

EMPIRICAL ARTICLE

Navigating Institutional Logics: Balancing Cultural Preservation and Economic Sustainability in ethnic minority settlements

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Abstract

Purpose - This study investigates how traditional communities balance cultural preservation and economic sustainability amid modernization pressures. Using the Dulong Jiang carpet weaving industry in Yunnan Province, China, as a case study, it explores the mechanisms through which conflicting institutional logics coexist and adapt.

Design/Methodology/Approach - The study employs an ethnographic case study approach, integrating participant observation, semi-structured interviews with community members, and archival analysis. Data were analyzed through the lens of institutional logics, focusing on principles, assumptions, identities, and domains.

Findings - The research identifies three mechanisms—pulling down, relating, and aligning—that enable the community to navigate tensions between cultural preservation and economic sustainability. While cultural preservation logic emphasizes safeguarding traditional weaving as a core identity, economic sustainability logic drives the integration of modern tools and platforms like Taobao for market engagement. The findings highlight generational dynamics, sustainability challenges, and the innovative strategies employed to balance these logics.

Practical Implications - The study offers actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners. Strategies such as integrating traditional crafts into educational programs, promoting fair trade practices, and facilitating digital marketing training can support both cultural preservation and economic sustainability. Community-led resource management and environmental education are recommended to address ecological challenges.

Originality/Value - This study extends the institutional logics framework to cultural anthropology, showcasing how traditional crafts navigate modernization pressures. By analyzing the interplay of cultural and economic logics in a specific community, the study enriches theoretical discourse and provides a model for balancing heritage and progress in traditional industries.

KEYWORDS

Institutional Logics, Cultural Preservation, Economic Sustainability, Traditional Crafts, Modernization, Ethnography, Sustainability Challenges, Hybrid Strategies, Generational Dynamics.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Institutionalist theory in anthropology extends beyond the binaries of tradition versus modernity or pre-capitalist versus capitalist societies (Latour 1983). Contemporary scholars advocate for a pluralistic understanding of norms and institutions, recognizing the coexistence of multiple logics within complex social systems (Thornton et al. 2012).

Recent research has examined the coexistence and hybridization of multiple institutional logics in various contexts (Lissillour and Rodríguez-Escobar 2020, Wang 2024). For instance, a study on the integration of B Corp courses within business school curricula revealed how industry, social institution, and sustainability logics shape course framing and implementation (Lähteenkorva 2024). Additionally, research on sustainability practices in high-hazard organizations across different countries has highlighted how conflicting institutional logics influence localized understandings of sustainability (Milosevic et al. 2023).

However, there is a paucity of studies that specifically investigate how traditional cultural practices, such as indigenous crafts, navigate the tensions between cultural preservation and economic sustainability through the lens of institutional logics. This research addresses this gap by integrating insights from institutional logics (Thornton et al. 2012) and the embeddedness paradigm, thus positioning ethnic minority settlements within a framework that acknowledges the interplay between cultural values and market imperatives. It challenges the notion of static cultural practices, instead highlighting the dynamic negotiations that occur as communities strive to balance preservation with adaptation.

In the spirit of indigenous scholarship (Rodriguez-Escobar 2024), by examining the Dulong Jiang carpet weaving industry, this study contributes to the understanding of the hybridization of logics (how cultural preservation and economic sustainability logics interact, conflict, or blend in the context of traditional crafts) and community dynamics (the role of community identity and agency in negotiating these institutional logics).

This research enhances the theoretical framework of institutional logics by applying it to the field of cultural anthropology in the context of traditional craft industries. To frame the study, the following research questions are posed:

- What institutional logics are prevalent in the context of ethnic minority settlements?
- In what ways do community identity and agency mediate the tensions between these logics?
- What strategies do traditional communities employ to navigate the pressures of modernization while maintaining cultural integrity?

By addressing these questions, this research not only enriches theoretical discourse but also provides practical guidance for balancing heritage and progress in traditional industries.

This article is structured as follows: First, we provide a theoretical background exploring institutionalist theory and its application to cultural practices. Next, we detail the methodology employed in this study, followed by an in-depth case analysis of the Dulong Jiang carpet weaving industry. We then discuss the findings, highlighting the interplay of institutional logics and the mechanisms at work, before concluding with theoretical contributions, practical implications, and suggestions for future research.

2 | INSTITUTIONALIST THEORY IN ANTHROPOLOGY: BRIDGING EMBEDDEDNESS AND INFORMAL NORMS

Institutionalist theory, a cornerstone in understanding the dynamics between culture, economics, and society, has evolved significantly in anthropology to study the interplay of embeddedness and informal norms.

