

Conditions and Models for Implementing Multi-Actor Participation in Rural Homestead System Reform: A Case Study of Jiangxi Province

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ABSTRACT

The reform of rural homestead land is a critical component of global efforts to enhance rural governance, optimize land use, and improve the livelihoods of rural residents. This study explores the implementation conditions and models for multi-actor participation in homestead system reform, focusing on the role of government, villagers, and social organizations. Using Jiangxi Province in China as a case study, we highlight collaborative governance mechanisms that facilitate successful reform, including institutional frameworks, community engagement, and the role of intermediaries. The findings indicate that a well-structured collaboration between stakeholders can effectively address issues of land allocation, resource utilization, and sustainable rural development. Policy recommendations are provided to enhance the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the reform process, emphasizing the importance of participatory governance, transparent decision-making, and capacity building at the community level. The lessons learned can contribute to similar rural land reforms in other regions globally, promoting sustainable and equitable development.

KEYWORDS

Rural Homestead Reform; Multi-Actor Participation; Collaborative Governance; Land Use Optimization; Sustainable Rural Development; Jiangxi Province; Policy Implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the management and utilization of land resources have increasingly become a focal point for governments and academia, particularly against the backdrop of rapid urbanization and rural population migration (Chang, 2023; Lambin & Meyfroidt, 2011; Ostrom, 1990). The rational allocation and sustainable use of land resources are crucial for balanced urban-rural development (Van Vliet et al., 2015). However, issues such as improper land use, idle resources, and mismanagement remain prevalent, especially in developing countries where the effective management of rural land presents complex challenges. These issues limit the economic potential of rural areas and negatively impact social equity and environmental sustainability (Borras & Franco, 2010; FAO, 2020).

Homesteads, as an important component of rural land resources, play a key role in rural areas in China and many developing countries. However, with economic growth and the flow of labor between urban and rural areas, issues related to homestead management have emerged, particularly the increasing number of idle homesteads and low utilization efficiency. The question of how to achieve efficient

use of homesteads through effective policies and governance mechanisms has become an urgent issue to address (Lefebvre & Merrifield, 2015; Munroe et al., 2005).

In recent years, the Chinese government has vigorously promoted the rural revitalization strategy, taking rural land system reform as a key measure to optimize the allocation and management of homesteads and improve the efficiency of rural resource use (Berry, 2009). The reform of the homestead system aims not only to improve the living conditions of rural residents but also to promote balanced development between urban and rural areas, reduce urban-rural disparities, and enhance the sustainability of rural areas (Wang & Zhang, 2021). In this process, multi-actor collaborative governance has become an important model for homestead reform, involving the participation of multiple stakeholders, including governments, villagers, and collective economic organizations (Knight et al., 2012; Boonyabancha, 2009).

The core objective of this study is to explore the collaborative mechanisms of multiple actors in homestead reform, analyzing the roles, motivations, and mutual influences of different actors during the reform (Krishna, 2002; Ansell & Gash, 2008). By constructing a theoretical framework of multi-actor collaborative governance, this study aims to reveal how the cooperation of various stakeholders, including governments, villagers, and social organizations, can promote the effective management and utilization of homesteads.

Using China's homestead reform as a case study, this research examines how multi-actor cooperation can address the issue of low utilization efficiency of homesteads. The study will provide a detailed analysis of the government's leading role in policy guidance, the villagers' autonomy in practical use, and the intermediary role of social organizations in resource coordination and technical support. Through a systematic analysis of the interactions among these stakeholders, the study will reveal the advantages and limitations of multi-actor collaborative governance in homestead management and provide corresponding policy recommendations (Benjaminsen et al., 2008; Borrás & Franco, 2018).

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature on homestead management and collaborative governance theory, discussing the gaps in current research and the innovations of this study. Section 3 proposes the theoretical foundation and research hypotheses, clarifying the roles and interaction mechanisms of multiple actors in homestead management. Section 4 presents the research design, including data sources, variable definitions, and research methods. Section 5 provides the empirical results, showing the main findings from descriptive statistics and case analysis. Section 6 discusses the results and concludes with policy recommendations, summarizing the limitations of the study and suggesting directions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of rapid global urbanization, rural land management, particularly homestead land (zhaijidi) management, has increasingly attracted the attention of academics and policymakers. Effective homestead land management impacts rural economic vitality and social stability (Ostrom, 2019; Bryant, 2018). Improving the utilization efficiency of homestead land is crucial for addressing the imbalance of urban-rural resource allocation (Liu, Li, & Yang, 2018). However, idle and inefficient land use remains a significant challenge, affecting the quality of life and economic development of rural residents (Van der Ploeg, 2020; Lambin & Meyfroidt, 2021).

