

A SYMPHONY OF THREATS AND HOPE

On the sustainability of traditional folk crafts in China

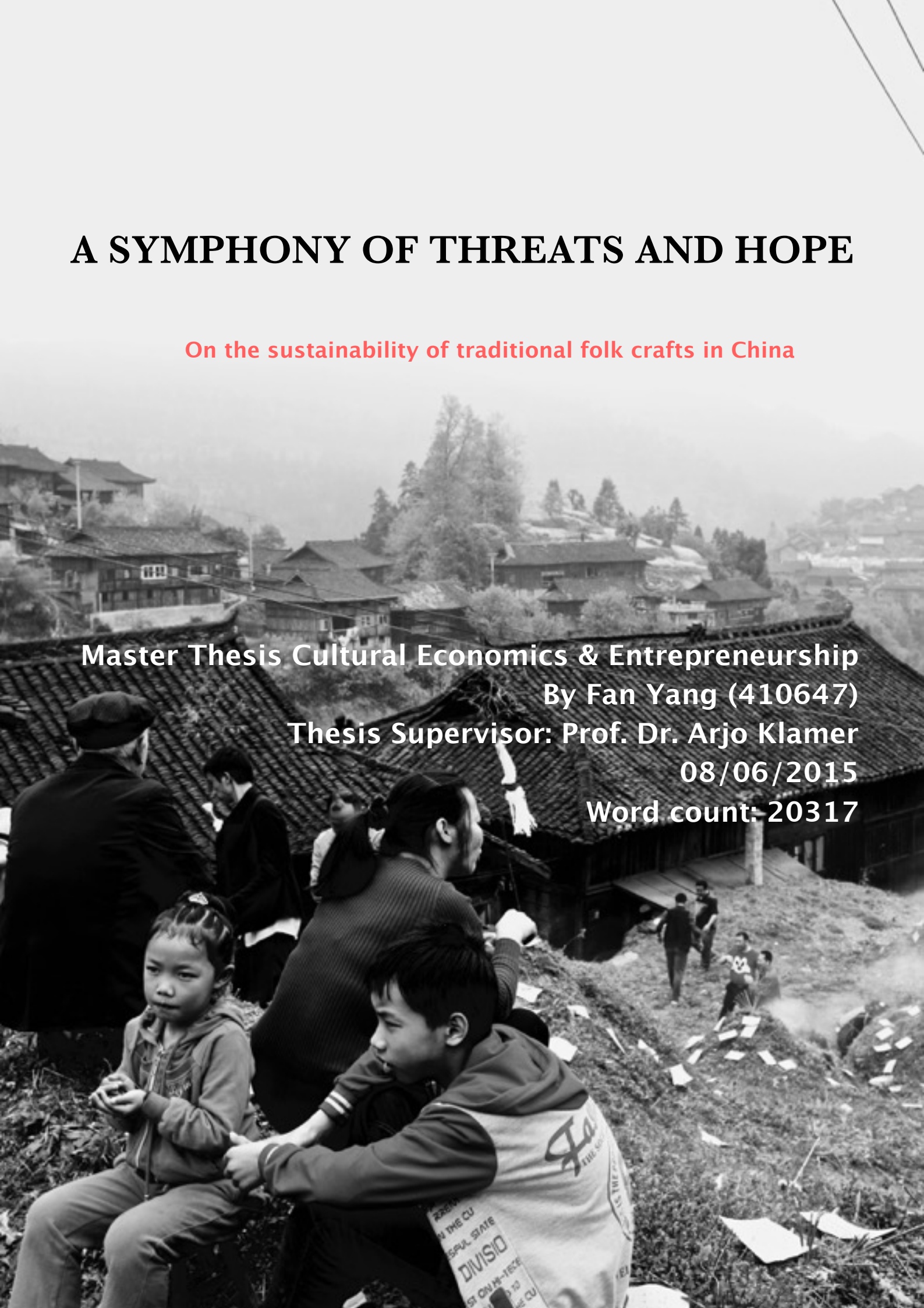
Master Thesis Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship

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08/06/2015

Word count: 20317



Abstract

Keywords: *crafts, cultural capital, intangible cultural heritage, values, sustainable development*

This thesis tries to identify the threats to the sustainability of traditional folk crafts in China based on a case study of traditional Miao silverware crafts.