The concept of embeddedness, rooted in the work of Polanyi (1944), underscores the notion that economic activities are not autonomous but deeply enmeshed within social, cultural, and political systems. Polanyi's critique of market-driven economies highlighted the socio-cultural contexts that shape economic behaviors, a perspective further expanded by anthropologists like Bohannan and Dalton (1962). These scholars emphasized that economic systems in non-Western societies are regulated by non-economic mechanisms, challenging the universality of market-centric paradigms.

In anthropology, embeddedness has been explored through diverse lenses. Marxist economic anthropology, particularly in Africanist studies (e.g., Meillassoux (1964), framed economic activities as entrenched in relations of domination and production. Conversely, culturalist perspectives, such as Foster (1965)'s "image of the limited good," posited that shared cognitive frameworks in peasant societies shaped economic behaviors. While these perspectives differ, both highlight the economy's reliance on broader social and cultural systems.

The new institutional economics (NIE), as articulated by scholars like Ostrom (1990), introduced a nuanced understanding of informal institutions—socially transmitted norms, customs, and conventions that govern human interactions. Unlike formal rules enforced by legal systems, informal institutions are deeply embedded in cultural practices, reflecting shared values and collective identities.

Anthropologists have critiqued the reductive application of informal institutions in NIE, arguing that such norms are dynamic, contested, and heterogeneous (Olivier de Sardan 2013). The anthropology of public action, for instance, examines how informal norms mediate power asymmetries and collective action, offering a more contextually grounded approach (Olivier de Sardan 2013). This aligns with the broader institutionalist agenda of understanding the mechanisms through which norms and practices are negotiated within social arenas.

This theoretical synthesis underscores the potential for dialogue between anthropology and institutionalism, particularly in addressing questions of cultural preservation, sustainability, and economic transformation. As Olivier de Sardan (2013) notes, such dialogue requires empirical rigor and a commitment to examining the pluralism and contradictions inherent in social life. By adopting this perspective, the study contributes to a richer understanding of how institutional logics shape the lived realities of communities navigating the pressures of modernization.

2.1 | Institutional Logics: A Framework for Understanding Social and Organizational Practices

Institutional logics are fundamental to understanding how individuals and organizations navigate complex and often contradictory social environments (Lissillour 2021). This section provides a detailed explanation of institutional logics, drawing on recent literature and empirical insights to contextualize their application in anthropology studies.

Institutional logics are the socially constructed patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their social reality (Thornton et al. 2012). They serve as frameworks through which actors interpret and organize their behaviors within institutional contexts, linking micro-level actions to macro-level structures.

Thornton et al. (2012) identify institutional logics as templates that guide behavior and decision-making. These templates often encompass competing principles and priorities, requiring actors to navigate tensions between various societal domains such as the market, state, family, religion, and community. For instance, the logics of the market prioritize profitability and efficiency, while state logics emphasize regulation and collective welfare. These contrasting principles often co-exist, creating challenges and opportunities for individuals and organizations.

Building on Berente and Yoo (2012), institutional logics can be analyzed through four dimensions:

- **Principles:** The core values and organizing principles that underpin the logic and guide activities. For instance, managerial rationalism emphasizes efficiency and accountability, while scientific professionalism prioritizes innovation and technical rigor.
- **Assumptions:** The causal beliefs about how activities should be conducted to achieve desired outcomes. Market logic assumes profit maximization, while state logic assumes the importance of regulatory compliance and public welfare.
- **Identity:** How actors see themselves in relation to the institutional logic. For example, professionals align with expertise and ethics, while entrepreneurs may identify with innovation and risk-taking.
- **Domain:** The scope or field where the institutional logic operates, such as markets, organizations, or communities.

This multidimensional approach provides an analytical lens for analyzing how institutional logics shape individual and organizational behavior across varied contexts.

Institutional logics offer a valuable framework for anthropological inquiry, particularly in examining how cultural, economic, and political domains intersect. By focusing on the interplay of logics, anthropologists can explore:

- **Cultural Embeddedness:** How cultural norms and values shape institutional logics and their manifestations in different contexts.
- **Agency and Structure:** The ways individuals negotiate competing logics to assert agency within institutional constraints.
- **Sustainability and Resilience:** The role of institutional logics in fostering adaptive responses to environmental and social challenges.

2.2 | Mechanisms of Interaction Between Logics

Milosevic et al. (2023) identify three mechanisms through which institutional logics interact and shape practices:

- **Pulling Down:** Refers to selectively drawing elements from different institutional logics to create localized and contextually relevant practices. For example, in high-hazard organizations, employees may incorporate elements of state and organizational logics to balance regulatory compliance and operational safety.
- **Relating:** Refers to connecting practices to broader societal or organizational objectives, embedding elements of institutional logics into actions. This mechanism underscores the importance of aligning individual behaviors with collective goals, such as sustainability or community well-being.
- **Aligning:** Refers to reconciling conflicting logics by finding congruence between personal or professional identities and the values embedded in institutional logics. This process often manifests in sustainability practices, where professionals integrate ethical considerations into their technical roles.

