Space is not a neutral container but the product of social practices. Lefebvre's theory of the "triad of space" (Lefebvre, 1991)[23] suggests that the transformation of industrial heritage is a typical process of space reproduction: government policies and development capital redefine the functional and intrinsic meaning of space (spatial representation); cultural activities, exhibitions, and public openness within the park reflect the spatial practices post-transformation. Visitors and residents, through narratives, experiences, and re-communication, participate in the construction of spatial meaning (representational space). This phase connects "physical space attributes" with "human social practice" and serves as the core transition from static space to dynamic social scenes.

(2) Multi-dimensional Scene Construction:

Based on the transformation of spatial attributes and space production, industrial heritage must undergo "scene reconstruction" to carry cultural perceptions in reality. Scene theory emphasizes that urban space is not only a physical structure but also a stage for cultural performances and daily life (Lash & Urry, 1991)[26] . Clark (2001-2003) the city as an "entertainment machine," pointing out that contemporary urban spaces construct cultural scenes that provide sensory immersion and emotional resonance through "dramatic, authentic, and legitimate" elements.

In industrial heritage, scene construction is no longer the passive display of historical symbols but the active embedding of consumer logic to form a multi-dimensional experiential space. Nostalgia, aesthetics, and participation become the key dimensions of this construction, turning the space into an "experiential place" that is "perceptible, narratable, and consumable." This part represents the conversion mechanism between "space and culture" and also serves as the intermediary platform for media communication.

(3) Spatial Mediaization:

Building on scene construction, media logic further propels industrial heritage spaces into a new dimension of "symbolization and communication." Two representative scholars in media geography, McQuire and Adams, have contributed different perspectives: media not only operates within space but also participates in the

construction and meaning-making of space itself (McQuire, 2008)[2] ; the media's role in reshaping spatial perception and geographical cognition is irreplaceable (Adams, 2009)[4] . Xie Qinlu (2018) pointed out that "spatial mediaization" is a spatial reproduction mechanism achieved through digital platforms, image narratives, and user participation[28].

In the process of industrial heritage transformation into cultural tourism, space is visualized and tagged through social media platforms, becoming a communicable cultural landmark. Visitors are no longer merely experiencers but also participants in UGC (user-generated content), with the perceptual path of space expanding from offline to online, and its cultural influence and communicative power growing exponentially due to mediaization. At this point, space is no longer just a geographical entity but also becomes a "cultural scene" and a "city cultural launcher."

The strength of this framework lies in its integration of new Marxist urban theory (Harvey, 1973)[29] , Lefebvre's spatial theory (Lefebvre, 1991)[23] , cultural sociology (Clark, 2003)[27] , and media geography's intersectional perspective (Adams, 2009; McQuire, 2008)[4][2] . It systematically integrates the social transformation, scene reconstruction, and media communication logic of industrial heritage spaces. This framework is applicable for analyzing how numerous industrial heritage spaces in contemporary Chinese cities, undergoing transformation, evolve into new cultural spaces that integrate "cultural memory, scene consumption, and symbol communication." It also provides theoretical support and methodological pathways for understanding spatial practices in contemporary heritage tourism.

3.Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Case Selection

The Shanghai M50, Nanjing Morning Light 1865, Yixing Tao Er Factory, Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park, and Hefei Hechai 1972 are well-known industrial heritage-based creative parks in the Yangtze River Delta region of China. The transformation and development of these parks have spanned from the early 21st century to 2025, reflecting common characteristics in the transformation of industrial heritage under the context of China's social development. These parks also show clear generational differences, making them valuable for empirical research on the spatial production drivers, scene construction dimensions, and spatial media communication mechanisms of industrial heritage-based creative parks.

(1) Shanghai M50 Creative Park: Transformed from the Chunming Woolen Factory (1930s), it retains a cluster of national industrial architecture along the Suzhou River, covering an area of 3.3 hectares with a building area of 41,000 square meters. The park's core business is centered on the native art ecosystem, gathering over 140 galleries, studios, and university art centers from 20 countries. It forms a spontaneous art district with a graffiti culture, becoming one of Shanghai's iconic art landmarks.

(2) Nanjing Chenguang 1865: Built on the industrial remains of the Jinling Machine Manufacturing Bureau (1865), it spans 210,000 square meters and retains 52 historical buildings from the Qing Dynasty to the early years of the People's Republic. The park adopts a "culture + technology + design" model for revitalization, housing 280 enterprises and generating nearly 400 million RMB in annual tax revenue. Its business focus in-

cludes military industry exhibitions, intangible cultural heritage incubation, and a tea culture museum. It has also been selected as a cultural tourism benchmark in Jiangsu's "Hundred Scenes of the Grand Canal."