In China, the homestead land system has evolved from collective ownership to gradual recognition of rights (Li, Long, & Zhang, 2020). Initially, policies focused on meeting basic residential needs through free allocation and collective management, effectively ensuring housing rights (Gao & Tian, 2019). As economic development and urbanization accelerated, issues like idle land and inefficient utilization emerged (Li, Liu, Long, & Chen, 2020). Recent reforms emphasize the principles of "intensive use and revitalization of existing resources," including measures to utilize idle land and encourage voluntary land withdrawal by rural residents (Chen, Li, & Zheng, 2021). Other countries,

such as India and Brazil, face similar challenges in land management (Borras & Franco, 2018). To address these issues, many countries have implemented land reform policies to enhance land use efficiency and reduce urban-rural disparities (Knight & Scalise, 2021). For example, India's jointly managed land system has improved land utilization through multi-stakeholder collaboration, providing valuable insights for China (Munroe, McSweeney, & Olson, 2020).

Collaborative governance theory offers a framework for understanding rural land management (Shen, Yan, & Ni, 2023; Maher et al., 2023). It emphasizes cooperation among stakeholders—including government, villagers, social organizations, and markets—through information sharing, joint decision-making, and shared responsibilities (Zhou & de Vries, 2022). Collaborative governance has proven effective in public resource management and environmental protection, offering lessons for rural land management.

The government plays a leading role in policy guidance and resource allocation, but effective homestead reform requires villager participation and multi-stakeholder cooperation. Social organizations act as intermediaries, facilitating information flow and resource integration. Market actors are also crucial in developing homestead land resources, particularly in regions where market mechanisms have improved land use efficiency (Shi, Gao, & Fang, 2022). Incorporating cooperatives or other market-based entities can effectively stimulate the economic potential of homestead land.

Existing literature has gaps regarding multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms and the roles and responsibilities among stakeholders. Most studies focus on individual stakeholder roles but lack analysis of their interactions. Effective governance requires addressing challenges like conflicts of interest and information asymmetry among stakeholders (Nhamo et al., 2022; Deng, Xiang, & Chen, 2023).

This study aims to address these gaps by exploring stakeholder collaboration in homestead land management, using Jiangxi Province as a case study. It will analyze the government's leading role, villagers' autonomy, and social organizations' intermediary role in resource integration, providing insights for rural land management in other developing countries.

A review of existing literature indicates that homestead management and reform policies face similar challenges across regions. Collaborative governance emphasizes multi-stakeholder participation in land management, promoting intensive land use and sustainable rural development. This study will deepen understanding of collaborative governance in homestead reform and provide policymakers with practical recommendations..

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND CASE BACKGROUND

This section introduces the research methods and data sources used in this study, as well as the case background of the homestead land reform pilot in Jiangxi Province. To comprehensively understand the implementation of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance in homestead land reform, this study combines qualitative research methods, collecting data through fieldwork and in-depth interviews, and provides a detailed analysis of the background and implementation of the homestead land reform pilot in Jiangxi Province as a case study (Shen, Yan, & Ni, 2023; Maher et al., 2023).

3.1. Research Methods

This study mainly adopts a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the interaction mechanisms among different stakeholders in the homestead land reform process. The advantage of qualitative research lies in its ability to capture complex social phenomena and people's genuine attitudes (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). Particularly in situations involving policy implementation and multi-stakeholder collaboration, qualitative research can provide deeper insights.

The data sources for this study include fieldwork, in-depth interviews, and the collection and analysis of secondary literature.