Institutional logics provide a robust framework for analyzing the complex dynamics of social and organizational practices. By elucidating the mechanisms through which logics interact and shape individual behaviors, this framework bridges macro-structural theories and micro-level agency, offering nuanced insights into cultural and economic phenomena. As this study demonstrates, understanding institutional logics is essential for addressing global challenges such as sustainability, cultural preservation, and economic development.

3 | METHODOLOGY

This study employed a case study methodology to explore the interplay of institutional logics in the context of cultural preservation and economic sustainability in Dulong Jiang, a village in Yunnan Province, China. The case study approach was chosen for its ability to provide in-depth insights into the complex social and organizational dynamics within a specific context (Yin 2018).

3.1 | Data Analysis

Data collection methods included participant observation (see Table 1), ethnographic fieldwork (see Table 2), semi-structured interviews (see Table 3), and the analysis of archival documents (see Table 4). Observations and fieldwork were conducted over a seven-day period in July 2024, during which researchers engaged with local community members, artisans, and cultural sites. These methods enabled the researchers to gain a holistic understanding of the local context and capture the lived experiences of participants (Emerson et al. 2011, Spradley 1980).

The analysis was guided by the four dimensions of institutional logics: principles, assumptions, identity, and domain (Thornton et al. 2012, Berente and Yoo 2012). This framework allowed the researchers to examine the logics of cultural preservation and economic sustainability that emerged from the data.

TABLE 1 Details of Participant Observation

Aspect	Details
Setting	Dulong Jiang, one county of Yunnan, focusing on weaving handicrafts in the village.
Duration	Daily observations over seven days in July 2024.
Role of Researcher	Researchers participated as a group of students, engaging in weaving activities and cultural exploration.
Activities Observed	Activities included weaving carpets, visiting the Dulong Jiang Museum, interviewing artisans, and observing community life.
Data Collected	Field notes, photographs, videos, and informal conversations.
Ethical Considerations	Steps were taken to respect privacy and cultural sensitivity, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring anonymity where necessary (?).

TABLE 2 Details of Ethnographic Fieldwork

Aspect	Details
Research Site(s)	Dulong Jiang village, museums, schools, and community spaces.
Fieldwork Duration	One week during July 2024.
Research Objectives	To explore traditional weaving practices, community dynamics, and the interplay of cultural preservation and economic development.
Methods Used	Participant observation, informal interviews, cultural event participation, and artifact collection.
Challenges Encountered	Language barriers were addressed through translation support.
Documentation Tools	Field notebooks, audio recorders, cameras, and mapping tools.

To triangulate our interpretation of the case (Yin 2018), data from participant observation, ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and archival documents were coded and analyzed thematically, ensuring alignment with the research objectives and theoretical framework (Braun and Clarke 2006).

4 | CASE STUDY: DULONG JIANG—INTERPLAY OF INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS IN CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

4.1 | Introduction to the Case

Dulong Jiang, located in the remote northwestern part of Yunnan Province, China, represents a unique intersection of cultural heritage and ecological significance. Nestled in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the region is known for its pristine environment, high-altitude biodiversity,

TABLE 3 Details of Interviews

Aspect	Details
Number of Participants	42 community members, 21 artisans, and 2 local police officials.
Sampling Method	Purposeful sampling of individuals knowledgeable about traditional practices and community dynamics (Patton 2015).
Interview Type	Semi-structured, in-depth interviews and informal conversations.
Interview Focus Areas	Topics included weaving traditions, economic challenges, generational perspectives, and cultural preservation.
Language and Translation	Conducted in the local Dulong language with Mandarin translation.
Data Collection Tools	Audio recorders, field notes, and transcription software.

TABLE 4 Details of Documents and Archives

Aspect	Details
Source Type	Government reports, museum records, and historical texts.
Purpose	To understand historical weaving practices and trace the evolution of cultural traditions.
Scope	Documents such as the "Dulong Jiang Development Reports, 2022-2024."
Access Method	Accessed through public archives, museum visits, and personal contacts.
Limitations	Challenges in verifying the authenticity and comprehensiveness of some documents.