(3) Yixing Tao Er Factory: Rejuvenated from the Zisha Craft Factory (1980s), with a building area of 64,000 square meters. Its core business revolves around the UCCA Tao Art Museum, designed by Kengo Kuma, and integrates international ceramic artist residencies, Mino ceramic exhibitions, and year-round creative markets. It promotes dialogue between Tao culture and international art, positioning itself as a "young, international, and digital" ceramic ecosystem.

(4) Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park: Built on the Hangzhou Steel Plant (1958), the park covers 55 hectares with a building area of 170,000 square meters. The transformation retains relics such as blast furnaces and coke ovens, and introduces innovations like Asia's deepest indoor diving center, XR theaters, and a rowing base. The park blends digital industries, cultural and artistic activities, and water sports, creating a "super industrial cultural tourism complex."

(5) Hefei Hechai 1972 Creative Park: Developed from a diesel engine factory and a prison site (1972), the park covers 430 acres with a building area of 300,000 square meters. It preserves the prison walls and dome workshops, transformed into an appliance museum and contemporary art gallery, with added office/residential spaces and a 1,595-space smart parking garage. Featuring both "industrial + prison" heritage, it attracts over 10 million visitors annually and has become a regional model for integrating Anhui's intangible cultural heritage and cultural creativity.

3.2 Data Sources and Collection Methods

(1) Platform Data and Policy Documents: From May 2023 to October 2024, Point of Interest (POI) information within the parks was collected using the Amap API, including the names of various institutions and their business types. Additionally, user-generated content (UGC), including text and images, was scraped from platforms such as Dianping, Mafengwo, and Xiaohongshu. Python was used for high-frequency word statistics and image content classification analysis.

(2) Primary Field Research Data: Between May 1, 2023, and October 7, 2024, two rounds of field visits were conducted to the five creative parks. Information was gathered on visitor trajectories, business type distribution, building usage, and more. In total, 124 interviews were conducted, covering park operators, cultural and creative merchants, visitors, and nearby residents. The field research data supplemented the platform data, such as the POI information collected from Amap.

3.3 Research Methods

3.3.1 Interviews and Observation

In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain space-related experiences and value perceptions from both park operators and users. The observation method focused on tracking the behavior patterns and social interactions of visitors within the space, identifying the degree of alignment between spatial data and visitor behavior. By synthesizing interview dialogues and observation notes, a dimensional analysis of spatial function transformation was conducted.

3.3.2 Social Data Mining and Analysis and

Web scraping techniques were used to collect content from Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) platform notes containing keywords such as "M50," "1865," "Tao Er Factory," "Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park," and "Hechai 1972" within the time range of May 2023 to October 2024. A total of 3,827 valid texts and 1,754 images were collected. Python was used for word frequency analysis to identify the most frequent visitor-related keywords, analyze their emotional tendencies, and trace media communication paths, assisting in understanding the role of media in shaping space.

3.3.3 POI Analysis and Expert Scoring

POI (Point of Interest) information within the parks was collected using the Amap API. This data was combined with interview data and used to develop a scene perception indicator system based on the "Cultural Comforts" theory (Table 1). Seven urban planning and tourism research experts were invited to perform itemized evaluations, creating a scoring matrix for subsequent statistical analysis and clustering (Table 2).

4.Empirical Analysis

4.1 Space Production Drivers and Logic

The transformation of industrial heritage spaces follows a progressive logic of triggering driving factors, unfolding spatial practices, constructing spatial representations, and diffusing media communication. In terms of driving factors, China's economic restructuring and industrial upgrading have promoted the development of the cultural and creative industries, while land capital operations have driven the conversion of low-efficiency industrial land into high-value cultural and creative spaces (Harvey, 2006)[24]. Under the guidance of policies and planning, parks have undergone a transformation from closed production spaces to public, multifunctional cultural spaces.

This spatial practice manifests in three aspects: functional transition, openness and sharing, and the integration of scene experiences. This transformation is not simply the accumulation of functions, but rather the formation of a complex structure between industrial logic, publicness, and market mechanisms. Material layout and functional configuration provide the narrative foundation for spatial representation. The park shapes a composite image of "nostalgia—visual consumability—artistry" by retaining industrial symbols and introducing graffiti, installation art, and cultural exhibitions (Zukin, 1995)[25] . Representational spaces are imbued with the attributes of "art + check-in" through social media image communication, facilitating the intertwining of "collective memory" and "modern experience" across generations (McQuire, 2008) [2]. Communication not only strengthens the visual symbols of space and the cultural identity of communities but also promotes the reproduction of space from its physical form to semantic and emotional values (Fuchs, 2019) [30]. This process constitutes a dynamic cycle of "drivers—practice—representation—communication," continuously advancing the production of space.