In the fieldwork, several typical villages in Jiangxi Province that participated in the homestead land reform pilot were selected as research subjects. These villages involved multiple stakeholders in the reform, including the government, villagers, collective economic organizations, and social organizations. By observing and recording the interactions among these stakeholders, it was possible to systematically analyze the pathways for realizing multi-stakeholder collaborative governance (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015; Ansell & Gash, 2008). To better understand the actual impact of the reform, we focused not only on the overall progress of the homestead land reform but also on the differences in policy implementation across different villages, thereby revealing the roles and performances of various stakeholders in different contexts.

The in-depth interviews focused on representative figures from different stakeholders, including government officials, village cadres, ordinary villagers, and members of social organizations. The interview content covered the roles, interests, modes of participation, and understanding and execution of policies by each stakeholder in the homestead land reform. The first-hand data obtained from these interviews provided strong support for the empirical analysis in this study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview questions were designed around the specific experiences of each stakeholder in the reform, the challenges they faced during the process, and how they addressed these challenges. By gaining an in-depth understanding of each stakeholder's perspectives and feedback, a more comprehensive understanding of the advantages and bottlenecks of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance could be achieved.

For sample selection, this study used purposive sampling to choose villages and stakeholders that were typical and representative in the policy implementation process to ensure the breadth and representativeness of the data. Additionally, successful and unsuccessful cases were compared to better understand the different pathways and outcomes of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance. Through this research design, the study can analyze the process and impact of homestead land reform from multiple dimensions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Besides the selection of villages and stakeholders, detailed analysis was also conducted on the timeline of policy implementation to capture dynamic changes during the policy execution process and reveal the effects of collaborative governance at different stages.

Furthermore, this study utilized secondary literature, including policy documents released by the government, local government work reports, news reports, and academic literature. These materials provided background information that helped in better understanding the original intent of policy formulation and the specific measures taken during implementation. By comprehensively using both primary and secondary data, this study aims to provide a more complete and in-depth picture of homestead land reform, thereby better answering the research questions.

3.2. Case Background: National Homestead Land Reform Pilot in Jiangxi Province

Jiangxi Province is one of the national-level pilots for rural homestead land reform in China, with extensive reform experience and diverse practice models. The reform mainly focuses on "revitalizing existing stock and optimizing allocation" to promote rational land use, stimulate rural economic development, and enhance resource efficiency. The reform emphasizes policy guidance, property rights reform, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to boost rural vitality and ensure intensive land use.

In Jiangxi's homestead reform, the government has played a crucial role by formulating policies and providing financial support. Specifically, the government issued guidelines, subsidies, and technical support to ensure smooth progress, along with a multi-level supervision mechanism from the provincial to village level. This multi-tiered approach has improved policy implementation and ensured transparency.

Villagers are key stakeholders, and their support is vital to the reform's success. The government has included incentives, such as increased compensation for relinquishing idle land, to encourage participation. Villagers' enthusiasm is closely tied to their understanding of the policy and future expectations, making policy promotion and village meetings important for boosting involvement.

Table 1. Case Study Overview: Homestead Reform Strategies and Outcomes in Four Pilot Counties of Jiangxi Province Reform

County	Reform Strategies	Outcomes
Dayu County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed regulatory frameworks: Established the "1+8" policy framework to guide village councils in homestead management. - Promoted land rehabilitation: Encouraged farmers to utilize vacated homesteads for courtyard economy, adding 719 mu of arable land. - Activated land circulation: Converted vacated farmhouses into homestays, transforming resources into economic assets. - Demonstration effect: Encouraged community members to dismantle outdated and abandoned structures. - Digital management platform: Built an integrated rural homestead database for comprehensive digital oversight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased effective arable land by 719 mu. - Enhanced rural tourism through homestay conversions. - Improved community aesthetics and utilization of housing resources.
Yujiang District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-led governance: Established village affairs councils composed of respected local figures to manage homestead allocations and development. - Civic engagement: Extended the homestead reform model to other community services, enhancing rural social welfare. - Asset revitalization: Implemented asset use strategies such as paid usage, transfers, rentals, and collateral loans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthened local governance and community decision-making. - Enhanced quality of life through comprehensive community services. - Increased household income through diversified asset utilization.
Hukou County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive approach: Developed a unique reform model under the "Two Completes, Two Improves, Five Explorations" framework focusing on land return, restructuring, and utilization. - Innovative strategies: Implemented "Retreat, Reform, Utilize" with four models covering village renewal, industry development, cooperative development, and resettlement. - Digital approval platform: Launched an integrated land management and approval platform to streamline processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed targeted land reform models, maximizing the efficiency of land use. - Enhanced village renewal and streamlined land management through digital innovation.
Yongfeng County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-level leadership: Established a centralized leadership structure for coordinated homestead reform efforts. - Practical regulatory frameworks: Created 39 specific policies governing land rights, withdrawal, management, and construction. - Resource revitalization: Explored partnerships involving collectives, private companies, and social capital to better utilize idle resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensured coordinated, systematic reform implementation. - Provided clear regulations for land rights and utilization. - Boosted the use of idle resources through innovative public-private partnerships.

