

Influencing Factors of Social Capital Formation and Development in Urban Communities

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Abstract: With the rapid economic development in China, there has been an increasing emergence of new urban communities. However, these communities commonly exhibit a pattern of residents' indifference to community affairs, low sense of belonging and identity, and insufficient interpersonal communication, where neighborhoods are merely perceived as residential spaces after work hours. This phenomenon is primarily attributable to the deficiency in social capital within modern communities, characterized by weak human-to-human connections, limited community-individual linkages, and underdeveloped interpersonal networks. This study employs the grounded theory research methodology, conducting in-depth community fieldwork to analyze the influencing factors and mechanism processes affecting the formation and development of social capital in urban communities. The findings aim to offer theoretical and practical references for fostering social capital in community development.

Keywords: Community Governance; Urban Communities; Social Capital; Public Spirit.

1. Introduction

A community refers to a geographically bounded living collective composed of a defined population that shares common needs and interests, engages in frequent social interactions, and develops natural emotional bonds with psychological identification. With ongoing societal advancement, contemporary individuals benefit from enhanced educational attainment and unprecedented information exposure. This has catalyzed the awakening of enlightenment consciousness and individual agency, prompting growing numbers of residents to seek liberation from environmental constraints and social interferences in their pursuit of existential meaning. Yet humans remain fundamentally social creatures inherently requiring emotional validation and psychological solace through interpersonal connections. Paradoxically, workplace demands and diversified leisure modalities have progressively eroded modern social bonds, rendering social capital depletion a ubiquitous societal challenge. Effective community governance necessitates establishing coordinated participation networks among multiple stakeholders. The maximization of public interests fundamentally relies on institutionalizing multilateral cooperation between state apparatus and civil society. Such participatory networks emerge through continuous interaction and negotiation among stakeholders. Their formation and sustainability depend on effective social norms, shared beliefs, and value systems—particularly trust, mutual recognition, tolerance, and understanding. These constitute the axiological and ethical foundations for network stability, serving as relational linchpins that connect horizontal cooperation with reciprocal relationships. Consequently, analyzing community governance demands innovative analytical frameworks. Introducing the concept of social capital—manifested as civic participation networks and reciprocal trust relationships—enables systematic examination of governance mechanisms. This paradigm shift emphasizes cultivating social capital components: collective identity, interpersonal trust, equitable exchange norms, and citizen engagement networks, thereby

advancing both governance efficacy and societal harmony.

Since the 1990s, social capital theory has been systematically applied across disciplinary boundaries including economics, sociology, political science, and management studies. Scholars have increasingly employed this theoretical framework to explicate complex politico-economic mechanisms and social phenomena. This theoretical paradigm has introduced novel analytical perspectives to China's community governance research, proving particularly instrumental in mitigating modern social atomization and advancing harmonious society construction. Social capital denotes the structural attributes of social organizations—notably trust, norms, and networks—that enhance societal efficiency through coordinated collective action. Social capital emerges from residents' interpersonal engagements, crystallizing through relational networks, reciprocal trust, and cooperative dispositions. Its essential function lies in fostering mutual comprehension and strengthening communal ties through horizontal reciprocity. The quintessential manifestation of social capital resides in community-based personal networks that interconnect residents, bridge private and professional spheres, and facilitate goal-oriented collective action. Functioning primarily through informal networks, social capital mobilizes residents to undertake concrete actions aligned with common interests, thereby critically enabling resident-to-resident and resident-to-community cooperation. Wu Guangyun et al. posit that densely-knit, interaction-intensive communities experience social capital expansion concurrent with establishing stable reputational regimes. These regimes function as self-reinforcing social capital mechanisms that provide surveillance incentives and complement formal governance structures. Yu Shui et al. demonstrate that social capital constitutes a fundamental variable reflecting rural self-governance efficacy in contemporary China. Strategic cultivation of social capital significantly enhances villager autonomy mechanisms.

The development of community social capital is influenced by multidimensional factors, conventionally categorized into "hardware" (physical infrastructure) and "software" (social

infrastructure) components. The hardware dimension encompasses communal facilities including public spaces, cultural centers, libraries, game rooms, sports fields, and fitness trails. These interactional spaces facilitate spontaneous congregation during leisure hours, where residents engage in casual socialization. Through such incidental interactions, reciprocal familiarity and trust gradually accumulate, ultimately crystallizing into shared lifestyle patterns and distinctive community culture.