4.2 Cultural Scene Construction Logic

4.2.1 Sample Selection and Data Sources

It is generally believed that the core concept of "amenity" in scene theory refers to the pleasant utility that goods and services in a specific space bring to consumers. In cultural spaces, amenities are not limited to facilities directly related to culture, such as museums and cinemas, but almost encompass all architectural facilities within urban spaces. Urban space, in essence, is a collection of experiences, symbols, and meanings. Different combinations of amenities create scenes of varying nature (Fu Caiwu, 2021)[17] .

This study uses open-source POI (Point of Interest) data from Amap to capture amenities in the five creative parks and their surrounding areas, combined with offline interviews with key stakeholders. Based on the collection of online POI data and interview data, manual cleaning and organization were carried out, resulting in a final dataset of 695 representative amenities (Table 1).

Table 1. Classification and Quantity Statistics of Representative Amenities in Industrial Heritage Creative Parks (Author's compilation)

Types of Amenities (10)	Shanghai M50	Chenguang 1865	Yixing Tao Er Factory	Hangzhou Steel Plant	Hechai 1972
Food and Beverage Facilities	21	7	31	26	31
Exhibition/Library	18/25000 ㎡	4/6000 ㎡	17/15000 ㎡	12/9000 ㎡	7/12000 ㎡
Entertainment/Experience	8	3	8	21	10
Retail/Lifestyle Aesthetics	15	10	24	34	29
Music/Performing Arts	3	0	3	7	7/9000 ㎡
Creative/Office	25/9000 ㎡	47/45000 ㎡	31/3500 ㎡	42/24000 ㎡	28/18000 ㎡
Media/Wedding/ Photography	3	3	13	19	11
Scenic Facilities	17	11	19	21	12
Thematic Festivals and Events	2	3	5	7	3
Living Support Facilities	3	1	4	5	4
Total:	115	89	155	194	142

Source: Data collected from Amap, with some amenities obtained through on-site surveys; data collection conducted in October 2024.

4.2.2 Scene Dimension Construction and Expert Evaluation

Based on the scientific framework of scene theory, a multi-dimensional evaluation system was constructed using a two-round expert scoring method. This system achieves the transformation of tourism amenities into scene variables through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The specific implementation

process includes three key steps:

(1) Dimension System Construction Step

Rooted in international scene theory paradigms and combined with the characteristics of industrial heritage tourism space production in China, an innovative industrial heritage tourism scene dimension model was constructed. The model was applied to the five cases surveyed in this study, resulting in the classification of amenities. Amenities were categorized into 10 types: dining/light snacks, exhibitions/books, entertainment/experiences, retail/lifestyle aesthetics, music/performances, creative/offices, media/weddings/photography, and life support. This classification ensures comprehensive coverage from production to living functions, reflecting nearly all cultural facilities in a comprehensive cultural tourism community (Table 1).

(2) Expert Evaluation Implementation Step:

A 7-person expert team was formed to conduct two rounds of back-to-back evaluations. In the first round, experts independently assigned scores to 10 categories of amenities based on a 15-dimensional scoring standard. Low scores (0-2.9 points) indicated that the dimensional characteristics were not significant; middle values (3.0-3.9 points) represented neutrality of the dimension; high scores (4.0-5.0 points) reflected prominent dimensional features. After scoring, a bi-directional verification mechanism was implemented: horizontal verification checked the logical consistency of scores across dimensions for each type of amenity, and vertical verification compared the systematic coordination of scores across different types of amenities within each dimension (Table 2).

(3) Data Optimization and Analysis Step:

Discrepancies in the evaluation were identified through standard deviation analysis, and in-depth interviews were conducted to eliminate cognitive differences before implementing secondary confirmation. A consensus matrix of dimension scores was then formed. A weighted average algorithm was used to construct the 15-dimensional scene characteristic model, expressed as:

$$S_{id}=\frac{\sum N_x f_x}{\sum N_x} \tag{1}$$

Where S_{id} represents the scene score of amenity i in dimension d, x is the cultural amenity, N_x is the number of amenities, and f_x is the score of each amenity within the dimension (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Scene Dimension Scores in Hechai 1972 (Author's compilation)

