

Cultural impacts of state interventions: Traditional craftsmanship in China's porcelain capital in the mid to late 20th century

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ABSTRACT

Craft production is essential in maintaining community cohesion and traditional craft knowledge, skills and techniques. In response to the decline of traditional craftsmanship, owing to industrialisation and modernisation, a global discussion on intangible cultural heritage (ICH) arose in the early 1990s. Exploring the roles of different stakeholders, including the state, in sustainably safeguarding ICH has become an increasingly important research topic in contemporary heritage studies. This paper assesses the cultural impact of China's state interventions on traditional craftsmanship by analysing the state's role in Jingdezhen's porcelain manufacturing in the mid- to late 20th century. An analytical framework is developed based on six essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship. This paper then applies this framework to comprehensively assess how Jingdezhen's state-led porcelain production practice affected various aspects of traditional craftsmanship. The empirical evidence presented in this paper reveals some

of the state interventions' adverse effects on the inheritance and development of traditional craftsmanship. In general, the state interventions lowered the involvement of artistic elements in the production and consumption of porcelain crafts, hindered the market's role in signalling customers' preferences to producers and terminated the dispersed production in traditional private workshops. However, state interventions, by and large, facilitated the diffusion of crafting skills and had mixed impacts on workers' agency as well as the transmission and development of accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship.

Keywords

state intervention, attributes of traditional craftsmanship, state-society relations, porcelain manufacture, state-owned enterprises, China, Jingdezhen

Introduction

Craft production was one of the most significant economic activities in pre-modern societies. It was essential in maintaining community cohesion and traditional craft knowledge, skills and techniques. Unfortunately, traditional craftsmanship has come under threat by various factors related to globalisation (Wiktor-Mach 2019, 1601),

industrialisation (Winter 2014, 558) and modernisation (Akagawa and Smith 2018, xiii). In the early 1990s, a global wave of discussion on intangible cultural heritage (ICH) arose among researchers, international organisations and government officials concerned about safeguarding traditional craftsmanship.

Traditional craftsmanship, as well as its production

practice, is considered to be one of the essential domains of ICH (UNESCO 2003). It has been given much attention because craft practice is often closely related to the construction and commercialisation of heritage (Parts et al. 2011; Varutti 2015; Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis 2017). The commodification of ICH contributes to the sustainable grassroots development of heritage in some cases (Akagawa and Smith 2018). The existing literature has highlighted the roles of the third sector, business entities and local communities in supporting ICH practitioners (Blake 2018; Grobar 2019). Through uncovering and reviewing historical evidence, this paper aims to comprehensively assess how the different roles played by the state affected traditional craftsmanship in Jingdezhen's porcelain industry in the mid to late 20th century.

Based on the empirical data gathered through in-depth fieldwork in 2018, this paper reveals that many porcelain artisans in Jingdezhen believe that the state-owned porcelain factories (SOPFs) played a positive role in the transmission of porcelain craftsmanship in the mid to late 20th century. Today, many of these former SOPF employees, who play essential roles in safeguarding the ICH of traditional craftsmanship in Jingdezhen's contemporary porcelain manufacture, make a deliberate effort to apply traditional craftsmanship in production practice. By exploring how these senior porcelain artisans perceive how state interventions have influenced their traditional craftsmanship, this paper aims to reveal the positive and adverse implications of state intervention on ICH.

In the mid-1950s, for practical and ideological reasons, China established a planned economic system, primarily embodied in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in urban areas, leading to the state's direct control over the SOEs' resources, outputs and productivities (Branko 1964, 4; Yeuh 2011, 98; Bian 2015, 314). Most existing analyses of SOEs focus on the economic aspect, arguing that these enterprises are inefficient (Qi and Kotz 2019, 97) and overly bureaucratic (Branko 1964, 4). Instead, this paper focuses on the less assessed cultural impacts of state interventions in production practice.

This paper shows that state interventions in production practice indeed had some adverse effects on traditional craftsmanship, such as interrupting the transmission of traditional systems of practice, reducing the art value associated with handmade products and decreasing the integrity of craftsmanship. However, in the case of Jingdezhen, the state interventions also helped upgrade craft production and craftsmanship transmission and make them more sustainable.

The rest of this paper is organised into four parts to present this argument. An assessment framework is first established to examine how the state interventions affected traditional craftsmanship, naming six essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship. Following a brief introduction to the research setting, data collection process and analytical methods, four key roles that the state played in porcelain manufacture in Jingdezhen's SOPFs from the mid to late 20th century are then identified based on empirical data. This paper then systematically assesses whether each role had a positive, negative or mixed impact on the six essential traditional craftsmanship attributes. Finally, this paper concludes with a summary of the main findings and a discussion on relevant policy and practice implications.

Essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship: An assessment framework

The concept of ICH was first systematically promulgated at the international level with the UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter, the Convention) in 2003 (Smith and Akagawa 2008, 131). China joined the Convention in 2004, and the term 'ICH' has since gained widespread acceptance in Chinese society (Xu, Tao and Smith 2021). Although the concept of ICH did not explicitly exist in China during the second half of the 20th century, scholarly discussions on ICH still offer information and inspiration for assessing the state's impact on traditional craftsmanship.

Craft production can be organised in many forms, based on the demands of producers and consumers. However, the ICH perspective is concerned foremost with the authenticity and integrity of craftsmanship in the actual production practice, as evidenced in many relevant UNESCO official documents and China's legislation (State Council of the People's Republic of China 2011; UNESCO 2016). 'Authenticity' is not a primitive concept. Instead, it is negotiable (Cohen 1988) and constructible (Kim, Whitford and Acordia 2019). The significant differences in how authenticity is defined highlight the need for a comprehensive, comparable framework to assess the status and quality of ICH in craft production practices.

Notwithstanding all these different understandings of authenticity, safeguarding traditional craftsmanship is a prominent theme in much ICH-related legislation and many scholarly publications. ICH practitioners and researchers tend to emphasise a connection between traditional craftsmanship and historical production

practices (Parts et al. 2011; Varutti 2015; Akagawa and Smith 2018). Some even call for the complete replication of traditional craftsmanship and techniques (Trilling 1972, 93; Karakul 2015, 138). Accordingly, when assessing the cultural impact of state intervention in craft production, it is necessary to identify the essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship.

The following six essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship can be generated from reviewing the literature on traditional craft-relevant practices such as craft production and craftsmanship transmission. Each attribute constitutes a dimension along which the status and quality of ICH in craft production practices can be assessed. Together, these six attributes form an assessment framework that can be applied to evaluate the vitality and vibrancy of traditional craftsmanship.