Going from a value-based approach, the theoretical part combines the theory of cultural capital (Throsby, 1999), the theory of valuation, evaluation and valorisation (Klamer, 2003) and the stakeholder theory to argue that the sustainability of crafts depends on the valorisation of craft values by its stakeholders. Meanwhile, it builds a reference of the ideal situation where the sustainability of crafts can be perfectly guaranteed.

The empirical part compares the practices of traditional Miao silverware crafts with the ideal framework to identify its threats, using a mixed method of 60 surveys and 8 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders including consumers, craftsmen, retailers, government officials, etc..

The main threat identified is that both local government and craftsmen ignore craft values and the importance of a supportive social sphere. The market logic where quantity and economic benefits predominate has been largely used to judge craft values.

This makes the sustainability of crafts questionable because under pure market logic it is not possible for crafts to compete with machine-made products due to the lack of production effectiveness. The competitiveness of crafts lies in craft values and the appreciation of craft values in the social sphere.

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Preface: motivation and relevance of the research

The preservation of traditional folk crafts has been a topic that fascinates me and triggers my reflections during a couple of years. I would very much like to illustrate and contextualise the social significance and urgency of investigating the current situation of traditional folk crafts in China and other developing countries under similar situations through academic research with three stories of my own.

First story

I grew up in Yunnan province, located in the far southwest of China and common homeland of people of 26 different ethnic groups. The variety of folk culture and natural resources have enabled Yunnan to become one of the famous touristic destinations in China and around the world. Dali is an autonomous prefecture of Bai people in Yunnan, which became a famous touristic destination in the latest ten years because of government promotion on a large scale.

The first time I visited Dali was 13 years ago when I was a primary school student. I could still remember the impressive and exciting experience of visiting the small family workshops of traditional Bai handmade silverwares and Tie-dye (ancient resist-dyeing technique) crafts.

Seven years ago I went back to Dali and surprisingly found out that a lot of the workshops of handmade silverwares I visited before are now doing the new business of making “models” for machines of silverware factories to produce large quantity of silverwares through embossing, which they called “half hand-made silverwares”. Machine-made silverwares have good sales on the market, but anyone who have seen the real hand-made silverwares could notice the difference and the lack of delicacy of “half hand-made silverwares”.

People told me that it was the market that was ruling, and we had to follow its rules. But I still felt that something, not only the beauty of handmade silverwares, but something else was disappearing. People called it “being too commercial”. I felt that it was not that simple.

Second story

Tibet is an autonomous province of China where Tibetan people, Han people as well as other ethnic groups such as Monpa and Qiang people live together. Tibet is famous for its mysterious Buddhist culture, constructions and arts.

I went to Tibet three years ago, where I discovered the traditional Tibetan handmade jewellery made of natural precious stones of different colours that symbolise religious belief and tradition of the Tibetans. I was confused by the different price levels on the market because there was jewellery of thousands of yuan and less than one hundred yuan that all claimed to be made of the same material. I asked my Tibetan friend about their difference, and he told me: “don’t buy any of them, they are all made of fake stuffs”.

I wasn’t shocked when I heard what he said because I have heard similar things at various times in other touristic areas in China. But later on I felt that the fact that I did not feel surprised could mean that some serious problems are happening all around the ethnic touristic destinations in China.

Third story

Two years ago I went to Florence, the capital of Renaissance, which is also famous for its jewellery and leather goods craftsmanship. I was deeply impressed by a small detail happened in a shop of handmade leather products. The owner, an Italian woman, who did not speak very good English, wanted to persuade me to buy the shoes that I was trying on, and she kept proudly saying “they are made in Florence” for various times. I was impressed by the pride that she showed towards crafts made in Florence, which I have not seen in anywhere in China.

