

Study on the Typologies and Operational Frameworks of Rural Talent in the Service of Shared Prosperity: A Case Study of HZ City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of rural elites, individuals distinguished by their moral standing, economic resources, intellectual capital, and social connections within their communities, in advancing the objective of common prosperity. Focusing on the empirical context of HZ city, the research employs in-depth interviews and participatory observation to investigate the typologies, operational mechanisms, and illustrative instances of rural elites' contributions to this initiative. The findings aim to elucidate the ideological dimensions of common prosperity and offer practical, grassroots-level insights relevant to the broader project of national rejuvenation through the framework of Chinese-style modernization.

KEYWORDS

Operational Frameworks; Shared Prosperity; A Case Study of HZ City

1 The Significance of the Research

The involvement of capable rural individuals in fostering common prosperity serves to solidify ideological consensus at the grassroots level. Rural elites, recognized as the vanguard of societal advancement and cultural leadership, wield considerable social influence. Strategic engagement of these individuals in the pursuit of shared prosperity facilitates the aggregation of a comprehensive ideological consensus across societal strata, thereby mobilizing widespread participation. The engagement of rural elites in fostering shared prosperity serves to fortify the foundational talent pool at the grassroots level. Concurrently, the processes of urbanization and the concomitant migration of young, skilled individuals away from their ancestral locales have engendered certain challenges within traditional rural settings. These include, but are not limited to, the diminished capacity for organizational economic self-sustenance, the discontinuity between generations in terms of rural expertise, and the erosion of rural cultural heritage. The repatriation of rural talents represents a crucial mechanism for augmenting the intellectual and human capital resources available within these communities. The engagement of rural elites in fostering shared prosperity serves to catalyze grassroots innovation. The developmental trajectory of common prosperity, however, is inherently heterogeneous, necessitating context-specific strategies tailored to the unique characteristics of individual locales.

2 The State of Rural Elite Organizations Feeding Back the Countryside

Through an examination of the extant conditions pertaining to the contribution of rural elites to the objective of shared prosperity within HZ city, this study ascertains that, under the auspices of party committees and governmental bodies at all echelons, the expansion of the rural elite cohort has proceeded in a manner characterized by both robustness and systematicity. Furthermore, the composition of this demographic evinces a multifaceted diversity, and the functions undertaken by these rural actors are demonstrably extensive and varied. The specifics of these observations are elaborated upon hereinafter.

2.1 The scale development of rural elites is healthy and orderly

In 2014, HZ City pioneered the establishment of village-level rural elite organizations, subsequently facilitating urban expansion by 2016. Despite variations in nomenclature, including "rural elite counsellor," "rural elite council," "rural elite society," and "rural elite sorority," these entities collectively constitute rural elite organizations, each vested with corresponding functions. By 2021, the city's cohort of rural capable individuals had surpassed 18,000. The proliferation of rural elite organizations correlates with the expansion of the rural elite demographic, demonstrating a tendency toward stabilization circa 2021. This phenomenon is primarily attributable to the comprehensive saturation of village-level communities by these organizations.

2.2 The multi-dimensional composition of rural elite organizations

The composition of rural elite organizations exhibits a diversified character and a more equitable distribution.

Regarding personnel types, the membership encompasses not only indigenous rural elites, such as village leaders, but also external rural elites who have served in the military, engaged in entrepreneurial activities, or pursued careers in education and medicine.

2.3 The favorable role of rural elite organizations

The "Opinions on Supporting Zhejiang's High-quality Development and Construction of a Common Prosperity Demonstration Zone," jointly promulgated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on June 10, 2021, delineated the multifaceted dimensions of common prosperity. These dimensions encompass: material affluence and enhanced living standards; the cultivation of spiritual self-assurance and societal advancement; the establishment of a sustainable and amenable environment; the fostering of social cohesion and harmonious relations; the provision of universal public services; and the promotion of comprehensive human development.

Within the context of HZ city, the contributions of rural elites encompass a wide spectrum of the aforementioned six objectives. Specifically, beyond conventional functions such as investment attraction, philanthropic endeavors, and public service initiatives, the role of rural elites has become increasingly salient in recent years across domains including cultural heritage preservation, policy consultation, the resolution of social conflicts, policy advocacy, administrative support, oversight and monitoring, ecological and environmental protection, and talent acquisition. For instance, in 2021, the number of participants in cultural heritage initiatives totaled 3,699, while those involved in policy dissemination reached 3,869.

3 A Typological Analysis of Rural Elite Organizations Participating in Common Prosperity

Based on comprehensive fieldwork, incorporating both interviews and survey instruments, a typology is established, differentiated by the dimensions of "member political influence" and "system genesis (endogenous or exogenous)" (cf. Table 1).