Individual agency. The vitality of traditional craftsmanship is based on continuous craft production activities. Craft production involves multiple elements, such as means of production, organisation of production and relations of production. Also, individual ICH practitioners such as craftspeople and their diverse agencies matter directly to the sustainability of craftsmanship practice (Parts et al. 2011; Martindale 2012; Macrae 2017; Lixinski 2018). Craftsmanship empowers craftspeople with a sense of pride. The desire of craftspeople for 'pride' may be hindered by 'competitive pressure, frustration, or obsession' in some cases (Sennett 2008, 9), but may be motivated by the pursuit of social and economic gain in other cases (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Gillette 2010). Individual agency is sometimes linked with the works produced by 'skilled hands' (Gerritsen 2020, 175). Before the Industrial Revolution, these skilled hands were perceived as the source of the crafts' quality (Risatti 2007, 14). Skilled hands determined the meaning and the cultural and economic value of various craft objects. The individual agency of these skilled hands remains essential in contemporary society to resist the homogenisation of commodities through industrial production.

Art value involvement. According to Natsuko Akagawa and Laurajane Smith, 'ICH appeals to a broader spectrum of humanistic, aesthetic and intellectual engagement' (2018, 3). The production of crafts is 'creative work that springs from the artistic imagination' (Risatti 2007, 14). The involvement of artistic elements tends to be more apparent in the production of fine art crafts, which often reflect a higher level of subjectivity in individual creations. However, most human-made crafts can be considered works of art, whether they were primarily designed to fulfil

practical or aesthetical purposes (Risatti 2007, 18). To appreciate crafts, therefore, craftspeople and their clients need to 'go beyond simply looking at crafts as objects that have functions or are made of certain materials'; instead, they need to 'see and recognise [the crafts] by grasping their essence' (Risatti 2007, 18). Thus, to sustain good craftsmanship in contemporary society, craftspeople, as well as their clients, need to develop a capacity for appreciating the art value involved in the craft.

Market-demands orientation. It was once argued that 'fabricating items at any scale can be understood as a purely economic activity that solely generates surpluses to meet market demands' (Schortman and Urban 2004, 186). Although such a notion may be overly simplistic, as Lucas Lixinski points out, 'traditional artistry is nothing if not an economic activity' (2018, 58). The handicraft industry is often closely linked with the market and consumption. Market competitions tend to select the fittest craftsmanship in generational transmissions, and the survival of craftsmanship is often driven by the demands in craft markets (Lixinski 2018, 58; Yang et al. 2018). Consumers' demands can shape the agency and actions of craftspeople as well as the commodification and transmission of craftsmanship. Although some governments have made proactive conservational interventions (Grobar 2019), the craftsmanship that embodies market demands tends to be more sustainable in the long run.

Diffusion of crafting skills. Craftspeople acquire and apply their crafting skills to meet ends (Gillette 2010). Some craftspeople establish handicraft businesses, while others are employed by workshop owners (Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis 2017, 69). Either way, they compete against one another for customers and resources. This competitive pressure in the craft industries can lead to mutual mistrust among members of the same profession: holders of more excellent skills fear that competitors may steal their secrets (Gillette 2010). Many craftspeople thus hold their skills, knowledge and techniques close to preserve their profits and privileges (Schortman and Urban 2004, 187). Such exclusiveness may hinder the diffusion of crafting skills. However, traditional craftsmanship is often attached to a sense of community, allowing craftspeople to get involved in and benefit from craft networks, such as professional societies, associations, and guilds (Gowlland 2017). These craft networks regulate the circulation and dissemination of professional skills, knowledge and techniques. Their rules can reinforce a sense of community and facilitate the diffusion of craft skills

through professional networks (Risatti 2007, 17; Gowlland 2017, 81–82).

Dispersed production. Traditional craftsmanship is rooted in the rural economy (Parts et al. 2011, 421), where civilian handicraft production is often organised through cottage industries. Traditional handicraft activities are generally ‘household-based’ (Scrase 2003, 450) and ‘dispersed among a wide range of households and communities’ (Schortman and Urban 2004, 203). Cottage industries are common in many pre-industrial and even a few post-industrial societies. Against the backdrop of globalisation, many consumers with postmodern sentiments tend to appreciate crafts that embody traditional, homely or earthy production practices, and they often show strong preferences for handicrafts (Scrase 2003, 450). The dispersed production of households or small workshops sharply contrasts with the mass production of big factories, providing a better setting for craftspeople to develop and apply their agency.

Accumulative and systematic knowledge. Traditional craftsmanship relies on a rich set of systematic knowledge passed from one generation of craftspeople to another. It is upgraded, renewed and enriched in the process of these generational transmissions (Martindale 2012). The systems of craft production are a result of continuous practice through generations of craftspeople. The younger generations of craftspeople, however gifted and talented, can hardly make meaningful innovations and breakthroughs without the sequence of, and reflection on, the achievements of their predecessors. Some traditional crafting skills have disappeared because not enough successors were willing to invest in learning the relevant knowledge and skills due to reasons such as perceived low economic returns (Yang et al. 2018, 1336). For traditional craftsmanship to be sustained and developed, it is essential to retain accumulative and systematic knowledge in the practice of craft production.

Together, the six attributes extracted from the ICH literature constitute a multidimensional framework covering the essential characteristics of traditional craftsmanship, laying the foundation for empirical assessments on how state interventions in the porcelain manufacturing practice in Jingdezhen affected what is now known as ICH.

Research settings and methodology

Porcelain manufacture is a vital part of China’s traditional handicraft industries. Jingdezhen, a city in north-

eastern Jiangxi Province, is known as China’s ‘Porcelain Capital’² (UNESCO 2018). Since the 1200s, Jingdezhen has been a national and international commercial exchange centre, with porcelain being traded to Eurasia via the Silk Road (Chen 1996; Ye 2005). Jingdezhen’s porcelain export industry flourished through the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, making it the most renowned ceramic production centre nationally and globally (Shen 1985, 118–126). In addition, Jingdezhen porcelains have been found in many archaeological sites and have been curated in museums worldwide (Chen 1996, 335–336; Ye 2005, 22–23).

Historically, Jingdezhen’s private porcelain manufacture was, in most cases, organised dispersedly in small workshops (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959). In the 1950s, like in many other places throughout China, Jingdezhen witnessed a rapid wave of socialist reform in its traditional workshops. Between 1953 and 1957, over 2,500 private porcelain workshops in Jingdezhen were merged into 19 factories under the so-called ‘joint public-private ownership’ (公私合营) and 31 collectives (Jingdezhen City Records Compilation Committee 1989, 45). In 1965, the local Jingdezhen authority further merged these factories and cooperatives according to their manufacturing specialities, forming 10 flagship SOPFs owned entirely by the state (Gillette 2014, 30) (Figure 1).