I wanted to find out why this natural pride showed in the shop owner of Florence towards their local crafts could not be found from any traditional folk craft makers or retailers in China. I think the deep reasons waiting to be discovered there could explain the chaotic situations of the folk crafts market and various serious problems regarding the preservation of traditional crafts in China.

I am deeply delighted that I could have the precious opportunity to get in touch with cultural economics studies during the master study, where I discovered the values of cultural heritage highly valued and concluded through academic researches and thinkings, the theory of cultural capital (Throsby, 1999), and the theory of valuation, evaluation and valorisation (Klamer,

2003) among other things, which enabled me to analyse and reflect on the topic of traditional folk crafts preservation in a systematical and refining way.

I want to thank my thesis supervisor Arjo Klamer, who gave me instructions and inspired me to keep reflecting on the topic from different perspectives. I also want to thank my interviewees from Maliao village for accepting my interviews with so much openness and treating me with hospitality.

The academic relevance of this thesis would be to explore the possibility to apply the theory of cultural capital (Throsby, 1999) and the theory of valuation, evaluation and valorisation (Klamer, 2003) to form a basic framework for assessing the possible threats to the sustainability of traditional folk crafts and providing possible solutions to increase its sustainability.

1. Introduction

The theory of folk crafts or Mingei theory was created by Japanese philosopher Muneyoshi Yanagi in 1920s (Kikuchi, 1997). Mingei means “art of the people”. The Mingei movement in Japan developed a national companion for the revival of folk crafts from 1930s onwards, which led Japanese people to rediscover their faith and pride in folk crafts and national tradition in a period of dramatic social changes caused by rapidly developed industrialisation and modernisation.

Mingei theory, created by the “father of Mingei movement” Muneyoshi Yanagi, defined folk crafts as crafts which are made for the people by the people, which carry beauty of handicrafts, beauty of intimacy, beauty of function, beauty of naturalness, beauty of tradition, beauty of sincerity and honest sweat, beauty of selflessness and unknown, beauty of inexpensiveness, and beauty of irregularity (Yanagi & Leach, 1989).

Under the similar general context of rapid economic development, industrialisation and urbanisation, the preservation of Chinese traditional folk crafts is nowadays facing serious problems.

China has 56 ethnic groups that offer rich resources of traditional folk crafts. Among 37 forms of intangible cultural heritage of China listed on Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage lists, 14 of them are traditional folk crafts (four of them are on the list in need of urgent safeguarding) (Intangible cultural heritage, 2015). Apart from that, there are more than one hundred kinds of traditional folk crafts listed on the national list.

The concept of craft is defined by Adamson (2009) as the application of skills and material-based knowledge to small scale production. It points out three basic features of the craft: it has an intangible form- the craftsmanship, and a tangible form because it is material-based; moreover, the production of crafts is on a small scale.

Going back to the Chinese context, all of these basic features of crafts seem to be altering, which leads to great threats to their sustainability. Firstly, some forms of craftsmanship are in the danger of “natural disappearance” because of lacking of utility in modern life (Han, 2010). Only one or two people who are the last possessors of these crafts do not have any apprentice (Han, 2010). On the other hand, other folk crafts, which have kept adjusting to adapt to the market,

have mainly two serious problems: the danger of being replaced by machine-made products and the use of fake material, both at lower prices (Han, 2010). These problems are also faced by other developing countries like India, Thailand and Vietnam (Han, 2010).

This thesis aims to identify and analyse *what are the threats to the sustainability of traditional folk crafts in China* based on field research in a case study of traditional Miao silverware craftsmanship with a mixed method. Traditional Miao silverware crafts are now facing the last two problems: large quantities of fake silverwares made of white copper by the machine are running rampant in the market.