Main Dimension	Subdimension	Definition	Shanghai M50	Chen-Guang 1865	Yixing Tao Er Factory	Hangzhou Steel Plant	Hechai 1972
Spatial Dimension	Authenticity	The original state of industrial equipment and architectural space	4.2	4.3	3.9	4.1	4.0
	Traditionality	The past conventional narratives of old industrial spaces	3.6	3.3	4.1	4.1	3.8
	Everydayness	The everyday narratives of old industrial spaces	3.6	3.1	3.8	4.1	3.7
	Openness	The transformation of space from "confinement" to "openness	3.9	3.2	4.2	4.4	4.3
Cultural Dimension	Locality	The unique attributes and values of this place	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.0
	Nostalgia	The collective memory of industrial heritage	3.9	3.7	3.9	4.4	4.2
	Symbolism	The abstract representation of old industrial space characteristics and collective memory	3.8	3.7	4.1	4.5	4.1
	Aesthetic Dimension	The embodiment of industrial aesthetic value	4.1	3.9	4.5	4.4	4.3
	Entertainment	Various novel and distinctive scenes and entertainment activities	3.7	2.5	4.6	4.5	4.4
	Innovative Atmosphere	Personalized expressions of scenes	4.2	3.8	4.7	4.6	4.5
	Self-expression	Personalized scene expression behaviors	3.9	2.6	4.4	4.5	4.3
Social Dimension	Egalitarianism	Equality in spatial rights and participation opportunities for diverse groups	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.3	4.3
	Public Services	Provision of non-discriminatory public services for diverse groups	3.9	3.3	4.5	4.5	4.3
	Knowledge Dissemination	Functions and attributes of socio-cultural spatial media	4.3	3.9	4.6	4.6	4.2
	Economic Value-added	As cultural capital, possessing the function of cultural production	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.3
Mean			4.0	3.6	4.3	4.4	4.2

4.2.3 Cultural Scene Analysis

(1) Spatial Dimension: Balance Between Authenticity and Openness

All five parks exhibit the common trend of "moving from closed to open" in their spatial transformation, yet there are significant differences in the degree of openness and the level of authenticity preservation. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park and Hefei Hechai 1972 stand out in terms of public open space and accessibility (Openness: 4.4; 4.3). The former achieves open landmark status through a 55-hectare district-level redevelopment, aerial corridors, and multifunctional complexes; the latter optimizes visitor flow with a two-tier pedestrian system and high-capacity parking garage, achieving a high daily carrying capacity. However, in terms of authenticity, Shanghai M50 and Nanjing Morning Light 1865, with their relatively well-preserved historical buildings, have advantages in terms of industrial texture and historical spatial narrative (Authenticity: 4.2; 4.3). Yixing Tao Er Factory, while retaining ceramic production spaces, has somewhat weakened the authentic presentation of the craft process due to the artistic transformation of some factory buildings (Authenticity: 3.9). Overall, there is a certain tension between spatial openness and authenticity: high-intensity commercialization often brings the risk of "hollowing out" spaces.

(2) Cultural Dimension: Interweaving of Nostalgia and Innovation

In terms of cultural narrative construction, each park has formed different combinations between "nostalgia" and "entertainment." Hechai 1972 enhances the nostalgic experience through the appliance museum, old items warehouse, and festival activities, while also introducing handicraft markets and youth-oriented cultural creative brands, creating a "nostalgia + fashion" composite scene (Nostalgia: 4.2; Entertainment: 4.4). Yixing Tao Er Factory, based on the intangible cultural heritage of Zisha craftsmanship, achieves high cultural reproduction through international curating by UCCA and luxury brand events, ranking first in terms of innovation atmosphere and internationalization (Innovation: 4.7). Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park injects contemporary experiences into the industrial heritage with music festivals, XR theaters, and other technological cultural activities, forming a "new industrial aesthetics" scene (Innovation: 4.6; Entertainment: 4.5). Shanghai M50 maintains artistic originality and niche cultural characteristics through galleries and artist studios (Innovation: 4.2; Aesthetics: 4.1). Nanjing Morning Light 1865 blends military industrial heritage exhibitions with a tea culture museum, reflecting a combination of "heavy history + lifestyle culture" (Innovation: 3.8; Self-expression: 2.6). Overall, entertainment and innovation-driven features significantly enhance the attractiveness of the parks, though the systematic presentation of local culture remains insufficient.

(3) Social Dimension: Challenges of Publicness and Spatial Justice

In terms of publicness and equality, all five parks generally adopt a free entry policy and provide shared public platforms, such as festival activities and public reading spaces, demonstrating high levels of social inclusivity. The water sports and public landscape axis at Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park, as well as the open markets and multifunctional plazas at Hefei Hechai 1972 (4.5; 4.3), enhance the city's public cultural service level. However, the risk of "gentrification" has already emerged in some parks: upscale dining, niche art consumption, and high-price brand events may raise the consumption threshold, weakening the participation of the original community residents (Smith, 2002).