TABLE 5 Themes and Definitions

Theme	Definition
Principles	The core values or organizing principles that guide actions within a logic.
Assumptions	The underlying beliefs about causal relationships or norms that underpin practices.
Identity	The roles or identities that individuals adopt within the framework of the logic.
Domain	The specific areas of activity or practice where the logic is most applicable.

and rich traditions upheld by the Dulong ethnic community. Historically isolated due to its challenging terrain, the area has recently undergone significant transformations, particularly with improved road infrastructure facilitating access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

At the heart of Dulong Jiang's cultural identity lies the traditional craft of carpet weaving. This practice, deeply rooted in the community's heritage, serves both as a symbol of cultural preservation and as a vehicle for economic development. However, the rapid modernization and increasing pressures from eco-tourism have created a complex interplay of institutional logics that shape the community's practices and priorities. The introduction of road infrastructure has enabled the sale of handwoven carpets beyond local markets, including online platforms like Taobao. This economic integration has supported livelihoods but has also introduced market-driven challenges, such as the pressure to produce at scale and adapt to modern designs.

Moreover, the community continues to balance its reliance on local natural resources for raw materials with the need for environmental conservation. Efforts to teach Mandarin to younger generations and facilitate their integration into broader socio-economic systems highlight the tensions between modernization and cultural preservation.

4.2 | Institutional Logics in Dulong Jiang

The interplay of institutional logics of cultural preservation and economic sustainability in Dulong Jiang is analyzed through the four dimensions of institutional logics: principles, assumptions, identity, and domain.

4.2.1 | Cultural Preservation Logic

The cultural preservation logic in Dulong Jiang is deeply rooted in the community's commitment to safeguarding its heritage. This logic governs traditional practices, particularly carpet weaving, as a means of maintaining cultural identity and social cohesion. Artisans in the community, especially women, see themselves as custodians of this tradition, passing down knowledge and techniques through generations. Local cultural sites, such as the Dulong Jiang Museum, play a pivotal role in teaching and celebrating these practices (see Table 6).

4.2.2 | Economic Sustainability Logic

In contrast, the economic sustainability logic emphasizes the integration of traditional crafts into broader market systems to improve livelihoods. This logic prioritizes profitability, efficiency, and adaptation to consumer demands. The younger generation, along with entrepreneurial artisans, view their craft as a tool for economic advancement. Platforms like Taobao have become critical for extending the reach of Dulong carpets, facilitating sales to national and international markets (see Table 7).

4.3 | Mechanisms of Interaction Between Logics

Pulling Down

Pulling Down refers to selectively drawing elements from different institutional logics to create localized and contextually relevant practices. In Dulong Jiang, the community maintains traditional weaving techniques (cultural preservation logic) while integrating modern tools and methods to increase efficiency (economic sustainability logic). For instance, the use of natural dyes alongside more durable synthetic threads represents a selective adoption of modern practices. While traditional weaving designs are preserved for cultural authenticity, specific patterns and products are tailored to tourist preferences and external markets, reflecting a localized synthesis of heritage and market demands. The use of platforms like Taobao blends traditional crafts with digital commerce. The community selectively integrates modern e-commerce systems without abandoning their cultural identity.

Relating

Relating refers to connecting practices to broader societal or organizational objectives, embedding elements of institutional logics into actions. In Dulong Jiang, artisans relate their traditional practices to economic goals by aligning them with local and national initiatives for rural revitalization. For instance, their participation in government-supported programs to promote cultural heritage directly connects their weaving practices to economic objectives. The teaching of Mandarin and modern skills to younger generations aligns with the state's vision of modernization and integration while ensuring that cultural practices like weaving are passed down as part of this education. The community embeds cultural preservation efforts into broader environmental conservation initiatives. For example, sustainable harvesting of raw materials for weaving aligns their practices with ecological priorities promoted by NGOs and government agencies.

TABLE 6 Cultural Preservation Logic

Dimension	Description
Principles	Safeguarding heritage: The intricate patterns and natural dyes used in carpet weaving symbolize the community's connection to their ancestors and environment.
Assumptions	Traditional weaving practices and rituals are essential for maintaining cultural identity and social cohesion. For example, the use of handwoven hemp threads dyed with natural pigments reflects this belief.
Identity	Artisans identify themselves as custodians of tradition, with weaving serving as a deeply personal and communal practice. Women, in particular, see their role as central to preserving this cultural art form.
Domain	The local community and cultural sites, such as the Dulong Jiang Museum, where traditions are taught, showcased, and celebrated.