Collective economic organizations have been crucial in redistributing homestead land and coordinating interests. Through open discussions and village meetings, they have ensured transparency, reducing conflicts. In some villages, these organizations have replanned and redeveloped withdrawn homestead land through cooperatives, optimizing resource allocation and increasing income for both the collective and villagers.

Social organizations have brought new vitality to the reform by providing legal consultation, policy promotion, and technical training, improving villagers' understanding and acceptance of the policy. They also help address practical difficulties and coordinate interests, providing support such as legal assistance and technical aid for land surveying and reuse planning.

Market mechanisms have provided new pathways for utilizing homestead land. Some villages, in cooperation with market entities, have revitalized idle land for commercial and industrial purposes. In some pilot villages, market entities collaborated with village collectives to develop agricultural processing bases or rural tourism, creating economic value, employment opportunities, and benefits for villagers.

Table 1 provides an overview of the key features and outcomes of the homestead land reform in Jiangxi Province, highlighting the involvement of various stakeholders. The pilot in Jiangxi serves as a typical case for understanding multi-stakeholder collaborative governance in homestead management, revealing the mechanisms of stakeholder collaboration, their roles, and interactions. This longitudinal analysis will show the dynamic changes in stakeholder roles and interactions during different stages of policy implementation, providing theoretical and practical insights for similar reforms elsewhere.

4. CONDITIONS AND MECHANISMS FOR MULTI-ACTOR PARTICIPATION

This section will explore in detail the conditions and mechanisms for realizing multi-stakeholder collaborative governance in homestead land reform. The reform of the homestead land system requires the participation of various stakeholders, including the government, villagers, collective economic organizations, social organizations, and market entities (Shen, Yan, & Ni, 2023; Maher et al., 2023). Effective collaboration among multiple stakeholders is key to achieving the intensive use of homestead land resources and rural social stability (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015). By analyzing the homestead land reform pilot in Jiangxi Province, this study examines the specific roles of multiple stakeholders in the reform and their interaction mechanisms.

4.1. Conditions for Realization

The conditions for realizing multi-stakeholder collaborative governance include government drive, villagers' motivation, the accumulation of social capital, and support from social organizations. First, government policy support and drive are fundamental conditions for homestead land reform. By formulating policies, providing financial subsidies, and offering technical support, the government has provided directional guidance and material guarantees for the reform (Zhou & de Vries, 2022). In Jiangxi's reform, the government's active promotion was reflected in the gradual implementation of policies, training of officials at all levels, and the establishment of a multi-level supervision mechanism. Through the implementation and execution of policies, the government created a favorable external environment for homestead land reform, ensuring the smooth progress of the reform.

Second, the motivation of villagers is a decisive factor in the success of homestead land reform. The ownership of homestead land is closely related to the vital interests of villagers, and thus their attitudes and actions directly impact the effectiveness of the reform. Increasing villagers' awareness

of homestead land reform and encouraging their active participation can effectively advance the reform process (Li et al., 2023). The government has enhanced villagers' motivation to participate in the reform through measures such as increasing compensation, improving infrastructure, and enhancing the quality of life. Additionally, social capital, that is, trust, cooperation, and mutual assistance among villagers, is also an important factor in motivating villagers to participate actively. In some villages, strong community awareness and a spirit of cooperation among villagers have prompted them to take active steps in the reform, with collective decision-making and cooperative management becoming important means for the intensive use of homestead land.