In terms of knowledge dissemination, Yixing Tao Er Factory and Nanjing Morning Light 1865, with their museums, art galleries, and intangible cultural heritage spaces, have strong knowledge functions (4.6; 3.9). M50 leads in art exchange and international communication (4.3). Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park expands the boundaries of knowledge dissemination through industry forums and technological exhibitions (4.6).

The economic value-addition function is also significant, especially at Yixing Tao Er Factory and Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park, which stand out in terms of the capital aggregation power resulting from the integration of culture and industry (4.5; 4.7).

Considering all three dimensions, Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park and Yixing Tao Er Factory serve as benchmarks in spatial scale, cultural innovation, and economic stimulation. Hefei Hechai 1972, relying on the "dual heritage" narrative, holds a unique advantage in blending nostalgia with youthfulness. Shanghai M50 and Nanjing Morning Light 1865 excel in authenticity and historical narrative but still have potential in diversifying business models and expanding internationally. In the future, these parks must strike a balance between preserving authenticity and fostering innovative vitality, while also strengthening the systematic presentation of local culture and community participation to address the challenges of gentrification and homogenization.

4.3 Spatial Mediaization Logic and Value

4.3.1 Reconstruction of Spatial Media Attributes

The first step in spatial mediaization is to translate a "physical place" into a "visual and narratable media text" (Adams, 2009)[4] . In the five case studies, the reconstruction of media attributes presents both common mechanisms and differentiated paths. Common mechanisms include: preserving iconic relics (blast furnaces, chimneys, factory facades, prison walls, etc.) as high-recognition visual symbols; encoding "historical objects" into sightseeing/consumption scenes through small-scale interventions (graffiti, installations, exhibitions); and enhancing accessibility through spatial redesign (pedestrian systems, walkways, parking, and public transportation access), thereby increasing the likelihood of social media dissemination. For example, at Hechai 1972, the prison-related elements (walls, sentry posts, prison porches) are deliberately preserved and visually reset as "ruin aesthetics/industrial style" backgrounds, forming high-frequency image dissemination carriers. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park uses large-scale landscapes and walkways to transform industrial relics like blast furnaces into accessible, viewable, and experiential visual focal points.

In terms of differences, Shanghai M50 and Nanjing Morning Light 1865 emphasize "architectural texture and historical continuity" — their transformations are relatively gentle, and visual symbols are often accompanied by more complete historical narratives. Yixing Tao Er Factory combines the "craft production origins" with modern curation/brand events, creating a triple connection of "craft—art—consumption." Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park and Hechai 1972 rely more on large-scale engineering and landscape interventions, making their media attributes simultaneously embody both "landmark" and "entertainment" qualities. Overall, the more the strategy relies on social media dissemination (visualization, tagging, check-in scenes), the higher the visibility, but also the greater the risk of a "superficial" historical presentation (i.e. strong visuals with weak context).

4.3.2 Media Reproduction of Space

Media reproduction is the process through which space transforms from a "designed symbol" to a "repeatedly produced field of meaning," which can be observed through three pathways: platform-based tagging, user-space co-creation of images, and the amplification of meaning reproduction through algorithms and commercial mechanisms.

First, Platform-based Tagging: On social media platforms, labels (such as "industrial style check-in spot," "escape theme," "cultural and creative market") simplify complex contexts into easily shareable keyword clusters. Hechai 1972 and Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park are commonly described in a standardized manner on short video and image-text platforms as the "check-in + performance + market" bundle. This increases the efficiency of space dissemination, but limits the depth of the narrative.

Second, Image Co-Creation Mechanism: Tourists, influencers (KOLs), and official content collectively form an image production network. Users participate in the "reconstruction" of scenes through selfies, filters, and narrative templates. The gallery ecosystem of M50 maintains a high cultural depth due to the continuous image generation by artists and visitors. In contrast, Haicha and Yixing Tao Er Factory quickly accumulate a vast amount of UGC due to festivals and brand events, rapidly forming a visual memory bank.

Third, Amplification Effect of Algorithms and Capital: Platform recommendations, event placements, and commercial sponsorships amplify the visibility of certain scenes (such as luxury brand dinners at Tao Er Factory and music festivals at Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park). This boosts foot traffic and economic value in the short term but may gradually shift the semantic focus of the space toward "consumer labels" (where image dominance replaces semantic dominance). In this process, spaces lacking deep context (such as craft processes, labor memory, or the history of prison systems) are easily "superficialized," creating an imbalance where "image landscapes" prioritize over "historical narratives" (McQuire, 2008) [2].