The logic of the theoretical part goes like this:

Section two answers the question why traditional folk crafts are important based on three reasons from the value-based approach:

- Traditional folk crafts are forms of intangible cultural heritage, which forms part of our cultural capital (Throsby, 1999).
- Cultural capital is an asset of values that has the potential to generate new values. The values carried by traditional folk crafts are part of this asset.
- Losing traditional folk crafts is losing cultural capital and the values (aesthetic, historical, social, etc..) embodied in it.

Section three introduced the sustainable development of cultural capital. Following this concept, section two answers two questions in a logical order:

- How to maintain the sustainability of folk crafts? The sustainability of crafts depends on the valorisation of craft values.
- Who should do it? Based on the framework of Cominelli (2011), the stakeholders are identified as central government, local government, common-based institutions, craftsmen, retailers and consumers.

The previous two sections together build up the basis for a framework of the ideal situation in which the sustainability of crafts is totally guaranteed, provided in the section four. This framework will be used to assess the sustainability of Miao silverware craftsmanship and identify its possible threats in the case study. To apply this framework only needs to compare the actual situation with the ideal situation.

Section five is a separate section that introduces the context of the case study, including the history of Miao silverware craftsmanship, information of field research locations and Chinese cultural policy regarding traditional folk crafts.

The empirical part will be section six and section seven.

Section six presents methodology, objectives and the hypothesis of the empirical research.

Section seven firstly offers the results of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews separately, and at last summarises the main findings by applying the framework of the ideal situation, making connections with the theoretical part.

The last part will end with a conclusive reflection of the theoretical and empirical part, trying to go a step deeper to explain the reason why the threats identified in the previous part exist and provide solutions to the current situation according to it. Moreover, limitations and possibilities of generalisation will be discussed

2. Traditional crafts, intangible cultural heritage and cultural capital

Why bother doing research on traditional folk crafts and caring about its sustainability? What do traditional crafts mean to us nowadays? These are the first questions needed to be addressed in a thesis that talks about the sustainability of traditional folk crafts.

This section answers this question from three different levels.

- Traditional folk crafts are regarded as intangible cultural heritage to be safeguarded by UNESCO and scholars (2.1). But this answer is way too superficial and leads to the question why intangible cultural heritage should be safeguarded.
- From a value-based approach, Throsby used the theory of cultural capital to answer this question (2.2). This theory pointed out that we should see the stock of cultural capital as the stock of natural capital, both vital for human activities. We need to care about our cultural capital as much as natural capital. The difference is that natural capital is made of the material, and cultural capital is made of values that are expressed in tangible or intangible form. Moreover, this stock of values itself has the potential to generate new values.
- Once clarified this, it could be argued further that the values of traditional folk crafts are part of this cultural capital which we cannot lose. And these values are introduced in 2.3.

2.1 Traditional craftsmanship as a form of intangible cultural heritage

The importance of safeguarding traditional crafts largely lies in its nature as a form of intangible cultural heritage, which is “transmitted from generation to generation, and constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, interacting with local nature and history, and providing them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity” (UNESCO, 2003, art. 2).

The development of preserving intangible cultural heritage (ICH) on a large scale began from 2003 when the Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH was held in Paris by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (Srinivas, 2008). The ICH to be safeguarded under this convention was defined as “the practice, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associat-

ed with communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage”.

Traditional craftsmanship was included in this list of ICH of various domains, such as:

- oral expressions and traditions, comprising language as vehicle for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage;
- performing arts;
- social practices, rituals and festive events;
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2003, art.2).

The reason to extend the concept of cultural heritage to include the intangible one is because intangible heritage is the one which gives meaning to the tangible one (Munjeri, 2000). In addition, although all tangible heritage has intangible values which associate with them, not all intangible heritage has a tangible form (Prosalendis, 2003).