Many parts of China were subjected to market-oriented economic reforms in the late 1970s (Eatwell, Milgate and Newman 1990, 16). In the 1980s, Jingdezhen introduced a ‘managerial contract responsibility system’,



Figure 1

A production scene at one of the 10 flagship porcelain factories – Weimin Porcelain Factory – in 1978.

Photo provided by Interviewee 9. Used with permission.

which gave managers of state and collective factories more decision-making power and incentives (Gillette 2016, 86–87). However, many factory managers were long accustomed to being told what to make and did not know how to respond to market demand (Gillette 2015, 234). In the 1990s, despite the expansion of the private sector, 90 per cent of Jingdezhen's economy remained in the state and collective sector (Gillette 2016, 89–90). In the mid-1990s, China's central government launched nationwide reform to transform SOEs into 'modern corporations' (Putterman and Dong 2000, 403). In 1995, the local Jingdezhen authority took a 'shock therapy' approach in closing down the 10 SOPFs almost overnight over concerns about their extensive liabilities (Jiang 2012). Around 60,000 SOPF employees were made redundant, and the porcelain manufacturing system established under the planned economy was largely dismantled (Xiong 2012). In Jingdezhen today, most porcelains are manufactured in private workshops and small factories run by former SOPF employees.

These former SOPF employees are valuable sources of information on the production practices of the SOPFs. As frontline practitioners in porcelain manufacture before and after the SOPF shutdown, they can reveal what worked well and what did not in the SOPFs. Therefore, a series of in-depth interviews with 14 of these former SOPF employees was conducted in 2018. The interviews provided rich primary information on production practices and skills transmission in Jingdezhen's SOPFs from the mid to late 20th century. As demonstrated in Appendix 1, the sample has a fair distribution among interviewees of gender, age group and work experience in the SOPFs. In addition, the sample includes employees from six of Jingdezhen's 10 major SOPFs.

Typically, the interviews began with an ice-breaking conversation on the personal background of the interviewee, followed by questions on the interviewee's professional life, especially their experiences as SOPF workers and as active porcelain craftspeople in post-SOPF Jingdezhen. The interviewees were also invited to share their perceptions and reflections on how the knowledge, skills and techniques associated with traditional craftsmanship were affected by the establishment and abolition of the SOPFs. Although the interviewees had varying personal experiences, consistent patterns across the different interviews can be identified. Unlike the first 12 interviewees, the 13th and 14th interviewees conveyed almost no additional information, indicating that sufficient empirical materials were collected for subsequent analysis.

Grounded theory, a widely adopted approach for generating explanatory models of human social processes grounded in data gathered through field research and interviews, was applied systematically to analyse the empirical data. Initial, focused and axial coding processes were conducted following the conventional multistep analysis technique (Charmaz 2006, 4) to tease out the key roles that the state played in Jingdezhen's SOPFs (see Appendix 2: The Coding Strategy and Process). How these roles affected each dimension of the assessment framework was analysed, and the cultural impacts of the state's control over porcelain manufacture in Jingdezhen's SOPFs were mapped out.

Findings and analysis

The state handled almost every aspect of production and sales in Jingdezhen until the mid-1990s. This section introduces the four key roles that the state played in running Jingdezhen's porcelain industry. How these roles impacted the six aforementioned essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship will then be assessed against empirical data.

The state as a change agent for industrial systems

Shortly after establishing Communist rule, the Chinese state took the initiative to reorganise Jingdezhen's porcelain handicraft industry, intending to achieve 'higher productivity, lower costs, better quality and wider mechanisation' (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 390). To pursue these targets, local Jingdezhen authorities introduced a series of technological innovations into the traditional handicraft industry. In the 1950s, innovation was introduced in over 60 types of porcelain skills in Jingdezhen, including kiln firing, green-body shaping, porcelain decoration, packaging, green-body container production, as well as the refinement of raw materials (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 358–359). These technological innovations brought a 20 per cent increase in productivity, and, thanks to promotion by the state, these advanced techniques diffused rapidly and extensively through Jingdezhen's porcelain industry (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 394).

After the mid-1950s, the state promoted the extensive application of modern scientific technologies in handicraft industries to pursue higher productivity. As a result, alternative clay and glaze materials were discovered, the quality of porcelain (such as the brightness and

smoothness of the green body) improved and the defective rate was reduced (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 391–392). In the mid-1970s, following the central government's call for modernising industries, agriculture, defences and science and technology, Jingdezhen's flagship SOPFs constructed automatic production lines with interconnected machinery, covering the entire process from raw material to the final product (Wang 2014, 27). This productivity-driven production also led to significant changes in porcelain manufacturing techniques.³

Compared to traditional workshops, the SOPFs established more rigorous and standardised systems for labour management and training. For example, each worker was assigned a monthly working target according to their skill level, determined by their performance in annual assessments (Interviewees 5 and 10). State intervention in production practice also led to the specialisation of labour in the SOPFs, and each worker typically performed one operation or produced one type of porcelain ware (Interviewees 5 and 10). In addition, strict quality-control methods were imposed (Interviewees 1, 10, 13 and 14).

The state intervention in Jingdezhen's porcelain manufacture led to a substantial selection effect in the dynamics of pattern design. In 1955, Jingdezhen's porcelain craftspeople designed 512 prototypes of white-and-blue porcelain wares, but only 10 were selected for their fitness for mass production (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 397–398). Eventually, the SOPFs chose four patterns designated as typically classic styles (Interviewee 10). Some other traditional designs, such as those with Confucian themes, were abandoned for ideological reasons (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 397–398).

The state also pushed for a radical simplification of the production practice, abandoning processes and designs perceived as overly time consuming or complicated (Interviewee 1). In other words, although the SOPFs valued traditional designs for their popularity in foreign markets, they tended to prioritise efficiency over authenticity when it came to production practice. As a result, over five hundred types of traditional porcelain were redesigned, usually with simplified production processes, to fit the technical requirements for mass production (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 399).

In Jingdezhen, craft distribution was in the exclusive charge of the state for most of the second half of the 20th

century. In 1950, the local authority established a state-owned sales company that eventually came to control 98 per cent of the total porcelain sales in Jingdezhen (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 405). Senior technicians in various departments at the SOPFs conducted repeated experiments to create prototypes. The sales company exhibited these samples at trade fairs at home and abroad to generate orders (Interviewees 1, 8, 13 and 14). Once an order came in, workers were required to mass-produce replicas with weights, sizes, patterns, colours and other features identical to the selected prototypes (Interviewees 4, 7 and 10). Consequently, production and sales were effectively separated, as were the SOPF workers from the market.