The support of social organizations plays an intermediary and coordinating role in the homestead land reform process (Sun, 2022). Social organizations have helped villagers better understand the policies and increased their willingness and ability to participate through legal consultation, policy promotion, and technical training. Especially in policy promotion, social organizations have used grassroots influence to translate complex policy provisions into simple and understandable language and demonstrated the benefits of the reform through real-life examples, significantly enhancing villagers' understanding and acceptance of the reform. Moreover, social organizations have played an important role in resolving conflicts between villagers and the government and coordinating the interests of collective economic organizations, thereby reducing conflicts and disputes in the homestead land reform.

The introduction of market entities provides economic incentives and possibilities for resource integration in homestead land reform (Pienaar, 2022; Roengtam, Agustiyara, & Nurmandi, 2023). Through market-based operations, homestead land resources can be transformed into profitable economic activities, further stimulating villagers' enthusiasm for participation. In Jiangxi's pilot, some villages cooperated with enterprises to use idle homestead land for rural tourism or specialty agriculture. These market-oriented projects not only improved the efficiency of homestead land use but also provided employment opportunities and economic income for villagers, thereby encouraging more villagers to participate in the homestead land reform.

4.2. Interaction Mechanisms among Multiple Stakeholders

The core of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance lies in the interaction mechanisms among stakeholders. The interaction between the government, villagers, social organizations, and market entities in homestead land reform is a dynamic process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015). These interactions, through information exchange, resource sharing, and interest negotiation, drive the reform's progress.

The government provides policy guidance, establishes a legal framework, and coordinates stakeholder interests (Zhou & de Vries, 2022). Effective communication between the government, villagers, and other stakeholders during policy formulation and implementation is crucial (Bryson et al., 2015). Regular village meetings and policy briefings help convey goals, gather feedback, and adjust policies, improving transparency and building trust, which enhances cooperation (Shen, Yan, & Ni, 2023).

Villagers' participation involves protecting their interests and contributing to community development. Through spontaneous cooperation and collective decision-making, villagers achieve intensive land use. For example, some pilot villages formed cooperatives to repurpose withdrawn homestead land for agriculture or tourism, realizing land reuse and economic benefits while strengthening community cohesion (Ostrom, 1990).

Social organizations act as intermediaries, facilitating information flow and interest coordination between the government and villagers (Putnam, 2000). They help address villagers' concerns, build confidence, and provide technical support, such as land surveying and planning (Sun, 2022).

Market entities bring economic vitality by transforming homestead land into economically valuable resources. They collaborate with village collectives to develop tourism projects or agricultural bases, improving land utilization and providing employment opportunities, creating a win-win situation (Pienaar, 2022; Roengtam, Agustiyara, & Nurmandi, 2023).

The interaction among stakeholders involves a dynamic process of cooperation and negotiation. The government adjusts policies to meet villagers' needs, while villagers influence implementation through feedback and collective action (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Successful reforms often involve positive interactions between villagers' actions and government adjustments, promoting rational land use and community development (Li et al., 2023).

In summary, the conditions and interactions of multi-stakeholder governance are crucial for successful homestead land reform. Through government guidance, villager participation, social organization support, and market incentives, all parties work together to implement reform effectively (Pienaar, 2022). This evolving cooperation among stakeholders provides a sustainable model for rural land management and offers insights for similar reforms in other regions.

Table 2. Roles and Participation Methods of Different Stakeholders in Homestead Reform

Stakeholder	Role	Participation Method
Government	Policy Making, Resource Allocation, and Supervision	Formulate policies, provide subsidies, supervise implementation, and ensure regulatory compliance.
Villagers	Land Contribution, Active Participation, and Feedback	Participate in decision making, contribute land, attend village meetings, and benefit from reform outcomes.
Social Organizations	Mediation, Policy Advocacy, and Technical Support	Provide training, legal support, promote awareness, and coordinate between government and villagers.
Market Participants	Investment, Infrastructure Development, and Partnerships	Invest in land development, establish commercial projects, and collaborate with local communities.
Local Leaders	Guidance, Mobilization, and Conflict Resolution	Provide local leadership, mobilize villagers, address conflicts, and ensure smooth implementation.
Academic Institutions	Research, Policy Analysis, and Advisory Support	Conduct research on land reform policies, provide expert analysis, and offer advisory support to stakeholders.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section summarizes the main findings of this study and provides an in-depth discussion of the role of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance in homestead land reform. Through the analysis of the homestead land reform pilot in Jiangxi Province, we have identified several key findings that reveal the advantages and limitations of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance in rural land management. This section also compares these findings with existing literature to further elucidate the theoretical contributions of this study in the fields of collaborative governance and homestead land management, and discusses the practical implications for policymakers.