Traditional crafts can only be safeguarded through the transmission of its intangible form—craftsmanship. However, it distinguishes itself from other forms of intangible cultural heritage in the list because it also has a tangible form—crafts made by the craftsmanship.

2.2 Traditional folk crafts and cultural capital

There are two different streams of arguments which could be used to address the question why intangible cultural heritage should be safeguarded. The first is based on the non-market benefits or externalities that cultural heritage could provide, and its feature as common goods from the neoclassical economic perspective (Snowball, 2008). The second stream is the value-based approach, which is relatively recent and attempts to provide a new framework in which the arts and culture are evaluated, by introducing the idea of “cultural capital” and “values” (Snowball, 2008). The arguments of this thesis will be based on the second approach.

Throsby first introduced the idea of cultural capital in economic studies based on the early notion of cultural capital created by Bourdieu. The cultural capital defined by Throsby, is the stock of cultural values embodied in an asset, being either in tangible or in intangible form, which may give rise to a flow of goods and services over time (Throsby, 1999). Rizzo and Throsby

(2006) offered an extensive discussion of the possible application of cultural capital to the governing of cultural heritage.

Throsby stresses the importance of cultural capital from a macro and long-term perspective, arguing that like natural capital and the well functioning of ecosystem could contribute to the increment of human productivity and economic growth, cultural capital could do the same (Throsby, 2005).

But the contribution of cultural capital may not only be limited to the economic one because the values of cultural goods are more than economics can account for (Klamer, 2002, P. 455). For example, traditional folk crafts have values like creating identity, social cohesion, and reinforcement within certain ethnic groups of people or local communities, because it is rooted in a specific community and has been transforming during ages together with this community.

To sum up, cultural capital is a stock of values - its root, and can generate values - its benefits. Traditional folk crafts are part of this cultural capital. Therefore its importance lies in the fact that its values contribute to this stock of values of cultural capital, and the potentiality of its values, together with this whole stock of values, to generate new values.

2.3 Defining craft values

Following the conclusion of the previous section, we should focus on the values of traditional folk crafts. The values are their roots and benefits. It is also a good way to narrow down the scope of research.

The unique values of cultural capital are classified by Rizzo and Throsby (2006) as:

- aesthetic value: beauty, harmony;
- spiritual value: understanding, enlightenment, insight;
- social value: connection with others, a sense of identity;
- historical value: connection with the past;
- symbolic value: objects or sites as repositories or conveyors of meaning;
- authenticity value: integrity, uniqueness (P.998).

As part of the cultural capital, traditional folk crafts correspondingly carry the same kinds of values. The following part will explain and specify each kind of values.

In order to understand what values crafts have for the society nowadays, we should firstly go back to its birth to see why they were created and how they have transformed with the progress of the times.

At its beginning, the appearance of crafts signifies that human beings are no longer satisfied with only meeting their animal needs. Crafts reflect an almost instinctive human impulse: to create and express (Chattopadhyay, 1984).

Some basic characteristics of crafts at that time were: created by simple instruments, decorated with ornamentation and made collectively rather than individually (Chattopadhyay, 1984). Nowadays, these characteristics still exist.

The fact that crafts are created by simple instruments allows people to develop a deep involvement with crafts (Chattopadhyay, 1984; Lv, 2003), unlike machinery production on a large scale, where products are produced by machines to which people are assigned, which makes for alienation of workers, according to Marx, and would be one of the *spiritual values* of crafts. Moreover, because of this deep involvement with products, the craftsmanship could represent the special human condition of being engaged and focusing on achieving quality and doing good work (Richard Sennett, 2008).

The decorative ornamentations made crafts not merely functional but transformed then into a form of arts, in which lie the *aesthetic values* of crafts (Chattopadhyay, 1984). But the aesthetic values of crafts are not only limited to its ornamentations, but also its shape, colour and use of material, etc.. Later on, ornamentations were developed to become more and more sophisticated. Some of them are carrying *historical values* nowadays since they could be records of the history of a certain group of people.