The state fundamentally altered Jingdezhen's traditional porcelain manufacture into an industrial system in the second half of the 20th century. How, then, did these changes affect traditional craftsmanship?

The state's push for mass production significantly constrained the individual agency of the craftspeople. In the SOPFs, frontline workers had little autonomy in personalising design styles and production techniques. The establishment of automatic production lines also reduced the chance for workers to apply their agencies to create porcelain wares.

The state-led changes, by and large, harmed the art value of the products from Jingdezhen's porcelain industry. In the pursuit of higher productivity, many sophisticated details in the traditional designs were abandoned, as they were deemed overly complicated or unsuitable for mass production. Mechanically repeating the same tasks also hindered the individual creativity of the frontline workers. Moreover, because the SOPFs prioritised function over aesthetics, frontline workers – even those skilled hands – had little opportunity, incentive or motivation to develop the art value of the products. Consequently, as porcelain wares came primarily to be perceived as housewares rather than artworks, the customers' level of art appreciation also reduced significantly.

For most of the mid to late 20th century, production in Jingdezhen's SOPFs was primarily supplier based rather than demand driven due to the shortage economy. As a result, the market had little to no impact on signalling customers' preferences to the producers.

The nationalisation of Jingdezhen's porcelain industry triggered the merging and closure of traditional private workshops. This process had a mixed effect on the accumulative and systematic knowledge embedded in traditional craftsmanship. The SOPFs implemented

production guidelines that integrated traditional craftsmanship with modern technologies, stimulating innovation and development in certain aspects of traditional craftsmanship. In the SOPFs, workers were assigned a few tasks that they were required to practise repeatedly. Through these processes, some workers learned skills and techniques essential to traditional craftsmanship and became practitioners and transmitters of traditional craftsmanship. However, due to this highly specialised labour division, not all workers had the opportunity to master traditional crafting skills and techniques comprehensively or systematically. Besides, some traditional craftsmanship components were abandoned, especially those deemed unfit for mechanical production or socialist values. At the end of the day, although the new production system retained and developed some aspects of traditional craftsmanship, it was very different from the traditional workshop-based porcelain manufacturing system. Consequently, considerable local knowledge, in forms such as customs, jargon, specifications and procedures, vanished when the state created the modern production chains of the SOPFs.

The state as a coordinator of research and development

As a result of state intervention, Jingdezhen established a centralised structure for technological innovations, leading to many breakthroughs in porcelain manufacture.

In 1952, thanks to the success of state-led research efforts, Jingdezhen stopped importing decal papers, an essential material for porcelain manufacture (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 386). The local Jingdezhen authority then established a ceramic art research group. Young artisans were assigned to assist senior porcelain masters in producing artistic creations and recording traditional knowledge, skills and techniques (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 386). In 1954, the local authority established the Art and Ceramics Craft Association (ACCA). The ACCA brought together 27 prominent porcelain masters for ideas on expressing political messages in porcelain designs. Collaborating with scholars from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, the ACCA successfully integrated practical skills with theoretical knowledge (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 387–388). To spread these advanced techniques, in 1955, the Jingdezhen government launched several training schemes on low-temperature coloured-glaze techniques (Interviewee 1). These schemes trained approximately

four hundred skilled technicians (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 401). By 1985, the Jingdezhen municipal government had invested over 125 million yuan in reforming manufacturing technology and equipment (Gillette 2016, 73).

The state also coordinated forces to preserve and recover some vanished or endangered traditional craftsmanship skills. For example, in Jingdezhen, coloured-glaze techniques mainly were transmitted through oral instructions and practical apprenticeship in imperial China (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 395). Consequently, some techniques were lost when senior masters died in the war before passing over their knowledge, skills and experiences to the younger generation. Other techniques gradually disappeared due to the exhaustion of certain raw materials. Following the state's initiatives, the Jingdezhen Porcelain Research Institute made significant contributions to rescuing and reviving traditional craftsmanship in the mid to late 20th century (Interviewee 9). The institute recovered many endangered skills, discovered formulas for various materials, re-established instructive methods to produce the pigments used in coloured-glaze porcelain and even introduced manufacturing methods for a dozen foreign coloured glazes (Jiangxi Light Industry Bureau Ceramics Research Centre 1959, 389–390).

By coordinating research and development activities, the state affected traditional craftsmanship in Jingdezhen's porcelain industry in three ways. First, the state facilitated the diffusion of crafting skills. Thanks to the state's efforts, essential crafting skills and techniques were no longer commercial secrets held exclusively in the hands of a few private workshops and guilds. Second, the state further reduced dispersed production by setting up a well-organised research and development network. Finally, state-led research and innovation preserved certain aspects of accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship. It also fostered technological innovations, contributing to the further development of this body of knowledge.

The state as a shaper of the labour structure

State intervention profoundly reshaped the labour structure in Jingdezhen's porcelain manufacture. Traditionally, because craftsmanship had mainly been transmitted through apprenticeships, craftspeople tended to come exclusively from specific social groups. However, state-led labour recruitments created a broader social base for Jingdezhen's porcelain manufacturing

workforce. Take gender distribution as an example. Gender discrimination was pervasive before the 1950s, and female craftspeople were rare in Jingdezhen (Interviewee 1). However, after establishing Communist rule, the state proactively and persistently advocated for gender equality, aiming to expand its workforce (Interviewee 10). As a result, many women joined the porcelain manufacturing industry in Jingdezhen, primarily for work such as colouring, sketching and painting (Interviewees 1, 3, 5, 6 and 10).

Porcelain manufacturing relies on skilled workers who are literate and capable of acquiring essential knowledge in the associated fields. However, to meet the needs of mass production, the SOPFs had to recruit a large number of unskilled workers, many of whom were illiterate due to poor education conditions in the 1940s and 1950s (Interviewees 1, 3, 5, 6 and 10). Most of these unskilled workers would have had little opportunity to join Jingdezhen's porcelain industry under traditional apprenticeship. However, many eventually became highly skilled craftspeople due to state intervention. Furthermore, in 1958, the local authority established the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute (JCI), which developed into the only university dedicated to ceramic arts in China today. Through the JCI, the state replaced traditional apprenticeship with a modern, formal and structured higher education system for training porcelain professionals and transmitting porcelain production techniques and knowledge. Following the National Talent Allocation Policy launched in the 1950s, many JCI graduates entered the SOPFs and eventually became senior technicians and managers (Interviewee 2). The JCI enabled the social mobility of its graduates and changed the talent structure in Jingdezhen's porcelain industry. In the 1980s, the city had formed a multilayered system serving the training of porcelain labourers. Middle and high schools began training students for the porcelain industry, porcelain vocational schools for high school graduates and higher education institutions offering advanced porcelain art, designing and engineering degrees (Gillette 2016, 81).