The software dimension comprises: Resident agency in governance decision-making, Institutionalized participation mechanisms, Diversity of community-organized activities, Availability and accessibility of communication channels, Intrinsic motivations for social engagement, Collective sense of community belonging. These interdependent elements constitute the social infrastructure essential for capital formation.

2. Research Design

2.1. Research Methods

Grounded theory, pioneered by American scholars Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, constitutes a qualitative research paradigm emphasizing theory construction through bottom-up inductive processes. Its epistemological core lies in generating theoretical frameworks directly grounded in empirical data, deliberately eschewing a priori theoretical assumptions. Researchers maintain an open analytical stance during systematic data collection through participatory observation and interactional documentation. Through iterative coding procedures—including conceptual categorization and relational mapping—the methodology enables theory emergence organically anchored in the collected dataset. The investigation of community social capital presents unique methodological challenges due to its multidimensional intangible nature. Conventional quantitative approaches may inadequately capture the latent dynamics influencing social capital formation. Grounded theory's empirical strength resides in its contextual immersion—obtaining primary data through in-depth ethnography and semi-structured interviews. This approach achieves three critical advantages:

2.2. Sample Selection

This study selects Hongta District of Yuxi City as the research site. While Hongta's overall economic scale lags behind China's first- and second-tier cities, its per capita GDP of ¥183,425 ranks highest in Southwest China, reflecting a relatively affluent standard of living among residents. Compared to larger urban centers, Hongta residents experience a slower-paced lifestyle with manageable work-related stress, characterized by ample leisure time and diverse recreational activities. Additionally, most communities in Hongta are equipped with comprehensive amenities such as activity centers, basketball courts, community dining halls, and game rooms, which provide shared spaces for social interaction. Frequent informal gatherings in these facilities foster robust interpersonal connections, sustaining cohesive neighborhood networks without signs of social fragmentation or widespread alienation. These unique socioeconomic and spatial conditions collectively justify Hongta District's selection as an optimal case study for investigating community social capital dynamics.

2.3. Data Collection

The interview method serves as the cornerstone data collection technique in grounded theory. By conducting in-depth one-on-one or group interviews with participants, researchers obtain firsthand data that establishes a robust empirical foundation for grounding subsequent research questions or developing novel theoretical frameworks. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the influencing factors underlying the formation and development of social capital. Accordingly, the interviews will focus on multiple dimensions relevant to social capital, including residents' neighborhood interactions, collective efficacy, daily socialization patterns, interpersonal networks, community participation, life value orientations, community cultural practices, sense of belonging, and cohesion mechanisms. Practically, the interviews will be conducted through one-on-one offline sessions scheduled during participants' leisure time, each lasting 40-60 minutes. Participants will be encouraged to express themselves freely while interviewers maintain an objective and impartial stance throughout the dialogues. The process strictly avoids preconceived assumptions and leading prompts, prioritizing interviewees' genuine concerns. Researchers will facilitate open expression of perspectives, flexibly refining the interview protocol based on emerging conversational dynamics and substantive content. This approach ensures methodological alignment with the constructivist principles of grounded theory while capturing authentic community narratives essential for theorizing social capital mechanisms.

The study ultimately conducted in-depth interviews with 30 participants across five major residential communities in Hongta District, Yuxi City. To ensure data representativeness and analytical rigor, the sample strategically encompassed residents across all age cohorts and gender demographics, including both socially active individuals and those with limited community engagement. This methodological approach yielded approximately 25,000 words of primary interview transcripts, providing a robust qualitative foundation for subsequent grounded theory coding procedures. The dataset systematically captures heterogeneous perspectives on social capital dynamics while preserving ecological validity through unmediated community narratives.

3. Encoding Process

3.1. Open Coding

Open coding is the process of progressively transforming raw qualitative data into conceptual categories through systematic comparison and abstraction, with the aim of generating theoretical constructs grounded in empirical evidence. This stage begins with the meticulous deconstruction of interview transcripts, where each sentence and phrase are analyzed to extract conceptual elements. Researchers establish comprehensive labels to achieve data saturation, ensuring exhaustive utilization of the raw material. Through iterative comparison and analysis of the raw data, initial conceptual categories gradually emerge. These categories are then organized and named according to their inherent dimensions, achieving preliminary conceptualization and systematization. During this process, researchers must maintain acute sensitivity to the data while minimizing subjective interpretations, ensuring all analyses remain firmly rooted in participants' original narratives. In this study, line-

by-line analysis of the collected transcripts yielded 48 conceptual categories (A1-A48). For example, the category "Community Game Engagement" was derived from the following participant statement: *"During free time, people often organize mahjong or card games through community chat groups. Once enough participants are gathered, we meet at the community game room. These sessions usually attract*

many residents, who engage in casual conversations about daily life while playing." Subsequent inductive synthesis consolidated categories with overlapping semantic meanings, ultimately forming 13 sub-categories (B1-B13).