TABLE 7 Economic Sustainability Logic

Dimension	Description
Principles	Emphasizes market-oriented practices, including efficient production, profitability, and adaptation to consumer demands. The sale of carpets through platforms like Taobao exemplifies this shift.
Assumptions	Assumes that integrating local crafts into larger economic networks will lead to improved livelihoods. This drives initiatives to modernize designs and increase production to meet market demands.
Identity	Younger generations and entrepreneurial artisans identify as innovators and economic contributors. Their focus is on leveraging traditional skills to create marketable products that cater to broader audiences.
Domain	Extends beyond the local community to include regional and online markets, highlighting the integration of traditional crafts into global economic systems.

Aligning

Aligning refers to reconciling conflicting logics by finding congruence between personal or collective identities and the values embedded in institutional logics. In Dulong Jiang, women artisans see themselves as cultural custodians, aligning their identity with the cultural preservation logic. Younger artisans, however, often view themselves as innovators, aligning their identity with economic sustainability logic. This generational reconciliation happens through shared goals of community well-being. The community embraces modernization (e.g., road development, market access) as a means of enhancing quality of life while framing these advancements as tools to celebrate and share their cultural heritage. This alignment reduces the tension between preserving traditions and embracing change. Products that combine traditional weaving techniques with contemporary designs serve as tangible examples of aligning cultural and economic values. These products allow the community to maintain cultural pride while catering to market trends.

4.4 | Integration of Mechanisms

In Dulong Jiang, "pulling down," "relating," and "aligning" work together to create a fluid and adaptive approach to modernization (see Table 8). For example, the decision to use platforms like Taobao involves pulling down modern e-commerce tools, relating these tools to the community's economic goals, and aligning the resulting market activities with

the artisans' sense of identity and tradition. The intergenerational collaboration in weaving reflects aligning values between preservation-focused elders and innovation-driven youth, while relating their efforts to broader economic and cultural frameworks.

4.5 | Challenges and Opportunities

By leveraging these mechanisms, the Dulong Jiang community demonstrates resilience and adaptability, navigating the tensions between cultural preservation and economic sustainability in a dynamic, context-specific manner. The interplay of cultural preservation and economic sustainability logics in Dulong Jiang creates a dynamic yet challenging environment for the community. While modern platforms provide opportunities to promote traditional crafts and improve livelihoods, they also introduce tensions, such as reconciling market demands with the slow, intricate process of traditional weaving.

The modernization of infrastructure has undeniably brought economic benefits, yet it risks diluting cultural practices as younger generations gravitate toward modern lifestyles and commercial activities. Environmental pressures further complicate this balance, underscoring the need for sustainable practices in sourcing raw materials and crafting carpets. Ultimately, the Dulong Jiang case highlights the complexities of navigating modernization in traditional communities. By understanding the principles, assumptions, identities, and domains of cultural preservation and economic sustainability, stakeholders can work toward solutions that honor heritage while embracing progress.

TABLE 8 Mechanisms of Institutional Logics in Dulong Jiang and Their Empirical Aspects

Mechanism	Definition	Empirical Aspect 1	Empirical Aspect 2	Empirical Aspect 3
Pulling Down	Selectively drawing elements from different logics to create localized, contextually relevant practices.	Integration of traditional weaving techniques with modern tools and synthetic threads to improve durability.	Tailoring traditional designs to meet tourist preferences while maintaining cultural motifs.	Adoption of e-commerce platforms like Taobao to expand market access while preserving a focus on local identity.
Relating	Connecting practices to broader societal or organizational objectives.	Alignment of traditional weaving with government initiatives for rural revitalization and cultural promotion.	Teaching Mandarin to younger generations to support modernization while incorporating cultural education.	Sustainable harvesting of raw materials to align with environmental conservation efforts and economic development.
Aligning	Reconciling conflicting logics by finding congruence between identities and embedded values.	Women artisans embrace their role as cultural custodians, balancing heritage preservation with market adaptation.	Younger artisans align economic innovation with community pride, creating hybrid products that honor tradition.	Creation of hybrid designs combining traditional techniques with modern aesthetics to meet market trends and cultural values.

5 | DISCUSSION

5.1 | Balancing Dual Institutional Logics

The resilience of Dulong Jiang's weaving traditions, despite modernization pressures, underscores the community's agency in preserving its identity. This resonates with Zhang (2000), who emphasizes the role of community-driven efforts in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The continued use of natural dyes and handwoven techniques, even in the face of industrial competition, demonstrates a commitment to cultural values.

As Mazard (2014) argues, the commodification of cultural practices for external markets often risks diluting their authenticity. In Dulong Jiang, the adaptation of weaving designs to cater to consumer preferences creates a tension between preserving cultural significance and meeting market demands. The transformation of traditional carpets into commodities tailored for modern aesthetics reflects broader concerns about the erosion of cultural identity in the face of globalization (Gros 2004, Mazard 2014). This commodification of cultural practices seems to play the same role as the commodification of work, which is driven by new forms of algorithmic management (Lissillour and Monod 2024).