State intervention also broke the guilds' monopolies, which had lasted for centuries over many aspects of craftsmanship. In Jingdezhen, porcelain craftspeople from the same region traditionally united to form an informal community called *bang* (幫). In many respects, these *bangs* were similar to the guilds of medieval Europe. Each *bang* formed regular collaborations in production, arranged apprenticeships and took collective action to pursue common interests (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 10 and 11). *Bangs* existed in all areas of porcelain production

in Jingdezhen before 1949, but they vanished soon after the Communist state controlled all craft manufacturing affairs (Interviewee 1). In the mid to late 20th century, porcelain craftsmanship changed from private-owned to publicly shared, as embodied in short-term factory-assigned mentorship between senior workers and entrants (Interviewees 3, 5, 6, 10, 12 and 14).

The reach of the state, however, had its limits. Guanxi⁴ (关系) remained salient in forming mentorships in the SOPFs. A few informal social networks that underlay the traditional *bangs* also survived in the SOPFs (Interviewees 1 and 3). Many employees utilised social capital in these informal networks to arrange for senior workers from the same community to mentor their children (Interviewees 10 and 12). These arrangements gradually developed into a new model of three-year apprenticeship (Interviewees 10 and 12). Compared to the formal training in the SOPFs, which generally lasted for three months, the informal three-year apprenticeship tended to be more effective in creating close social and professional ties between successive generations of craftspeople. These informal apprenticeship arrangements complemented the structured training in the SOPFs in shaping the transmission of Jingdezhen's porcelain craftsmanship.

The state-led changes in labour structure had a significant impact on traditional craftsmanship. As evidenced by the self-initiated resurgence of informal apprenticeship, the modern mentorship established by the SOPFs was not enough for novices to acquire the intricate knowledge and skills necessary for articulating the art value that had evolved in traditional craftsmanship. On the other hand, state intervention broke traditional social boundaries in the diffusion of crafting skills. For example, some traditionally marginalised social groups, such as women and the illiterate poor, now have unprecedented access to crafting skills. The weakening of the boundaries between traditional *bangs* also enabled the broader diffusion of crafting skills.

By granting broader population access to crafting skills, the new labour structure facilitated safeguarding the accumulative and systematic knowledge of traditional craftsmanship. In addition, new forms of labour relations, such as SOPF-based mentorships, also created opportunities for the broader transmission of this accumulative and systematic knowledge. However, the new labour structure also destroyed the symbolic capital embedded in traditional social networks, such as the *bangs*. As a result, compared to apprentices in traditional workshops, SOPF workers were less likely to perceive

an explicit link between their personal reputation and the sophistication of their products. Consequently, many SOPF workers prioritised productivity over accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship.

The state as a provider of opportunities and benefits

Careers in the SOPFs were widely regarded as desirable in Jingdezhen, especially among rural residents in the mid to late 20th century, thanks to the relatively high income and the many work-associated opportunities and benefits. In addition, in the SOPFs, state-sponsored labour unions replaced traditional guilds in providing support and welfare to employees, especially to those who had suffered occupational injury or disease (Interviewees 4, 5, 7 and 10).

SOPF employees enjoyed a relatively comfortable life thanks to their competitive salary, determined by their skill level. Following a nationwide salary framework for skilled labour in the 1960s and 1970s, the SOPFs in Jingdezhen adopted a salary scale of eight levels. SOPF workers could enjoy a 15 per cent pay rise when they moved up each level (Interviewees 5 and 10). In 1982, on average, a SOPF worker at the entry level on the salary scale could earn approximately 660 yuan a year, significantly higher than the national average annual disposable income for urban and rural residents (535.3 yuan and 270.1 yuan, respectively) in the same year (National Bureau of Statistics of China 1980–1990). Especially from 1978 to the 1990s, Jingdezhen SOPF workers' salaries increased year after year (Wang and Yin 1994, 467). Consequently, many workers in Jingdezhen's state enterprises were reluctant to quit their secure jobs to head private firms or work for private entrepreneurs since the central government's decision in the 1980s to permit private commerce was announced (Gillette 2016, 74).

Moreover, the SOPFs provided their employees with many education and personal development opportunities. To address the lack of literacy among the recruits, Jingdezhen's state-sponsored labour unions organised night schools in the 1950s and 1960s for workers (Interviewee 1). In the 1970s, as illiteracy was no longer a major issue thanks to a general improvement in China's elementary education, the SOPFs replaced night schools with more opportunities for further education (Interviewees 6 and 9).

Furthermore, the SOPFs offered their employees reputational rewards such as honourable technical titles, widely adapting the Technical Title Application and Assessment (职称评定) scheme in the 1970s (Interviewees

1 and 2). As a result, an emphasis on individual reputation emerged among SOPF employees, significantly motivating many workers and technicians to pursue improvement in their craftsmanship proactively. Especially in the 1990s, those ceramicists who had received official recognition for their skills began selling their works privately for extra money (Gillette 2016, 89). Many SOPF employees also developed a strong sense of responsibility for maintaining porcelain crafts' authenticity, originality and tradition, even after being laid off in the late 1990s.

Compared with traditional craftspeople, whose economic conditions were often unstable and challenging, SOPF workers enjoyed a stable income and job security, adequate protection for health and safety, and better social recognition. Without the constant worry of losing their income and jobs, SOPF workers were better positioned to pursue what Abraham Maslow defines, in his hierarchy of needs, as the higher levels of human needs, including self-actualisation, by applying individual agency in creative works. The SOPF workers were also more likely to teach their skills and share their knowledge, as the socialist welfare system of the SOPFs dispensed with the zero-sum competition. The SOPFs also facilitated the inheritance, transmission and innovation of accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship by providing opportunities and an institutional atmosphere for individuals among its labour force to pursue development.

Charting the cultural impacts of the state interventions

During the mid to late 20th century, the state fundamentally reshaped Jingdezhen's porcelain industry through changes in industrial systems, research and development practices, labour structure, and opportunities and benefits. As summarised in [Table 1](#), these state-led interventions had mixed impacts on traditional craftsmanship.