4.3.3 New Urban Cultural Landmarks

Under the logic of the media, the creation of cultural landmarks is no longer solely based on size or prestige, but on the ability to be "watched, spread, and remembered" (Urry, 2002) [31]. The five case studies present different paths and outcomes in becoming "new landmarks." Yixing Tao Er Factory, through collaborations with UCCA and international brands, quickly established a cross-regional cultural discourse power. Shanghai M50, with its long-established art ecosystem, has formed a stable international communication system. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park, through government resources and large-scale events, successfully integrates "industrial landscape—contemporary experience," becoming a regional model. Hechai 1972, with its "differentiated narrative" (prison + industrial), gained high recognizability in local media and public imagination, bringing significant short-term traffic and economic benefits (such as peak festival traffic). However, its sustainable landmark status depends on whether it can transform the temporary popularity into long-term cultural capital (i.e., transitioning from "event-driven" to "institutionalized cultural expression").

Overall evaluation should focus on three indicators: recognizability (visual/semiotic uniqueness), communicability (platform and network dynamics), and the ability to embed into urban identity and governance structures (e.g., integration with city branding and cultural policies) (McQuire, 2016)[10] . If reliance is

placed solely on visual media dissemination while neglecting the development of a deeper cultural ecosystem, the so-called "landmark" may become a short-term social media sensation, thereby weakening historical authenticity and community attachment.

5.Findings and Discussion

5.1 Research Findings

This study focuses on five well-known industrial heritage-based creative parks in the Yangtze River Delta region of China. By integrating space production theory, cultural scene theory, and media geography theory, it explores the spatial production logic, scene construction, and mediaization mechanisms in the process of their transformation into cultural tourism destinations. The research reveals that this transformation process follows a multi-stage, cross-cutting advancement mechanism consisting of "space production-driven—scene construction—space mediaization." The study also highlights the following points: diverse driving mechanisms lead to the differentiation of spatial production forms; the construction of diverse scene characteristics generates cultural differentiation; and differences in mediaization paths reinforce the cultural distinctiveness of the parks.

(1) Common Characteristics of the Industrial Heritage Cultural Tourism Transformation Path

Through a comprehensive study of the transformations in the five cases, four steps can be summarized for the transformation of industrial heritage into cultural tourism:

1)The transformation of spatial attributes as a prerequisite, influenced by historical heritage traits and urban planning policies.

2)The connection of space production between physical space and social practices, driven by capital, policies, and cultural demands.

3)The construction of multiple scenes as an intermediary platform for cultural expression and mediaization.

4)The mediaization of space reproduction, transforming space into a cultural symbol and dissemination node, which in turn drives space reuse.

The differences in driving mechanisms, cultural integration, and mediaization paths across the five cases reflect generational evolution trends: from the spontaneous artistic model (M50), to the integration of culture, business, and tourism (Morning Light 1865), to the digitally empowered super-integrated model (Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park, Yixing Tao Er Factory, Hechai 1972).

(2) Diverse Driving Mechanisms Lead to Differentiation in Spatial Production Forms

The spatial transformation in all five cases was driven by multiple factors such as industrial upgrading, land capital operations, and cultural consumption demands, resulting in a transition from "closed production" to "open, composite spaces." M50 and Morning Light 1865 maintained the authenticity of their buildings and historical texture, achieving space reuse through gradual updates. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park and Hechai 1972 significantly enhanced openness and accessibility through large-scale landscaping and transportation

system optimization. Yixing Tao Er Factory, relying on intangible heritage craftsmanship and contemporary curation, built dual channels for cultural consumption and international communication. Such space production is not just a physical update but also a reconstruction of social relationships and publicness, validating the theoretical claims of "social production of space" and "capital-driven space restoration" (Harvey, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991) [24][23].

(3) Construction of Diverse Scene Characteristics Stimulates Cultural Differentiation

Cultural scenes in the five parks generally exhibit composite features of nostalgia, entertainment, and innovation (Clark et al., 2010) [3]. M50 maintains its artistic originality through artist studios and galleries. Yixing Tao Er Factory collaborates with luxury brands and international curators while incorporating intangible heritage craftsmanship to form a cultural highland with international appeal. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park strengthens new industrial aesthetics through music festivals, XR theaters, and sports events. Hechai 1972 integrates prison symbols with youth culture elements to create a differentiated narrative. Morning Light 1865 overlays lifestyle culture on top of its military industrial heritage. Although scene construction has significantly enhanced cultural appeal, some cases show a lack of local cultural expression and a superficial treatment of industrial memory narratives, confirming Zukin's (1995) of the tendencies towards "commodification of cultural spaces" and "visual consumerism."