Economic sustainability in Dulong Jiang has been significantly bolstered by improved access to markets, both physical and digital. Li (2003) highlights how infrastructure development facilitates economic integration, enabling artisans to reach broader audiences. In Dulong Jiang, younger artisans have embraced this opportunity, leveraging platforms like Taobao to modernize their craft while creating economic value. However, this empowerment is uneven. As observed by Zhang et al. (1997), older generations often lack the skills or resources to navigate these new economic landscapes, creating generational disparities in economic participation.

The reliance on local natural resources for traditional weaving materials introduces significant environmental challenges. Overharvesting of raw materials like hemp and natural dyes poses risks to both ecological

balance and the long-term viability of the craft. Zhang et al. (1997) and Gros (2004) emphasize the importance of integrating sustainable practices into cultural preservation efforts. In Dulong Jiang, strategies such as community-led resource management and environmental education are critical for ensuring the coexistence of economic and environmental sustainability.

The coexistence of institutional logics in Dulong Jiang highlights the inherent tensions communities face when navigating conflicting demands. As Berente and Yoo (2012) observe, the intersection of multiple logics creates both challenges and opportunities for adaptation. In Dulong Jiang, the cultural preservation logic emphasizes safeguarding heritage through traditional weaving practices, while the economic sustainability logic focuses on leveraging market-oriented strategies for community empowerment. This interplay reflects Thornton et al. (2012)'s framework, which underscores how institutional logics shape organizational and community actions. Akin to prior studies on hybrid organizations (Wang 2024), the case demonstrates that rather than a binary conflict, these logics often coexist in dynamic tension, with communities enacting hybrid strategies to accommodate both.

A key mechanism for balancing these logics is the reconfiguration of traditional practices to align with modern market demands. Platforms like Taobao exemplify how traditional crafts can be reframed as marketable products, blending authenticity with commercial appeal. This aligns with Zhao et al. (2020), who emphasize the role of digital platforms in bridging local traditions with global markets. Similarly, Gros (2004) highlights how cultural groups adapt their practices to sustain livelihoods without entirely sacrificing their heritage. The Dulong Jiang case illustrates this adaptability, where traditional weaving is both a cultural symbol and an economic asset. This pulling-down mechanism relates to the loose coupling mechanism that helps social groups cope with contradictory institutional logics (Lissillour 2021).

5.2 | Interplay of Logics and Community Identity

Identity serves as a crucial mediator in navigating the tensions between cultural preservation and economic sustainability. Women artisans in Dulong Jiang, for instance, identify as custodians of tradition, seeing weaving as a deeply personal and communal practice. This aligns with Thornton et al. (2012)'s assertion that identity shapes how actors prioritize and enact institutional logics. On the other hand, younger artisans view themselves as innovators and economic contributors, focusing on modernizing traditional crafts to appeal to wider markets (Mazard 2014).

The generational divide in Dulong Jiang mirrors broader patterns observed in other traditional communities. Gros (2004) notes that younger generations often adapt traditional practices for economic gain, while elders prioritize cultural purity. In Dulong Jiang, this divide is evident in the differing approaches to weaving: older artisans emphasize traditional methods, while younger ones embrace technological innovations and market-oriented strategies. This tension reflects the broader interplay of continuity and change within cultural systems.

The interaction of institutional logics in Dulong Jiang aligns with and extends the insights from prior studies on hybrid organizational and social practices. Milosevic et al. (2023) identify three mechanisms—pulling down, relating, and aligning—through which institutional logics interact, offering a framework to understand how tensions between competing logics are negotiated in high-hazard organizations. While their analysis primarily addresses organizational sustainability practices, these mechanisms also resonate with studies of cultural and economic hybridity in traditional communities.

5.2.1 | Pulling Down

The process of pulling down involves the selective incorporation of elements from conflicting logics to create practices that are locally relevant and contextually meaningful. Previous studies, such as Gros (2004) and Zhao et al. (2020), have documented similar selective adaptations in cultural practices, where communities incorporate modern tools while maintaining traditional identities. This is consistent with the dynamics observed in Dulong Jiang, where younger generations draw from economic logics to leverage platforms like Taobao but adapt these tools to uphold cultural authenticity. This selective adaptation mirrors what Lissillour and Rodríguez-Escobar (2020) describe as flexible coupling, where actors balance conflicting institutional demands by maintaining loose but strategic connections between logics. In this sense, the practices in Dulong Jiang do not merely represent a compromise but actively reconfigure institutional elements to suit both market and cultural needs.