Generally speaking, concerning the six essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship, state interventions reduced the involvement of artistic elements in the production and consumption of porcelain crafts, hindered the market's role in signalling customers' preferences to producers and terminated the dispersed production of traditional private workshops. On the other hand, state interventions, by and large, facilitated the diffusion of crafting skills. The interventions had more complex impacts on the two remaining attributes. First, some workers had little autonomy in applying individual agency in production practice due to automation and the SOPFs' pursuit of

Table 1

Impacts of the state interventions on the essential attributes of traditional craftsmanship

Attributes of traditional craftsmanship	The state as a changing agent for industrial systems	The state as a coordinator of research and development	The state as a shaper of the labour structure	The state as a provider of opportunities and benefits
Individual agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some frontline workers had little autonomy to apply their agency in mass production. (-) Automation reduced the chance for some frontline workers to apply their agency in production practice. (-) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some workers were better positioned to apply individual agency in creative works after the SOPFs fulfilled their physiological and safety needs. (+)
Art value involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many sophisticated details in the traditional designs were abandoned in mass production. (-) Frontline workers had little chance, incentive or motivation to develop art value involved in the production practice. (-) The level of art appreciation was generally low among customers, as porcelain products were primarily perceived as housewares. (-) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modern mentorship established by the SOPFs was not sufficient for the junior workers to acquire the intricate knowledge and complicated skills essential to articulating the art value evolved in traditional craftsmanship. (-) 	
Market demands orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The market had little to no impact in signalling the customers' preference for the producers because of the supplied-based (rather than demand-driven) productions under the shortage economy. (-) 			
Diffusion of crafting skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essential crafting skills and techniques were no longer commercial secrets held exclusively in the hands of some private workshops and guilds. (+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some traditionally marginalised social groups, such as women and the illtreated poor enjoyed unprecedented access to crafting skills. (+) The weakening of traditional <i>bangs</i> enabled the broader diffusion of crafting skills. (+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SOPF workers were more likely to share their knowledge and skills as the socialist welfare system in the SOPFs also dispelled the necessity for zero-sum competitions. (+)
Dispersed production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massive SOPFs replaced the dispersed production in traditional private workshops. (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A well-organised research and development network led by the state made dispersed production impractical. (-) 		

Attributes of traditional craftsmanship	The state as a changing agent for industrial systems	The state as a coordinator of research and development	The state as a shaper of the labour structure	The state as a provider of opportunities and benefits
Accumulative and systematic knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SOPFs stimulated the innovations and developments in some aspects of traditional craftsmanship by introducing modern techniques. (+) • Some workers mastered traditional crafting skills and techniques through their assigned tasks in the SOPFs. (+) • Workers tended to focus on some specific skills and missed the opportunities to comprehensively and systematically master traditional craftsmanship. (-) • Some knowledge underlying the traditional craftsmanship was abandoned as deemed unfit. (-) • Replacing the traditional production systems with very different new systems interrupted the inheritance of some local knowledge. (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state-led research and innovation preserved considerable accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship. (+) • The state-led technological advancements contributed to the further development of traditional crafting knowledge. (+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state-led new labour structure enlarged the population base of the accumulative and systematic knowledge of traditional craftsmanship. (+) • The state-led new labour structure created new approaches to the broader transmission of the accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship. (+) • The state-led new labour structure decomposed the symbolic capital embedded in traditional social networks, causing many SOPF workers to prioritise productivity over the accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship. (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing opportunities and an institutional atmosphere for the individual developments of its labour force, the SOPFs facilitated the transmission of the accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship. (+)

Note: The positive impacts on traditional craftsmanship are indicated by '+', and negative impacts are indicated by '-'.

higher productivity. However, others found themselves better positioned to apply individual agency in the creative process, since their physiological and safety needs were met through employment at the SOPF. Second, the state-led efforts stimulated the transmission and development of accumulative and systematic knowledge in traditional craftsmanship, especially concerning technology or ideology that is deemed appropriate by the state. However, the same efforts also led to the loss of knowledge in other areas.

Conclusion and discussions

Compared with other locations and industrial sectors in China, the porcelain industry in Jingdezhen experienced more intense state intervention, and flagship SOPFs dominated production until the mid-1990s. The collapse of these SOPFs caused tremendous job losses and other social issues. Consequently, the media and the public tend to focus on the negative legacies of Jingdezhen's SOPFs. Based on the empirical data collected through in-depth interviews, this paper examines the cultural effects

of the state-led interventions on Jingdezhen's porcelain manufacturing sector from the mid to the late 20th century. It reveals that the productivity-driven changes led by the state indeed undermined certain aspects of traditional craftsmanship in Jingdezhen's porcelain industry, especially those traditional skills, knowledge and techniques that were deemed unfit for mass production or the socialist ideology. However, it would be an oversimplification to perceive the interventions as disruptions to traditional craftsmanship. In the reshaping of Jingdezhen's porcelain industry, some aspects of traditional craftsmanship were efficiently diffused into the broader labour force while other aspects developed. These empirical findings call for a more comprehensive understanding of the complex cultural impacts of state-led economic initiatives and, more broadly, China's planned economy during the second half of the 20th century.

After the SOPFs collapsed in the mid-1990s, private workshops and small-scale factories dominated Jingdezhen's porcelain industry. Laid-off workers in Jingdezhen found themselves in circumstances similar to the early 20th century (Gillette 2014, 35). Many former SOPF


workers faced great difficulty making ends meet after being laid off. Others eventually became the technical backbone of the private workshops and factories in post-SOPF Jingdezhen, which had experienced massive disruption in its porcelain industry due to the state's shock therapy-style retreat. State interventions severely dismantled traditional production networks. Consequently, it will take a long time for post-SOPF private workshops and factories to build a new system in Jingdezhen, as they have suffered from the absence of a supportive, sustainable and self-contained ecology of production.

Today, the local authorities in Jingdezhen aim to reclaim the city's historical glory. Findings reported in this article reveal that the key to revitalising traditional craftsmanship in Jingdezhen's porcelain industry lies in three areas. First, the city's many craftspeople need to have a decent income, job security, basic welfare and development opportunities. They will then be in a better position to apply individual agency to inherent traditional crafting skills, improve their knowledge and techniques and increase the art value of their production practice. Second, lacking an effective coordinator, most private workshops and factories in today's Jingdezhen have little to no communication or interaction with local porcelain research institutes and universities. Therefore, new channels and platforms need to be established to enable Jingdezhen's porcelain practitioners to exchange knowledge and collaborate to study and develop traditional craftsmanship. Finally, self-initiated apprenticeships are necessary. Although such arrangements reappeared even before the collapse of the SOPFs, there is yet to be a well-developed social network to replace the SOPFs and traditional *bangs* in facilitating innovation in traditional craftsmanship.