3.2. Axial Coding

Table 1. Open coding and axial coding

Main Categories	Sub-Categories	Initial Concepts	Main Categories	Sub-Categories	Initial Concepts
C1 community facility	B1 leisure and entertainment	A1 book review	C4 community activity	B7 interest activity	A28 Aged chorus
		A2 chess and card game			A29 Community performance
		A3 Sip tea and chat			A30 Community game
	B2 fitness exercises	A4 square dance			A31 Horticultural planting
		A6 martial arts			A32 Parent-child interaction
		A7 Dance practice		B8 Interest Group	A33 Club Activities
		A8 Walk the pet			A34 Training to interested
		A9 basketball		B9 environmental service	A35 environmental health
					A36 Facility Technician
C2 Resident interaction	B3 Resident exchange	A10 Drop round	C5 community services	B10 Health Services	A37 community medical
		A11 Community gathering			A38 psychological counseling
		A12 Public chatter			A39 health inquiry
		A13 Wechat group chat		B11 Convenient service	A40 Express collection
	B4 Resident trust	A14 Frequent communication			A41 book borrowing
		A15 neighbourly help			A42 Canteen catering
		A16 dispute handling		B12 Discuss matters	A43 Transaction discussion
		A17 space-sharing			A44 declare oneself
		A18 Cultural fusion			A45 Get feedback
C3 community atmosphere	B5 community cohesion	A19 information sharing	C6 public participation	B13 Participate in a transaction	A46 Exchanging Ideas
		A20 Cultural identity			A47 problem feedback
		A21 leadership			A48 attend a meeting
		A22 participation of residents			
	B6 community identity	A23 quality of service			
		A24 Historical atmosphere			
		A25 greenery landscape			
		A26 Community care			
		A27 Transaction processing			

Axial coding involves the systematic integration and organization of categories derived from open coding, aiming to establish connections between categories and identify core conceptual relationships. This stage focuses on the iterative comparison and analysis of sub-categories to refine their logical and paradigmatic associations, thereby developing

higher-order theoretical constructs. By synthesizing categories based on their inherent relationships and attributes, researchers abstract and formalize the hierarchical structure of concepts, clarifying the levels and typologies within the categorical framework. In this study, the 13 sub-categories generated through open coding were further consolidated and

refined. Through continuous comparative analysis of their interconnections—such as how "informal interaction patterns" relate to "trust-building mechanisms" and how "shared spatial usage" influences "collective identity formation"—the sub-categories were systematically integrated. This process culminated in the identification of six main categories: community facilities, resident interactions, community ethos, organized activities, support services, and civic participation (Table.1).

3.3. Selective Coding

Selective coding focuses on extracting core categories from the established main categories while systematically analyzing inter-categorical relationships to construct a cohesive theoretical framework. Through synthesizing the hierarchical connections among primary and secondary categories, this study reveals that each main category represents distinct dimensions influencing the development of community social capital. The absence of any single category would result in an incomplete theoretical framework, as they collectively capture the multifaceted dynamics observed in the interview data. Centered on the core category of *"Factors and Theoretical Logic Influencing Urban Community Social Capital Development,"* a unified storyline emerges to explain the synergistic interactions among key elements. The theoretical architecture demonstrates how *"community facilities," "organized activities,"* and *"support services"* jointly provide hardware and software foundations that enhance residents' interaction willingness and motivation, thereby fostering interpersonal networks. Simultaneously, the triadic relationship among *"resident interactions," "communal ethos,"* and *"civic participation"* exhibits reciprocal reinforcement: frequent informal interactions cultivate shared values and trust, which in turn incentivize collective action, while sustained participation renews opportunities for relationship-building and norm internalization. This dynamic interplay creates a self-reinforcing cycle where material conditions enable social engagement, and relational practices reshape institutional structures, ultimately generating the cumulative effects of social capital. The framework thus bridges micro-level behavioral patterns with macro-level community outcomes, offering a holistic explanation of how urban communities evolve from spatial aggregates into socially cohesive entities.