Table 1 Types of Rural Elite Organizations

Types of rural elite organizations		(Member) Political influence		
		high	moderate	low
System generation	endogeny	inheritance mode	consultation mode	auxiliary mode
	external	mutual interest mode	charity mode	cultivation mode

The political influence of rural elites, as it pertains to their involvement in rural elite organizations, varies across different identity groups. System generation denotes an endogenous and stable organizational framework within the village, arising from the interactions of various actors. This endogenous system contrasts with externally imposed governmental decrees or regulations, representing an institutional arrangement introduced from outside. Consequently, six idealized types emerge. Moreover, it is observed that these distinct types of rural elites exert feedback functions across industry, organization, talent, culture, intelligence, and service, thereby contributing to the six dimensions of common prosperity (refer to Table 2).

Table 2 The correlative dynamics among the compositional prerequisites, functional orientations, and the attainment of shared prosperity within diverse rural elite organizational typologies.

Types of Rural Elite Organizations	System Generation	Political Influence of Member	Function	Type of feedback	Prosperity in Common
mutual interest mode	endogeny	high	striving for projects, attracting investment	industry back-feeding	rich and affluent
charity mode	endogeny	moderate	public service, charitable activities	service feedback	public service inclusive
cultivation mode	endogeny	low	ecological environmental protection, homesickness return	talent feedback	environment livable
inheritance mode	external	high	traditional maintenance, cultural heritage	cultural feedback	all-round development of human being
consultation mode	external	moderate	decision-making consultation, policy advocacy	intelligence-anti-feed	Spiritual self-confidence
auxiliary mode	external	low	social governance, administrative assistance, supervision and inquiry	organization feedback	social harmony and harmony

3.1 Mutual Interest Mode: Industry Insights Contribute to the Enrichment and Advancement of Societal Well-being

The symbiotic relationship between rural elite organizations and local communities fosters economic advancement through industrial feedback mechanisms. The "4 + X" initiative, spearheaded by the WX District, exemplifies this dynamic. This program has facilitated the "WX Rural Elite Hometown Tour" for five consecutive years, attracting over 600 WX rural elites for investigative exchanges and the introduction of over 30 projects, including engineering machinery big data ventures. Furthermore, the strategic classification and listing of numerous rural elites has bolstered the demonstration base for shared prosperity, thereby amplifying its demonstrative and catalytic impact on the augmentation of villager income.

3.2 Charity Mode: Service Feedback Helps Public Service Inclusiveness

Charity Mode of rural elite organization, characterized by a "Noblesse Oblige" ethos rooted in local sentiment and a "localism honor morality of the native land," facilitates the dissemination of public services within the community through reciprocal Tzu Chi service. For instance, the NX Rural Talents Nurturing Hometown Public Welfare Matrix has contributed over 70 million yuan over a five-year period. Furthermore, Cai, a rural elite from DQ, has invested 50 million yuan (49%) in the construction of an elderly care service center, offering comprehensive healthcare services that integrate health promotion, dietary therapy, and safety protocols.

3.3 Cultivation mode: Talent nurturing helps the environment to be livable and suitable for industry

The advent of rural elite organizations, facilitated by their entrepreneurial endeavors and the cultivation of local talent, has demonstrably enhanced the habitability of village communities and fostered collective prosperity. A case in point is the post-90s entrepreneur Song, whose establishment of a family farm has provided opportunities for over eighty farmers, generated employment for nearly one hundred individuals, and garnered accolades such as 'Exemplary Rural Leader'. These rural elites are instrumental in the 'Two Mountains' transformation, spearheading the 'Head Geese' initiative, and cultivating green rural development as a burgeoning entrepreneurial landscape.

3.4 Charity mode: Cultural engagement fosters holistic individual development

The lineage-based rural elite structure demonstrates a pronounced focus on village-level dynamics, the perpetuation of local context, cultural evolution, and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, thereby fostering holistic human development through cultural feedback mechanisms. For instance, WX's initiatives, spearheaded by local artists, facilitated the excavation and preservation of Lougang culture, contributing to its successful application within the Taihu Lake region. Similarly, the revitalization and protection of the horse lantern tradition were achieved through the efforts of DQ's rural elite, Zhu, who organized a new horse lantern troupe. Furthermore, CX's rural elites are actively involved in the inheritance and protection of the baiyelong intangible cultural heritage.

3.5 Consultation mode: Constructive intellectual critique fosters both spiritual self-assurance and personal development

Consultative rural organizations are increasingly pivotal in fostering internal participation, thereby contributing to the spiritual and material prosperity of rural communities through intellectual feedback mechanisms, including policy consultation and dissemination. For instance, WX has pioneered the establishment of a 'rural elite think tank,' actively expanding channels for soliciting 'suggestions and recommendations' by integrating rural elites into key party and government meetings, resulting in 176 deliberation and consultation initiatives. Similarly, CX rural elites have independently organized 'civilized rural wind trumpet groups,' facilitating the direct communication of party and government policies to the populace.