5.1. Key Findings

In the homestead land reform in Jiangxi Province, the roles of stakeholders and their interactions were crucial to the reform's success. First, the government's leadership ensured smooth implementation by formulating policies, providing subsidies, and establishing regulatory mechanisms. The government laid the foundation for stakeholder collaboration through multi-level policy promotion and supervision, enhancing villagers' trust in the reform.

The government also guided villagers and market entities to participate in land reutilization by setting policy objectives and incentives, such as promoting rural e-commerce, ecological agriculture, and tourism. The government's continued support and public service improvements, like infrastructure development, indirectly boosted villagers' willingness to participate and their capacity for collective action.

Second, villagers' participation was decisive for the reform's effectiveness. Their cooperation influenced the efficiency of land reuse and contributed to community development. Active participation led to higher efficiency in homestead reutilization and collective economic development. Villagers' involvement was linked to their understanding of policies and trust in collective action. Table 3 summarizes factors influencing participation, and Figure 1 illustrates stakeholder interaction mechanisms. Strong social capital enhanced trust and cooperation, improving reform outcomes.

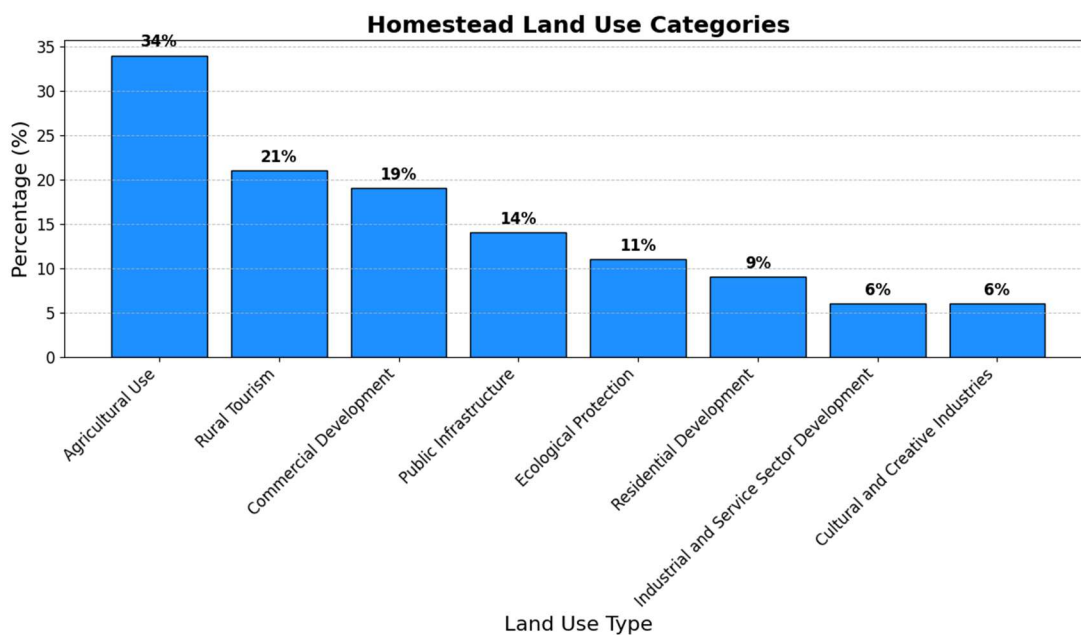


Figure 1. Distribution of Homestead Land Use Categories at Survey Sites in Jiangxi”

Economic incentives and trust relationships played crucial roles in villagers' participation. By increasing compensation for homestead land withdrawal and offering higher profit-sharing from reutilization, villagers' enthusiasm for participation was significantly enhanced. Mutual trust among villagers was also key, especially in collective decision-making. Trust and cooperation within the community enabled collective use of homestead land. For instance, some villages adopted a cooperative model to repurpose idle land for collective agriculture or rural tourism, achieving effective reutilization and economic value addition.