5.2.2 | Relating

Relating emphasizes how actors link their practices to broader societal or organizational objectives, embedding local practices within overarching logics. As noted by Zhang (2000) and Zhao et al. (2020), cultural communities often align their activities with state-led initiatives or market-driven goals to sustain both cultural and economic viability. The connection between weaving traditions and state programs for rural revitalization in Dulong Jiang exemplifies this mechanism.

This alignment resonates with Polanyi's (1944) concept of embeddedness, wherein economic practices are enmeshed within broader cultural and social structures. Furthermore, relating reflects the nested dependencies of institutional logics described by Thornton et al. (2012), where local practices are framed in ways that satisfy broader institutional imperatives. In this case, the Dulong Jiang community situates their weaving traditions within national sustainability narratives, thereby aligning their practices with state-driven modernization goals without undermining cultural values.

5.2.3 | Aligning

Aligning addresses the reconciliation of logics through identity and values, a process heavily mediated by generational and gendered dynamics in Dulong Jiang. As Thornton et al. (2012) suggest, identity serves as a crucial bridge between competing logics, enabling actors to prioritize one logic without entirely abandoning the other. This mechanism echoes the dual legitimacy strategies observed in other hybrid contexts (Berente and Yoo 2012), where actors maintain alignment with multiple logics to ensure both external validation and internal coherence.

The generational tensions in Dulong Jiang, where older artisans emphasize cultural preservation and younger artisans embrace economic innovation, are indicative of broader patterns highlighted in the literature (Gros 2004, Mazard 2014). The alignment process allows these generational divides to be negotiated, fostering hybrid practices that reflect both cultural continuity and economic transformation. This dynamic parallels what Wang (2024) terms selective coupling, wherein actors integrate disparate logics while preserving the integrity of their core identity.

By integrating Milosevic et al. (2023)'s framework with insights from cultural anthropology and institutional theory, this study extends the applicability of these mechanisms to traditional, community-based contexts. The findings emphasize that these mechanisms are not isolated but interdependent, operating simultaneously to mediate the interplay of logics. This contributes to the broader discourse on hybridization in institutional logics, highlighting the role of agency and identity in navigating complex institutional environments (Thornton et al. 2012, Lissillour and Monod 2024).