(4) Differences in Mediaization Paths Reinforce the Cultural Distinctiveness of the Parks

The involvement of digital platforms and social media has transformed space from being merely a physical container to becoming a "media stage" that is watched, spread, and re-coded (Adams, 2009; McQuire, 2008) [4][2]. All five parks rely on high-recognition visual symbols to achieve tagged dissemination, forming a visual logic of "performative—individualized—communicable." Yixing Tao Er Factory and M50 have built a stable cultural depth through continuous artistic production. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park and Hechai 1972 generate short-term traffic surges through large-scale events and festivals. Morning Light 1865, on the other hand, relies more on local culture and historical exhibitions to construct identity. Mediaization paths have strengthened the parks' recognizability and regional cultural influence, but they also bring the risk of "superficialization," where the commodification of visual symbols crowds out the space for conveying deeper historical context.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

(1) Integration of Space Production, Cultural Scene, and Media Geography Theories

By integrating New Marxist urbanism (Harvey, 2006) , space production theory (Lefebvre, 1991) , cultural scene theory (Clark, 2010) , and media geography theory (Adams, 2009; McQuire, 2008) , this study breaks through the disciplinary boundaries that have hindered heritage research, forming a multi-dimensional and progressive analytical framework. This contributes to enriching the theoretical pathways in cultural tourism space research.

(2) Application of Cultural Scene Theory in the Context of Chinese Heritage

Building on Clark's cultural scene dimensions (Clark, 2010) , and combining the triple system of "scene

amenities—spatial dimensions—media characteristics," this study optimizes a scene evaluation model suitable for the practice of industrial heritage transformation in China, advancing the localization and empirical research of cultural scene theory.

(3) Deepening the Perspective of Heritage Mediaization Research

This study emphasizes the key role of media platforms, user-generated content (UGC), and spatial visual symbols in shaping cultural identity and the construction of new urban culture. It responds to the theoretical proposition of "media as place" (Adams, 2009) and addresses the current gap in research on the mediaization of space in industrial heritage tourism in China.

5.3 Practical Discussion

5.3.1 Overall Limitations

Although industrial heritage-based creative parks in the Yangtze River Delta region of China have shown active performance in spatial renewal, cultural scene construction, and media dissemination, achieving significant economic and social benefits, a comprehensive comparison of their spatial, cultural, and social dimensions reveals the following limitations:

(1) Tension Between Authenticity Preservation and Commercial Utilization

Most parks emphasize high-recognition visual symbols and consumable scenes during their transformation process, leading to insufficient authenticity. While M50 and Morning Light 1865 have preserved architectural textures, some historical craft processes and living scenes are missing in the interior functional renovations. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park and Hechai 1972, with their large-scale landscaping and event-driven approaches, have enhanced entertainment and consumption functions but weakened the display of industrial labor memory and deep institutional culture.

(2) Insufficient Depth in Cultural Narratives and Weakening of Local Identity

Although the parks perform well in cultural dimensions such as nostalgia, entertainment, and innovation, the systematic integration of local culture and regional memory is generally insufficient. Yixing Tao Er Factory achieves a cross-boundary integration between intangible heritage ceramics and international curating, but the continuous narrative of local ceramic history remains limited. Morning Light 1865, while bearing military industrial history, lacks in youth-oriented and immersive scene creation. Hechai 1972's translation of prison symbols often remains superficial and lacks deeper historical education functions. The absence of continuous integration of local culture has led to a trend of "weakening regional identity" in some parks.

(3) Insufficient Social Participation and Cultural Governance Mechanisms

The management and operation of most parks are dominated by the government or state-owned enterprises, with limited market-driven and community-driven participation. Citizen communities, artist organizations, and local residents have limited institutional involvement in park-related planning, public curating, and cultural decision-making, making it difficult to achieve genuine "cultural co-creation." This "single leadership—consumer-driven" structural model makes the parks more inclined to output cultural products rather than

promote cultural co-creation, leading to a tendency toward homogenization and reliance on traffic in the long-term development process.

(4) Risk of "Superficial Symbolization" in Mediaization Paths

Social media dissemination has greatly increased the visibility of the parks, but it has also introduced a tendency toward the commodification of symbols. A large amount of UGC (user-generated content) focuses on high-recognition backgrounds and short-term events, lacking a deep representation of the parks' history and cultural context. This "tagged space" driven by algorithmic recommendations increases traffic but risks weakening the cultural connotations, reducing the space's meaning to a short-term visual consumer good.

In summary, the main challenges facing industrial heritage-based creative parks in the Yangtze River Delta region of China lie in how to preserve historical authenticity while deepening local cultural narratives, improving the governance mechanisms for multi-stakeholder participation, and avoiding excessive "superficialization" in the mediaization process, so as to achieve the sustainable and collaborative development of spatial, cultural, and social values.