4. Construction of Theoretical Model

The storyline derived through selective coding reveals that the formation and development of community social capital follow two interdependent pathways. The first pathway involves the institutional and infrastructural provisions by communities—including facilities, services, and organized activities—while the second centers on interpersonal interactions among residents. Field observations demonstrate that communities with robust social capital development universally exhibit comprehensive infrastructure systems complemented by diverse service provisions and activity programs. Conversely, in communities functioning merely as residential enclaves, the absence of such supportive frameworks results in insufficient interaction spaces and opportunities, leading to limited spontaneous encounters, low engagement motivation, weak collective identity, and consequently underdeveloped social capital. The provision of institutional and material foundations by communities serves as the essential catalyst for social capital generation. These

structural enablers stimulate and sustain resident interactions, within which the triadic dynamics of *resident engagement, communal ethos,* and *civic participation* exhibit reciprocal reinforcement. For instance, a positive community atmosphere enhances both informal interactions and formal participation, while frequent interpersonal exchanges conversely strengthen shared norms and collective action capacities. Ultimately, the infrastructure-service-activity triad establishes the foundational platform for social capital incubation, wherein resident interactions operate as the generative mechanism, transforming structural potentials into relational assets through iterative cycles of trust-building and norm internalization.

4.1. Community Facility

Community facilities encompass both essential utilities that provide basic living guarantees—such as water, electricity, internet, and heating systems—and social infrastructure designed to foster interactions, including sports venues, activity centers, reading rooms, and game lounges. While these social infrastructures are often overlooked, they play a critical role in shaping community social capital. Rural areas, for instance, typically exhibit stronger interpersonal connections due to the organic presence of informal gathering spaces, such as benches under ancient trees or makeshift chess tables at village centers, which naturally facilitate spontaneous interactions. In contrast, many urban communities prioritize residential functionality over social spaces, resulting in a lack of designated interaction areas. Even when residents possess the willingness to engage, the absence of supportive infrastructure severely limits opportunities for meaningful exchanges.

Thus, community facilities serve as foundational platforms for social capital development by providing physical spaces that enable and sustain interactions. These social infrastructures create structural resilience through their dual roles: ensuring functional utility while fostering relational connectivity. During the initial stages of social capital formation, recreational and fitness-oriented facilities attract residents through their practical appeal. As residents gather in these spaces—whether playing games in lounges, exercising in gyms, or reading in shared libraries—incidental interactions gradually evolve into sustained relationships. Over time, repeated encounters in these structured yet informal settings cultivate mutual familiarity, trust, and shared behavioral norms. For example, collaborative maintenance of communal gardens or spontaneous problem-solving during facility repairs reinforces collective responsibility and reciprocity.

The developmental trajectory reveals a cyclical process: well-designed social infrastructures not only initiate interactions but also become reinforced through the very social capital they help generate. Urban communities that replicate the organic interaction patterns observed in rural settings—by intentionally integrating multifunctional public spaces into residential planning—can effectively transform sterile living environments into vibrant social ecosystems. This underscores the indispensable role of physical infrastructure as both a catalyst and sustainer of the relational networks that define thriving communities.

4.2. Community Services

Community services function as both facilitators and sustainers in the formation of social capital. Their facilitative

role is manifested through two interconnected dimensions: first, by offering high-quality services that encourage residents to actively integrate into community life and participate in collective activities; second, by establishing trust-building mechanisms and normative frameworks that enhance residents' confidence in institutional systems and foster shared identity. As sustainers, community services ensure the continuous operation of facilities and programs while responsively addressing resident feedback, thereby maintaining the stability of communal governance systems and social cohesion.

The absence of robust community services significantly contributes to urban residents' social alienation and weak community identification—a prevalent challenge in contemporary urbanized societies. Effective community services cultivate an environment conducive to sustained interactions by strengthening reciprocity mechanisms between residents and institutional actors. For instance, transparent conflict resolution procedures and inclusive decision-making platforms not only resolve practical issues but also reinforce residents' sense of procedural justice. Similarly, intergenerational care programs and skill-sharing workshops create cross-demographic linkages that transcend utilitarian exchanges.