Social organizations played an important intermediary role by bridging the gap between the government and villagers, providing policy promotion, legal assistance, and technical support. This alleviated information asymmetry during policy implementation. In the early stages of reform, social organizations helped build villagers' confidence through support measures, encouraging active participation. They also played a key role in resolving conflicts of interest and coordinating stakeholders, particularly in the redistribution and development of homestead land, where their neutral position made them credible mediators.

Table 3. Utilization Categories of China's Rural Homesteads

Category	Utilization Type	Description
Agricultural and Industrial Use	Agricultural Activities	Primary use of homesteads for agricultural activities, including housing, auxiliary buildings, and courtyards.
	Cold Chain, Processing, Storage	Developing cold chain, primary processing, and storage projects for agricultural products to promote integrated rural industries.
	Industrial and Service Sector Development	Building premium agricultural parks, rural industry integration demonstration areas, and exploring new types of rural tourism.
Tourism and Hospitality	Rural Tourism and Leisure Farming	Utilizing idle residences for leisure agriculture and rural tourism to develop new rural industries.
	Catering, Homestays, Cultural Experience	Encouraging the use of vacant houses for catering, homestays, cultural experiences, creative offices, and e-commerce.
Residential and Community Use	Residential Housing	Includes self-occupied housing, employee dormitories, talent apartments, and executive villas.
	Public Services	Utilizing vacant homesteads for administrative, elderly care, and exhibition purposes as public services.
Commercial and Creative Development	Commercial Development	Bridging urban commercial resources with rural characteristics to develop unique rural commerce.
	Healthcare, Leisure, Creative Offices	Developing healthcare and leisure industries, as well as creative office spaces to adapt to aging and demographic trends.

Social organizations provided substantive assistance, including agricultural training and organizing visits to successful reform cases. These activities improved villagers' knowledge and skills and enhanced their trust and involvement in the reform. In complex projects, the expertise and neutrality of social organizations enabled them to mediate conflicts more effectively, ensuring sustained reform progress.

Market entities brought economic vitality to homestead land reform, especially in developed areas where market mechanisms enabled efficient utilization of land resources. In some pilot villages, market entities cooperated with village collectives to use idle land for tourism or specialty agriculture, resulting in significant economic benefits. This improved land utilization and provided direct economic benefits to villagers, promoting rural development and population retention. By introducing capital and technology, market entities facilitated commercialization, converting idle land into homestays or agritourism facilities, boosting local employment and income.

Government regulation was crucial for market participation. While market operations can bring economic benefits, insufficient regulation may lead to unfair resource allocation. The government needs to establish clear market rules and supervision mechanisms to align market actions with public interests. In Jiangxi's reform pilot, cooperation agreements clarified responsibilities and rights, ensuring fairness and transparency in land development. This model ensured economic benefits while protecting villagers' rights, creating a win-win situation.

5.2. Comparison with Existing Research

The findings of this study show certain similarities and differences compared to the existing literature on homestead land management and collaborative governance theory. In the current literature, many

studies emphasize that the role of the government is central to the success of homestead land reform, often neglecting the roles of other stakeholders, particularly villagers and social organizations (Shen, Yan, & Ni, 2023; Maher et al., 2023) . However, through the case analysis of Jiangxi Province, this study finds that the active participation of villagers and the support of social organizations are crucial in driving the reform, and in some cases, they can even determine the success or failure of the reform (Li et al., 2023; Sun, 2022) . This finding aligns with the collaborative governance theory, which emphasizes multi-stakeholder cooperation and resource integration, but further reveals the complex interrelationships and interdependencies among stakeholders.

Unlike some studies that stress government dominance, the findings of this study suggest that the government's role in homestead land reform is more about providing policy support and resource guarantees, while the initiative of villagers and social organizations plays an irreplaceable role in the specific implementation of the reform (Zhou & de Vries, 2022; Lundsgaard-Hansen et al., 2022) . This result further validates the fundamental assumption of collaborative governance theory, that the effectiveness of public governance depends on the interaction and cooperation among different stakeholders. Additionally, this study also reveals the importance of social capital in homestead land reform, which has been underemphasized in the existing literature (Putnam, 2000) . By analyzing the trust relationships and cooperation mechanisms within the community, this study finds that the accumulation of social capital is a key factor in enhancing villagers' participation and promoting collective action (Ostrom, 1990) .