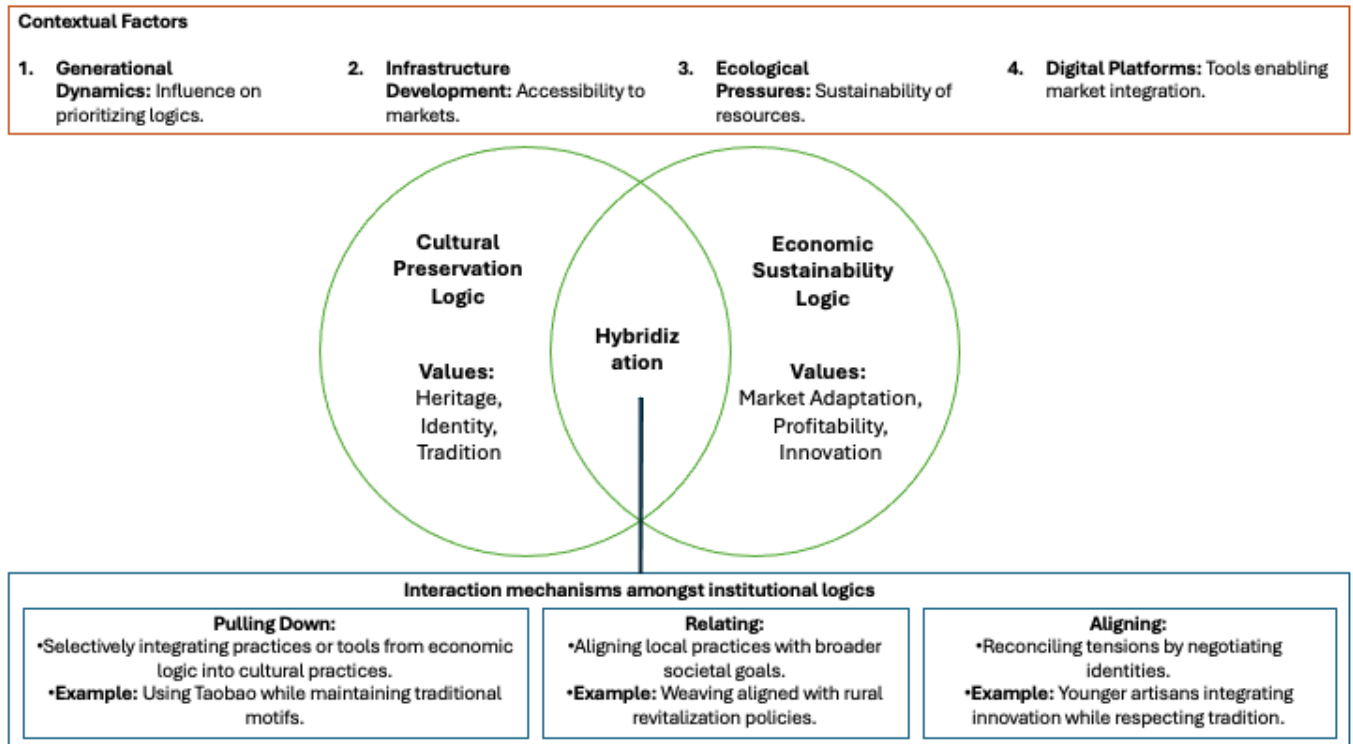


FIGURE 1 Conceptual Framework: Mechanisms of Institutional Logic Interaction in Balancing Cultural Preservation and Economic Sustainability

6 | CONCLUSION

This study explored the interplay of institutional logics in the Dulong Jiang carpet weaving industry, shedding light on the tensions and synergies between cultural preservation and economic sustainability. The findings offer a nuanced understanding of how traditional communities navigate modernization while striving to maintain their heritage. The analysis revealed that Dulong Jiang exemplifies the coexistence of two dominant institutional logics: cultural preservation and economic sustainability. The cultural preservation logic emphasizes safeguarding heritage through traditional weaving practices, rooted in the community’s identity and rituals. Conversely, the economic sustainability logic prioritizes integration into broader market systems, leveraging platforms like Taobao to create economic opportunities.

Key insights include the description of Hybrid Strategies, Generational Tensions, and Sustainability Challenges. The community has enacted innovative strategies to blend traditional practices with modern economic mechanisms, such as marketing culturally significant crafts to global audiences. Mechanisms such as pulling down, relating, and aligning illustrate how traditional practices are adapted to modern contexts. For instance, artisans use digital platforms like Taobao to promote their crafts while maintaining traditional methods and motifs. A generational divide highlights differing priorities, with older artisans focusing on preserving cultural purity and younger artisans adapting practices to align

with market demands. The reliance on natural resources introduces ecological risks, underscoring the need for sustainable practices to ensure the long-term viability of both cultural and economic activities.

6.1 | Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the institutional logics literature by extending its application to the realm of cultural anthropology and traditional crafts. By integrating insights from Thornton et al. (2012) and Wang (2024), it demonstrates how the interplay of logics shapes community identity, decision-making, and adaptive strategies in non-corporate contexts. Specifically, the study highlights the dynamic nature of institutional logics, showcasing how communities actively negotiate and blend conflicting logics. The case study underscores the centrality of identity in mediating tensions, with generational and gendered identities playing pivotal roles in navigating institutional complexity. The findings expand the application of the embeddedness paradigm, illustrating how traditional economic practices are deeply intertwined with cultural and social norms.

6.2 | Practical Implications

The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and cultural heritage. Governments and NGOs should develop policies that balance cultural preservation with economic development,

such as promoting fair trade and intellectual property protections for traditional crafts. Community-led resource management and environmental education can mitigate the ecological risks associated with the overharvesting of raw materials. Integrating traditional crafts into school curricula and cultural festivals can foster younger generations' interest in preserving heritage while encouraging innovation. Training programs on digital marketing and e-commerce can empower artisans to leverage modern platforms without compromising cultural authenticity.

6.3 | Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

While this study provides rich insights, several limitations warrant attention. The findings are context-specific and may not fully generalize to other regions or crafts. Comparative studies in other traditional industries could broaden understanding. A longitudinal study would offer deeper insights into how the interplay of institutional logics evolves over time, particularly as modernization efforts intensify. Moreover, future research could employ a practice-based methodology (Lissillour et al. 2023) to better understand the impact of capital and habitus in shaping sustainability practices (Lissillour 2022, Lissillour and Silva 2024). Further research could quantitatively assess the ecological effects of resource use in traditional crafts and explore sustainable alternatives. Future studies could investigate how consumer perceptions of authenticity influence the economic viability of traditional crafts in global markets (Cheben et al. 2022, Lissillour et al. 2022).

The Dulong Jiang case underscores the resilience and adaptability of traditional communities in navigating modernization. By balancing cultural preservation with economic sustainability, the community provides a compelling model of hybrid institutional logics in action. This study not only enriches theoretical discourse but also offers actionable strategies for supporting traditional crafts in an increasingly globalized world.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors contributed to conceptualization, writing, reviewing, editing and addressing reviewer comments.

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FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None reported.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interests.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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