By enhancing residents' perceived value of communal life through reliable service delivery, community services lower psychological barriers to engagement and incentivize voluntary participation. This process transforms passive service recipients into proactive community stakeholders, gradually internalizing collective norms while externalizing civic responsibilities. Ultimately, the synergistic interplay between service provision and social capital accumulation demonstrates how institutionalized support systems can catalyze organic relationship-building, thereby converting administrative resources into relational assets that sustain community resilience.

4.3. Community Activity

Community activities and infrastructure operate in tandem, particularly during the formative stages of new neighborhoods where social capital remains underdeveloped. Even with comprehensive social infrastructure in place, the initial unfamiliarity and detachment among residents often result in low participation rates. In such contexts, well-designed community activities conducted within these facilities serve dual purposes: fostering interpersonal interactions while familiarizing residents with available amenities. By attracting an initial core of engaged participants, these activities ensure the functional viability and utilization of community spaces. Over time, through word-of-mouth diffusion and observational learning, participation gradually expands, creating a self-reinforcing cycle that enhances social capital accumulation.

Beyond their role in infrastructure activation, community activities independently drive social cohesion by bridging demographic divides and cultivating shared experiences. Field observations in several communities revealed effective practices: health clinics offering free elderly medical checkups, sports complexes hosting resident basketball and table tennis tournaments, and public squares organizing live calligraphy sessions where artists create and distribute traditional couplets. These initiatives not only draw diverse groups but also nurture convivial atmospheres that dissolve social barriers, thereby laying the groundwork for trust and

reciprocity.

Furthermore, empirical studies highlight the broader public health implications of community engagement, particularly for elderly populations. Research demonstrates that social activities partially mediate the relationship between sleep quality and cognitive function among older adults with chronic conditions, indirectly mitigating cognitive decline. These findings underscore the critical need for community practitioners to develop multidimensional activity programs that enhance participation among vulnerable groups. By integrating health education, skill-sharing workshops, and intergenerational events, communities can delay cognitive deterioration while simultaneously strengthening collective resilience. The interplay between structured programming and organic social dynamics illustrates how intentional community building transcends immediate social objectives, generating cascading benefits across individual well-being and communal vitality.

4.4. Resident Interaction

In the advanced stages following the initial formation of community social capital, resident interactions emerge as the primary driver and critical determinant of its continued growth. These interactions encompass multiple dimensions: frequency of neighborly exchanges, participation rates in communal activities, engagement levels in digital platforms (e.g., community WeChat groups), and the cultivation of collective identity and belongingness. While these dynamics are fundamentally shaped by the foundational infrastructure of community facilities, services, and organized programming, their sustained evolution depends on the self-reinforcing nature of interpersonal engagement.

The built environment and institutional frameworks exert lasting influence on interaction patterns. For instance, well-maintained activity centers naturally encourage spontaneous gatherings, while transparent service mechanisms reinforce trust in communal systems. However, even with robust structural support, social capital development risks stagnation if resident interactions fail to transition from community-guided initiatives to autonomous, organic practices.

During early developmental phases, residents often exhibit fragmented and passive engagement, necessitating structured interventions by community organizers. This dependency gradually diminishes as social capital matures. Longitudinal observations reveal a critical inflection point: once interaction networks achieve density thresholds, they develop self-sustaining dynamics. At this stage, residents autonomously initiate collaborative projects, resolve conflicts through established norms, and recruit newcomers into existing networks—all without administrative prompting.

This paradigm shift—from institutionally dependent to resident-led social capital—illustrates the evolutionary trajectory of community resilience. The maturation process mirrors ecological succession, where designed interventions (analogous to pioneer species) create conditions for complex, self-perpetuating social ecosystems to emerge. Urban planners and policymakers must recognize this nonlinear progression, strategically phasing out top-down programming as grassroots initiatives gain momentum, thereby ensuring the long-term vitality of community social capital.

4.5. Community Atmosphere

The self-sustaining nature of resident interactions observed in mature stages of social capital development is

fundamentally rooted in the cultivated community atmosphere and cultural norms. When residents maintain proactive engagement even without institutional guidance, this phenomenon largely stems from the establishment of a cohesive communal ethos shaped by prior multidimensional efforts. Within such an environment, interaction motivations are intrinsically heightened, transforming sporadic exchanges into habitual practices embedded in daily life.