It has been over a quarter of a century since the Chinese state's retreat from Jingdezhen. However, these three areas remain underdeveloped, indicating that, although the market-demands orientation is an essential attribute of traditional craftsmanship, the market alone is insufficient in safeguarding traditional crafting knowledge, skills, and techniques. For example, as revealed by Jingdezhen's pre-reform experiences, under the right conditions, the state may facilitate technical collaborations and foster skill-transmission networks, thereby promoting the growth of social capital among craft practitioners. Furthermore, through policy initiatives and financial incentives that encourage knowledge exchanges and community building among Jingdezhen's craft practitioners, the state can create better conditions for preserving and developing traditional craftsmanship without intervening in the actual

production practices. Moreover, in areas with better quality of governance in contemporary China, local decision-making processes tend to be inclusive, and autonomous social forces are perceived as the state's collaborators rather than prospective challengers (Tao et al. 2020). In addition, existing scholarship has demonstrated that local authorities that work more closely with local communities tend to be more efficient in providing public goods (Tsai 2007) and reducing transgressive contentions (Tao and Liu 2012; Tao 2015). Therefore, the local authorities in Jingdezhen can better support sustainable self-initiated ICH safeguarding in porcelain manufacturing by working with local communities of craft practitioners rather than overly intervening in the internal affairs. Finally, the state can and should take the necessary actions to ensure basic social welfares are accessible to crafts practitioners, especially those vulnerable to the risks imposed by market-oriented reforms due to their age, career stage or family circumstances. The state can thus create a decent social environment in which crafts practitioners feel respected and dignified, supporting the long-term resilience of local craft communities, which are essential to the safeguarding and transmission of ICH.

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Appendix 1: Interviewee Profiles

De-identified code names	Gender	Age group	Name of the SOPF worked for	Year entered SOPFs	Type of work undertaken in SOPFs
Interviewee 1	Male (M)	≥80	Jianguo Porcelain Factory	1950s	Porcelain green-body shaping, and then transferred to formula management
Interviewee 2	M	≥80	Sculpture Porcelain Factory	1960s	Pattern design, techniques development and administration
Interviewee 3	Female (F)	50–59	Weimin Porcelain Factory	1970s	Porcelain sketching and painting
Interviewee 4	M	50–59	Sculpture Porcelain Factory	1970s	Sculpture moulding
Interviewee 5	F	50–59	Sculpture Porcelain Factory	1980s	Porcelain sketching and painting
Interviewee 6	F	50–59	Sculpture Porcelain Factory	1980s	Porcelain sketching and painting, and then transferred to the technique department
Interviewee 7	M	50–59	Sculpture Porcelain Factory	1980s	Sculpture moulding
Interviewee 8	M	50–59	Hongxing Porcelain Factory	1980s	The experimental group in the technique department for developing and designing innovative products, samples and some exhibition crafts
Interviewee 9	F	50–59	Weimin Porcelain Factory	1980s	Green-body shaping, and then transferred to quality inspection
Interviewee 10	F	60–69	Art Porcelain Factory	1980s	Porcelain sketching and painting
Interviewee 11	M	30–39	Art Porcelain Factory	1990s	Choreman
Interviewee 12	M	40–49	Sculpture Porcelain Factory	1990s	Porcelain sketching and painting
Interviewee 13	M	40–49	Porcelain company of SOPFs	1990s	Marketing
Interviewee 14	M	40–49	Jingxing Porcelain Factory	1990s	Green-body shaping, compact machine operation and raw material test

Appendix 2: The coding strategy and process

We used Nvivo, a computer-assisted material-processing software, to apply the grounded theory methodology in our transcribing and coding processes. In general, we adopted a three-stage coding strategy to process and interpret our data.

Initial coding

Our initial codes are 'provisional, comparative, and

grounded in the data' (Charmaz 2006, 48). We may have unconscious personal biases towards Jingdezhen's porcelain development. Despite our efforts to apply professionalism where possible, we may still emotionally stand with individual interviewees. Due to our sociocultural backgrounds, we may also unintendedly or unconsciously immerse ourselves in the world views of our interviewees. To mitigate these methodological risks, we adopted the strategy of 'line-by-line coding'. In so doing, to a large

	Beginning year of learning craftsmanship	Learning approaches	Fate after laid-off from SOPFs	Type of produced/sold porcelain
	1945	Conventional apprenticeship taught by private workshop owners	Self-employed (set up a porcelain workshop)	Fine art traditional decorative porcelain
	1958	Professional learning in university or college	Self-employed (set up a porcelain workshop)	Traditional sculpture porcelain
	1977	Family teaching	Joined in Municipal Ceramic Research Institute	Fine art traditional decorative porcelain
	1983	Factory-assigned mentorship	Self-employed (set up a porcelain workshop)	Traditional sculpture porcelain
	1985	Factory-assigned mentorship	A casual employee working for different private workshops	Traditional sculpture porcelain
	1982	Factory-assigned mentorship	Self-employed (set up a porcelain workshop)	Traditional sculpture porcelain
	1982	Factory-assigned mentorship	Self-employed (set up a porcelain workshop)	Traditional sculpture porcelain
	1987	Factory-assigned mentorship	Self-employed (opened a Porcelain Bar in Beijing and now established a porcelain factory in Jingdezhen)	Fine art modern decorative porcelain
	1985	Factory-assigned mentorship	Self-employed (Set up a porcelain shop and a porcelain factory)	Porcelain table wares and tea wares
	1980	Conventional apprenticeship taught by factory masters	Worked for private porcelain workshops and now retired	Fine art traditional decorative porcelain
	1996	Self-learning without being taught by master	Worked for private workshops and now set up own workshop	Fine art traditional decorative porcelain
	1992	Conventional apprenticeship taught by factory masters	Self-employed (set up a porcelain workshop)	Fine art traditional decorative porcelain
	Not applicable	Not applicable	Self-employed (set up a porcelain factory)	Practical porcelain of hotel and restaurant wares
	1990	Factory-assigned mentorship	Worked for private workshops and now runs a porcelain factory	Practical porcelain of hotel & restaurant wares and wine containers

extent, we were able to reduce and overcome our possible biases and look at the data more critically and analytically. In total, we coded all transcription into 622 initial nodes.

Focused coding

Focused coding is 'more concentrated, selective, and conceptual' than the initial coding (Charmaz 2006, 57). At this stage, we sifted through the first-round nodes and categorised those initial codes that 'make

the most analytic sense to organise data incisively and completely' (Charmaz 2006, 58) into one group, namely a 'category'. This step resulted in 11 main categories: 'times background (before 1949)', 'times background (1950s–1990s)', 'policies in the 1950s – 1990s', 'factory commodities distribution', 'production practice in SOPFs (features, systems, guidelines)', 'recovery of the lost craftsmanship', 'breakthrough in craftsmanship', 'factory craftsmanship transmission system', 'welfare in SOPFs',

‘fulfilment of individual needs’ and ‘labour recruitment’.

Axial coding

Axial coding aims to construct ‘a dense texture of the relationship around the axis’ (Charmaz 2006, 60). In this step, we organised focused codes logically to visualise a dense structure of relationships around axes. This study aims to explore the roles of the state interventions in Jingdezhen’s porcelain industries in the mid to the late 20th century. Therefore, we established the axial coding around the different ‘roles’ in reshaping Jingdezhen’s porcelain industries. Based on the 11 main categories obtained from the focused coding stage, we finally created four axes.