3.6 Auxiliary mode: Organize back-feeding to help social harmony and harmony

The auxiliary rural elite organization contributes to social cohesion and stability through its functions in social governance, administrative support, oversight, and investigation. For instance, AJ established a "Talk Lulu" studio, enabling expert mediators to address diverse conflicts and disputes, including those related to comprehensive environmental improvements in small towns, as well as land acquisition and demolition. A prominent township in WX has innovated the "Fellow Villagers Help" studio to address the challenges posed by a large population, numerous enterprises,

cultural diversity, and complex social contradictions, thereby establishing a model of rural elites' participation in social governance under the rubric of "new governance."

4 An Analysis of the Mechanism of Rural Talents Helping the Common Prosperity

On the basis of typological analysis, this paper analyzes the internal operation mechanism and system of different types of rural talents nurturing rural areas to help common prosperity.

First, the social reproduction function. The work of the grassroots party is not only to absorb society, but also to actively shape society. Within this organisation, the party is dominant, but it is also social because it absorbs different types of non-party groups, is an 'absorptive social reproduction', more embodies the flexible and enculturation of governance technology.

Second, the open consultation mechanism of rural communities. In accordance with the requirements of consultation with the people and consultation for the people, we should vigorously develop grassroots consultative democracy, focusing on grassroots consultation. Stimulating the backbone of the peasant masses to participate in building the country has its institutional basis.

Third, the construction of an emotional grassroots participation system based on honour and dignity. In the analytical framework of "state-society", the work of the capable people in the countryside has built a platform that links personal honour and dignity with political values and national interests, reshapes the rural elites, and ultimately promotes the construction of common prosperity.

Its basic logic is that honour and dignity arise from the needs of individual self-satisfaction and the desire for social recognition, which is the source of motivation. According to a set of procedures, the grassroots political power grants the title of rural elite to elite citizens who conform to the country's mainstream values, and issues corresponding certificates of honour. The limited number of rural elite honours, supplemented by a dynamic exit mechanism, is the main content of the grassroots honour system. The grassroots honour system has virtually become a link between the state and society. It links personal honour and dignity with political values and national interests. On the one hand, it promotes political identity through the mechanism of recognition. On the other hand, it integrates social values through the exit mechanism. By satisfying the personal pursuit of honour and the general recognition of society, it realizes and establishes a good coupling of the social moral order and the political order, promotes the prosperity and development of the whole society in the interaction between self-motivation and the demonstration orientation of the state, and realizes the common prosperity of all the people.

5 Four Pairs of Relationships of Rural Elites Contribute to Shared Prosperity

5.1 Unity and diversity : the relationship between the goal of common prosperity and diversity in local practice

The concept of "every village has its own temperament and temperament" is a notable one. In certain regions, the endeavours of rural elites are thriving, while in others, they encounter challenges. The fundamental problem is that the unified goal of common prosperity has not been developed into a rich and diversified localized practice, and the resource endowment of the village itself has not been fully explored (endogenous and external introduction; members of the political influence) to design a common prosperity program in line with their own logic.

5.2 Tradition and Modernity : The Relationship between Traditional Ethics and Modern Governance

The governance of rural communities by individuals endowed with the qualities traditionally associated with the role of the 'squire' represents a departure from the customary model. However, it is important to recognise the emergence of a social action space characterised by the presence of individuals who embody traditional ethical values. In the contemporary context, the integration of diverse elements, resources and groups in the form of rural capable people's work remains a challenging task. This is particularly so in the context of addressing the trend of 'hollowing out' in rural areas within the broader framework of 'multiple governance'. The objective is to break the state of dispersion of rural social authority and to establish a group that is widely recognised, respected and held in high esteem by the people.

5.3 Elite and mass : the relationship between elite participation and mass participation

Whilst elite action has been shown to enhance the efficacy of the participation process and galvanise public enthusiasm for participation, it has also been demonstrated that such actions can concomitantly erode the egalitarianism

of the situation. A salient concern pertains to the potential impact of rural elites' endeavours to enhance common prosperity on the balance of grassroots political power. This is a matter of particular concern when considering the possibility that the influence of the collective may ultimately prevail over that of the individual elite, thereby potentially eroding the overall welfare of society.

5.4 Benefit-sharing and mutual benefit : the relationship between the tendency of benefit-sharing and the moral mutual benefit of hometown

The altruistic contributions of rural residents towards the collective prosperity of their communities stem from their profound sense of moral obligation towards their place of origin. This phenomenon can be considered a rational choice, underpinned by certain emotional values and motivated by a desire to promote public welfare. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that certain rural elites may employ opportunistic strategies to maximise their own or small group interests through policy arbitrage. Consequently, in the pursuit of promoting common prosperity, it is imperative to galvanise the commitment of rural elites to contribute to the betterment of the countryside, whilst concurrently establishing a regulatory framework to impede institutional arbitrage.