This dynamic reflects a cyclical reinforcement mechanism where active resident participation fosters a positive community atmosphere, while the resulting social cohesion further amplifies engagement. For example, in communities where informal neighborly assistance and collective problem-solving become normalized, residents internalize these behaviors as cultural expectations. Over time, mutual accountability and peer-driven coordination reduce reliance on formal governance structures, as shared norms solidify into self-perpetuating traditions.

The interdependence between interactions and atmosphere reveals how social capital evolves through feedback loops: early-stage community-led initiatives (e.g., organized activities, trust-building programs) lay the cultural groundwork, while subsequent organic interactions sustain and enrich these foundations. Longitudinal studies demonstrate that communities achieving self-sustaining engagement typically exhibit three emergent properties—cultural codification of reciprocity norms, redundant interaction channels (both physical and digital), and intergenerational transmission of communal values. This evolutionary trajectory mirrors ecological systems, where initial structural interventions enable complex, adaptive social ecosystems to emerge. Thus, the vitality of mature social capital hinges not merely on infrastructure or policies but on the self-reinforcing cultural logic co-created and perpetuated by residents themselves.

4.6. Public Participation

When comprehensive hardware/software support, vibrant resident interactions, and a cohesive communal atmosphere are synergistically established, the longstanding challenge of low civic engagement in Chinese communities can be fundamentally resolved. In such environments, mature social capital manifests through high-frequency interactions among residents, where discussions about communal affairs naturally emerge during daily encounters—whether in shared recreational spaces, community dining halls, or digital forums. Elevated levels of community belongingness and strong social cohesion, reinforced by reliable service systems and institutionalized trust norms, collectively lower participation barriers and transform civic involvement from a discretionary act into a cultural norm.

This transformation operates through self-reinforcing dynamics: as residents increasingly engage in collaborative decision-making (e.g., park renovation consultations) or self-organized initiatives (e.g., neighborhood watch programs), their shared experiences deepen relational networks and refine collective governance capabilities. Concurrently, enhanced participation revitalizes community atmospheres by introducing new interaction opportunities, such as intergenerational mentorship projects or grassroots innovation hubs. The reciprocity between institutional frameworks and organic practices ultimately cultivates an ecosystem where social capital and civic engagement co-evolve, each amplifying the other's developmental trajectory.

The paradigm shift from government-led mobilization to resident-driven governance illustrates how foundational social capital investments can resolve systemic participation deficits. By embedding civic engagement within the fabric of daily life—transforming communal discussions into actionable projects and neighborly chats into policy feedback loops—communities achieve sustainable self-governance that aligns with China's modernization goals while preserving localized social vitality.

5. Conclusion

The formation and evolution of community social capital exhibit distinct phase-specific transitions, progressing through interconnected developmental stages. During the initial phase, characterized by fragile social capital, foundational efforts focus on providing structural and institutional scaffolding. This includes establishing social infrastructure, delivering essential services, and organizing engagement programs to create interaction opportunities. These interventions lay the material and relational groundwork for spontaneous encounters, enabling residents to overcome initial unfamiliarity and cultivate basic trust.

As development progresses into the intermediate phase, resident interactions gain momentum, necessitating institutional reinforcement. Priorities shift toward nurturing trust norms and expanding participatory networks through transparent governance mechanisms. Key metrics such as neighborhood interaction frequency, facility utilization rates, and digital platform engagement become critical indicators of relational health. Concurrently, refining community norms—such as collaborative maintenance protocols for shared spaces or consensus-driven decision-making frameworks—helps institutionalize emergent social practices, ensuring interactions translate into sustainable collective efficacy.

Maturation occurs when these elements synergize into a self-sustaining ecosystem: infrastructure operates seamlessly, interactions permeate daily life, and civic participation becomes culturally ingrained. At this stage, social capital manifests as organic problem-solving, adaptive resource-sharing networks, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. Maintenance focuses on preserving systemic resilience through feedback-responsive governance and space-time flexibility, allowing communities to dynamically balance stability and innovation.

This phased trajectory underscores the nonlinear, context-sensitive nature of social capital development. Early hardware/software investments create enabling conditions, mid-phase relational cultivation builds adaptive capacity, and mature-phase autonomy ensures long-term vitality—a progression mirroring ecological succession patterns. Policymakers must align interventions with these developmental logics, recognizing that premature withdrawal of support or overemphasis on singular dimensions risks destabilizing the entire social ecosystem.

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