Figure S1 shows the relational structure of the four axes (see the rectangles). The four axes that we identified

from the data, or the four leading roles of the state, are ‘Changing Agent for Industrial Systems’, ‘Coordinator of Research and Development’, ‘Shaper of the Labour Structure’, and ‘Provider of Opportunities and Benefits’. The circles in Figure S1 represent the categories and subcategories from the focused coding step, the number in one-way arrows refers to the count of references, and each referencing phrase indicates an initial node identified by the line-by-line coding strategy. For example, there are 18 initial nodes (obtained through the initial coding step) categorised in ‘Motifs of porcelain’ (established at the focused coding step). The subcategory ‘Motifs of porcelain’ manifests a feature of the SOPFs’ production (‘selectiveness in production’), which further forms a part of the state’s role as a ‘Changing Agent for Industrial Systems’.

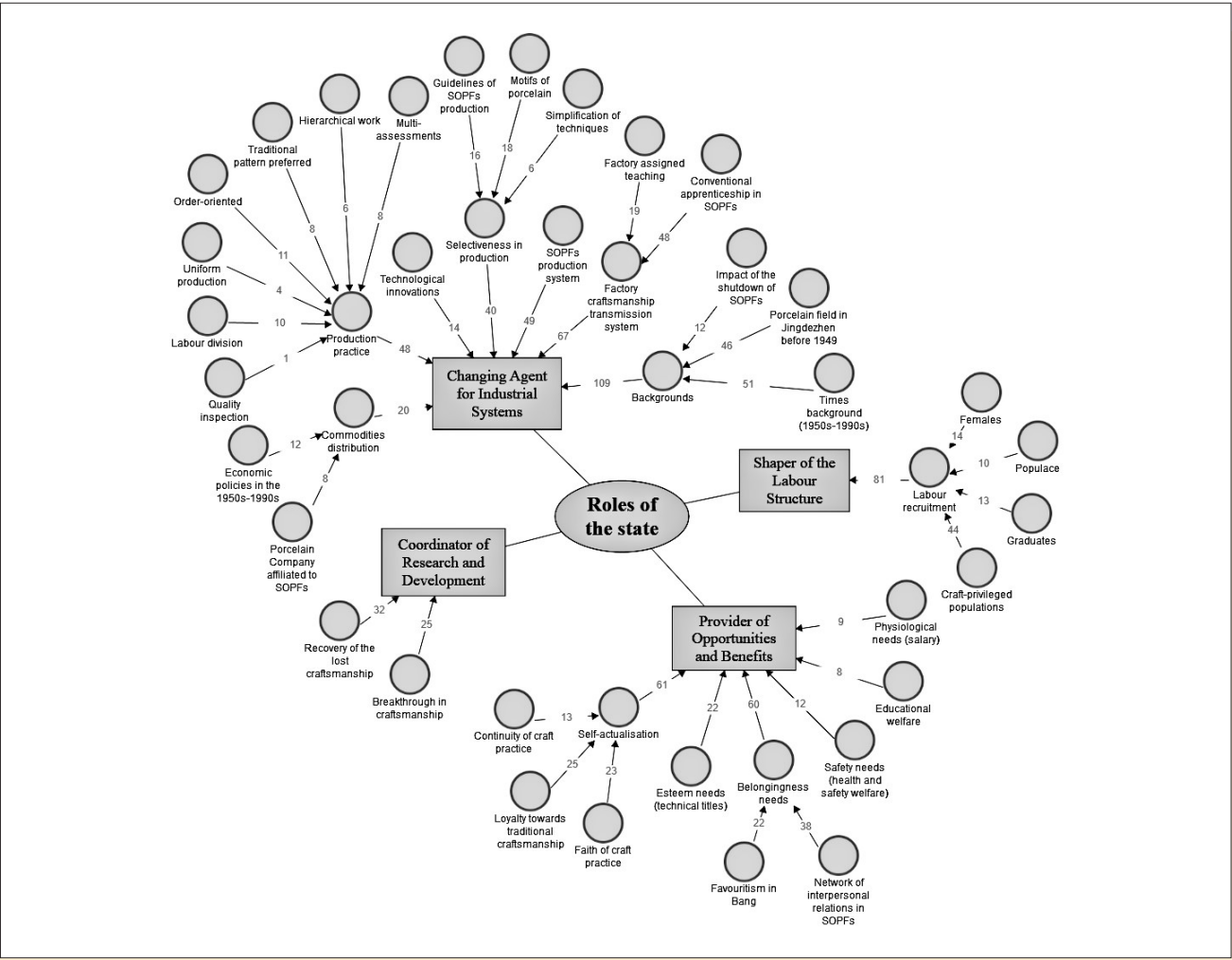


Figure S1
A relational structure of the coding strategy and process.

ENDNOTES

1. The term 'authenticity' originated in museums, where experts, for price evaluation, tested whether art wares were what they appeared or were claimed to be. Later, many curators and ethnographers tended to perceive authenticity as a characteristic of pre-modern life, emphasising 'handmade' and 'natural materials' when defining the authenticity of cultural products.
2. In 2004, the China Light Industry Association officially named Chaozhou as China's 'porcelain capital' for its market recognition, export scale and technological standards. Despite recent developments (as discussed in this paper), Jingdezhen is still widely regarded as China's 'porcelain capital' among Chinese society and by international organisations such as UNESCO.
3. For example, before 1949, wood-fired kilns were extensively used in Jingdezhen's porcelain production. In 1956, after years of research and experimentation, the state-owned factories in Jingdezhen developed coal-fired kilns to reduce the consumption of pine wood. By 1965, almost all SOPFs in Jingdezhen were using coal-fired kilns. In the 1990s, more advanced diesel-fired and gas-fired kilns were adopted by the SOPFs. However, the fuel may have affected the quality of the porcelain, as gas and oil cannot entirely replicate pine tar in producing the unique traditional feel of Jingdezhen porcelain. Therefore, even in the 1990s, the Art Porcelain Factory – the main manufacturer dedicated to producing Famille Rose (*fencai* 粉彩) fine arts ceramics – continued to use wood- and coal-fired kilns to manufacture export commodities, while other products were manufactured in oil- and gas-fired kilns.
4. As Alan Smart defined, *guanxi* means relationships of social connections built through the exchange of gifts, favours, and banquets (1993, 399). In Chinese societies, *guanxi* is built on pre-existing relationships of classmates, people from the same native-place, relatives, superior and subordinate in the same workplace (Yang 1988, 411).

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