6 The Coping Strategies of Rural Elites Contribute to Shared Prosperity

The objective is twofold: firstly, to strengthen the construction of two key teams, and secondly, to establish a 'rural talent pool'. The existing rural talent pool will be systematically developed and the access and exit standards for these individuals will be refined. A multifaceted approach will be employed to assess rural talent, with a focus on ideological and political aptitude, personal morality, professional achievements, social impact, and other pertinent factors. The team structure will be continuously optimised. In the reserve of rural elites, the principle of unity of consistency and diversity should be adhered to, with emphasis placed on individuals outside and inside the party. The cultivation of a group of new generation groups with feelings, responsibilities, achievements and influences is also recommended, as is the formation of a key circle.

The objective is twofold: firstly, to improve and optimise the four sets of operational systems, and secondly, to establish an organisational leadership system. The first of these is the organisational leadership system. It is imperative to incorporate the contributions of rural capable individuals into the comprehensive consideration of Party committees (Party groups) at all levels. Furthermore, there is a necessity to fortify the work pattern of unified leadership of Party committees (Party groups) and to delineate the respective responsibilities of all relevant parties. The list of rural elite resources information, contact list, target task list, activity list, and effectiveness evaluation list should be clarified, and coordination of the promotion of rural elites to help common prosperity should be ensured. The second is the ideological guidance system. The overall leadership of the Party will be strengthened throughout all aspects of the work of rural elites. The ideological and political guidance of rural elites will be systematically strengthened, and the effectiveness of education and training will be enhanced by the organisation of training courses for leaders of rural elites' associations and backbone talents of rural elites, as well as the organisation of rural elites' lecturing groups. Concurrently, targeted activities such as excursions to the rural elite's place of origin and lectures in the rural elite's locality will be organised to further enhance understanding, feelings and recognition. Thirdly, the role of the system is addressed. In alignment with the overarching theme of common prosperity, efforts will be made to establish a platform and to streamline channels through which rural elites can leverage their distinct advantages in supporting industrial development, cultural enhancement, rural governance, ecological sustainability, public welfare and philanthropy. Through collaborative endeavours, the objective is to foster the harmonised advancement of the six common prosperity levels. Fourthly, the effectiveness evaluation system. In view of the party committees (party groups) at all levels, it is necessary to highlight the work innovation, concentric cohesion, organisational construction, reputation evaluation and other aspects of rural capable people. Furthermore, the establishment and improvement of the mechanism of 'outstanding horse racing' is required, as is the comprehensive formation of a consistent and strict implementation of the work atmosphere. For rural elite organisations, exploration of evaluation methods for effectiveness is recommended, with further leadership to promote effective "rotation".

The objective is to facilitate the realisation of five functional values. The first of these is the value of developing energy storage. It is imperative to leverage the advantages of abundant resources and extensive rural-urban connectivity to explore strategies that enhance the role of rural-urban capable individuals as image ambassadors to attract wealth and talent. Additionally, it is crucial to establish rural-urban capable individuals' networks to attract investment and talent, thereby charting a novel course for shared prosperity. It is essential to ensure effective 'chain and group matching' and maintain an 'excellent structure'. The second is the value of culture. The selection and excavation of a group of intangible cultural heritage, skill inheritors, and rural elites should be undertaken, with the subsequent narration of tales concerning

cultural elites. This will encourage rural elites to activate historical and cultural heritages, create rural cultural industry projects, form well-known cultural IPs, and enhance the new advantages of common prosperity, thereby fostering a sense of common prosperity culture. The third is the value of unity and stability. The absorption of rural elites in grassroots public affairs decision-making, consultation, deliberative democracy, discussion, dialogue and other activities, and the promotion of grassroots deliberative democracy in an orderly manner, is also recommended. The advantages of rural elites should be fully utilized. Lao Niang Uncle's human relationships are to be relied upon, and the "four governance integration" is to be promoted through methods such as "rural elite package case resolution" and "rural elite class system". Platform carriers such as rural elite studios are to be utilized. " Fourthly, the value of promoting green to beauty. The concept of ecological civilization is anchored, with a focus on the joint construction of beautiful cities, towns and villages. The role of the 'think tank' of rural elites is maximized, with the 'green water and green mountain protection group' and 'environmental protection supervision team' of rural elites being utilized effectively. The great beauty of the world and the United States is promoted. The fifth is the value of public good. Focusing on volunteer services and public welfare activities such as helping the disabled, donating funds to help students, and helping the poor, we plan to create a number of shining business cards for rural elites to help the common prosperity, and promote the improvement of people's livelihood and well-being.