Moreover, there are divergent views in the existing literature regarding the role of market entities. Some studies argue that market operations may lead to the commercialization of homestead land, affecting its public nature and equity (Pienaar, 2022) . However, this study finds that with effective government regulation and active participation from village collectives, the involvement of market entities can effectively improve the utilization efficiency of homestead land and promote rural economic development (Roengtam, Agustiyara, & Nurmandi, 2023) . This indicates that market operations do not necessarily undermine the public nature of homestead land, but rather that the outcome depends on the mode of collaboration and the interest-balancing mechanisms among stakeholders. Balancing marketization with public interest is key to achieving sustainable rural land management, and government regulation and collective participation are essential elements in ensuring this balance.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explores the role of multi-stakeholder collaborative governance in Jiangxi Province's homestead land reform, highlighting the performance of stakeholders and their interactions during the reform. The government's leadership was crucial in providing policy guidance, resource allocation, and supervision, ensuring smooth implementation and preventing conflicts. Through policy formulation, financial subsidies, and technical support, the government laid the groundwork for the reform, establishing a clear direction and ensuring that various stakeholders were adequately supported. By establishing compensation mechanisms and improving land rights, the government facilitated efficient homestead land reutilization, which was instrumental in ensuring both the economic viability and equitable development of rural communities.

Villagers' participation, supported by incentives and trust within the community, was vital for effective land use and community development. The government implemented various incentive programs, including increased compensation for land withdrawal and opportunities for income generation through land reutilization. Villagers' understanding of policies, as well as their trust in the reform process, directly impacted their willingness to participate. Social capital, such as trust and cooperative norms, played a significant role in motivating collective action among villagers. These factors were essential in promoting the successful utilization of homestead land and enhancing the overall social cohesion of the community.

Social organizations played a key intermediary role by providing legal and technical support, bridging gaps between the government and villagers, and fostering trust and involvement. These organizations facilitated the dissemination of information, helping villagers understand policy objectives and benefits. Additionally, social organizations helped resolve conflicts that arose during the reform process, ensuring that the interests of all parties were fairly represented. By providing training sessions, legal consultations, and technical assistance, social organizations played a critical role in empowering villagers and enhancing their capabilities to engage meaningfully in the reform process.

Market entities injected economic vitality through collaboration with village collectives, transforming idle land into productive resources and promoting rural economic growth. By leveraging their expertise, capital, and technology, market entities helped to enhance the economic value of homestead land, particularly in economically viable projects such as rural tourism and specialty agriculture. These collaborations between market entities and village collectives not only improved land utilization efficiency but also provided employment opportunities and diversified income sources for villagers. Government regulation was essential to balance commercialization with public interest, ensuring fairness and transparency in the process.

To further promote homestead land reform, the government should maintain its leadership role while enhancing policy transparency and communication with villagers. Strengthening incentive mechanisms, such as increasing economic compensation, improving infrastructure, and supporting cooperatives, can encourage active participation from villagers. The government should also focus on enhancing public services to improve the overall living environment, thereby indirectly boosting participation. Social organizations should be fully supported by providing funding and policy space to enhance their influence in policy promotion, conflict resolution, and technical assistance. Proper regulation of market entities is needed to ensure fair utilization of homestead land, balancing economic and social benefits, and fostering collaboration with village collectives to create locally beneficial industries like rural tourism and specialty agriculture.

Future research could expand on these findings by adopting quantitative methods and exploring the effects of multi-stakeholder participation in different regions. Investigating how policy measures can enhance social capital and improve villagers' collective action capabilities is another important direction for future research. Cross-regional comparisons could provide deeper insights into the success factors for homestead land reform, helping to summarize best practices under varying socio-economic conditions. Such studies could also shed light on how different stakeholder motivations evolve throughout the reform process, offering broader empirical support for improving rural land management and promoting sustainable rural development.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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