5.3.2 Policy Recommendations

(1) Balance Between Authenticity Preservation and Commercial Utilization

Adhere to the principle of "protection as the primary goal, reasonable utilization" (MCTPRC, 2021)[32]. Establish a zoning utilization model of "core preservation—peripheral adaptation," where key industrial facilities, craft processes, or typical institutional spaces are listed as priority protection units. Their historical functional context can be maintained through on-site explanations and interactive performances. Peripheral areas may introduce cultural and creative consumption businesses to meet economic operational needs. A reference case is the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in the Ruhr Valley, Germany, where the main factory building is preserved as a World Heritage Museum, while the surrounding area integrates conference spaces, design exhibitions, and commercial functions, balancing authenticity with sustainable operation (Zhang, 2018)[33] .

(2) Strengthen the Depth of Cultural Narratives and Locality

In response to the policy direction of "living heritage transmission and integration into the public cultural service system" (SCPRC, 2008)[34], it is recommended to incorporate local history and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) resources into scene planning, forming permanent cultural education modules rather than relying solely on one-off activities. For instance, setting up "oral history workshops" and "local artisan residency programs" would enable local communities to engage in long-term content production, strengthening the locality and emotional depth of cultural scenes. An example of this is Yixing Tao Er Factory's combination of international residencies and intangible heritage, which through ongoing curation and craftsmanship experiences, not only preserves local cultural elements but also attracts international audiences.

(3) Implementing the Concept of "Co-construction, Co-governance, and Sharing"

The concept of "co-construction, co-governance, and sharing" enhances residents' sense of identity and participation (CCCPCSC, 2021)[35]. It is recommended to introduce a "multi-party collaboration" governance

model, establishing a mechanism for issue negotiation and co-creation of activities involving the government, operators, community residents, cultural institutions, academic teams, etc., with the proceeds from funds or operations reinvested into the community. The experience of the Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse in Japan shows that the involvement of community self-governance organizations in cultural activity planning helps achieve a balance between commercialization and publicness.

(4) Increasing the Depth of Narrative Content and Upholding Educational Missions

Implementing the direction of "improving content quality and providing deeper cultural offerings" (SCNPC, 2023) [36]. It is recommended to develop a layered strategy for disseminating content: while maintaining high-recognition visual symbols, increase the proportion of deep narrative content in the dissemination matrix. This can include long-form documentary videos, online extended versions of thematic exhibitions, and interactive guided tours, thus transforming traffic into cultural cognition. Hangzhou Steel Plant Site Park can refer to the approach of the Tate Modern in the UK, combining major exhibitions with multimedia narratives, maintaining continuous education and cultural dissemination online to prevent the dilution of space meaning by short-term traffic.

6.Conclusion and Prospect

In this study, we explored the transformation process of industrial heritage-based creative parks in the Yangtze River Delta region of China, focusing particularly on their "scene construction—media dissemination" characteristics and mechanisms. Through the analysis of five representative cases in the Yangtze River Delta, we revealed a multi-stage, cross-cutting advancement mechanism composed of "space production-driven—scene construction—space mediaization" in the industrial heritage transformation process. The study shows that diverse driving mechanisms lead to the differentiation of spatial production forms, the construction of multiple scene characteristics fosters cultural differentiation, and the differences in mediaization paths reinforce the parks' cultural distinctiveness. The study also identified common limitations across the five cases: weaknesses in multi-stakeholder participation, deep integration of local culture, and the enhancement of educational functions, which could result in the risks of symbol commodification and superficial landscape development.

However, there are some limitations in the study. First, this research primarily focuses on five creative parks in the Yangtze River Delta region. Although these parks are somewhat representative of their transformation processes, the generalizability and applicability of the conclusions need to be verified through more case comparisons. Second, despite incorporating multidimensional scene evaluation and media dissemination analysis, there is room for further expansion in terms of methodology, especially through comparative studies of cross-regional, multi-type cases and further development of multimodal quantitative analysis.

Overall, the contribution of this study lies in proposing and validating the theoretical framework for the transformation of industrial heritage creative parks, especially the integration of scene theory and media geography. It provides valuable theoretical support for the cultural tourism transformation of industrial heritage and offers a systematic analytical method for spatial production, scene construction, and media dissemination paths in practical cases. However, future research can further refine this framework, particularly by validat-

ing it in more diverse regions and contexts, and focusing on how to balance the tension between historical authenticity preservation and cultural innovation to achieve more sustainable cultural regeneration and social participation mechanisms.

Author Contributions

(1)Conceptualization: 1, 2; Methodology: 1, 2; Software: 1, 2; Validation: 1, 2;

(2)Formal analysis: 1, 2; Investigation: 1,2; Resources: 1,2; Data Curation: 1,2;

(3)Writing – original draft preparation:1, 2; Writing – review and editing:1; Visualization: 1; Supervision: 1;

(4)Project administration: 1; Funding acquisition: 1.

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