Moreover, since its beginning, traditional craftsmanship represents a form of labour where the workshop was conceived as a craftsman's home, a place that unites family and labour. People built a deep relationship and worked together for a long time. The master who guided the workshop transmitting his knowledge and experience was regarded both as a teacher and as a father (Sennett, 2008). Therefore, craftsmanship has a kind of *social values* which unites people.

In the context of modern age, apart from the ability to contribute to economic growth and job creation (Cominelli, 2011), traditional crafts have gained some new values, derived from values that they carry before.

First of all, because of the historical values of crafts that are accumulated during a long period of time in a specific territory, they have become a factor in creating identity, social cohesion, and reinforcement within certain ethnic groups of people or local communities (Matarasso 2001).

From the national or international level, the safeguarding of traditional folk crafts of each local community will reinforce cultural diversity and ethnic harmony. Therefore, some new *social values* of crafts are generated nowadays.

Moreover, the aesthetic, spiritual and symbolic values of traditional folk crafts have new outcomes in the modern age in the sense that it can give new input to the production of goods, as Nascimento (2009) argued, it can “bring soul into the designed” (p.1).

It nurtures creativity and offers a wealth of references in terms of skills, forms, colours and symbols to various industries leading to product differentiation (Cominelli & Greffe, 2012).

It not only stimulates creativity and innovation with an impact on the aesthetic and symbolic dimension of goods, but also gives specific attention to the quality of products, thus creating demand and competitiveness (Santagata 2009).

In addition, the craftsmanship carries within itself the flexibility and spontaneousness compared with the inflexibility and stability of machines, which also makes it able to produce *authenticity*, varieties and novelties.

All of these are exactly what the creative economy increasingly calls for, since the new consumer culture stresses authenticity and quality (Klamer,2012), and they look for more sensitive and down-to-earth experiences (Nascimento, 2009).

3. Sustainable development of cultural capital

Following the parallels between natural and cultural capital, Throsby (2005) introduced the concept of sustainable development of cultural capital. This section extends this concept by arguing that the sustainable development of cultural capital is the sustainable development of the values embodied in it. This leads to the question that how these values could be developed sustainably. The answer is: by valorising them (Klamer, 2003). Moreover, the stakeholder theory is introduced to figure out who plays a role in the valorisation of these values.

Consequently, since traditional folk crafts carry a part of the values of the whole stock of cultural capital, its sustainability lies in the valorisation of craft values with the contribution of its stakeholders.

3.1 Defining the concept of sustainable development in cultural economics

The concept of sustainable development, as defined in ecology, has been introduced to apply to cultural fields (Nassauer, 1997; Garcia Mira et al., 2003). Throsby (2005) extended the concept of sustainable development by recognising parallels between natural and cultural capital.

The concept of “sustainable development” was first brought to widespread public attention through the report *Our Common Future* of UN World Commission (1987), which emphasises that a healthy economy depends on a healthy biosphere and vice versa. The idea of sustainable development was to integrate economic and ecological concerns in long-term development strategies, which gave rise to a sub-discipline of ecological economics with growing interest in the concept of natural capital (El Sarafy, 1991). Natural capital, which is the extension of the economic notion of capital, is the stock of natural resources that could give rise to a flow of valuable ecosystem goods or services in the future (Costanza, 1992).

Throsby (2005) identified parallels between natural and cultural capital, arguing that both are inherited from the distant and recent past, and while the former is provided as a gift of nature, the latter is derived from human creativity. Meanwhile, the well functioning of both natural ecosystem and cultural “ecosystem” could contribute to the increment of human productivity and economic growth (Throsby, 2005). Furthermore, the irreversible consequences such as species loss of natural capital could also happen to cultural capital (Throsby, 2006). Given the facts men-

tioned above, extending the analysis of sustainable development in ecological terms to embrace the cultural phenomenon is almost inevitable (Throsby, 2005).

More specifically, the sustainable development of cultural capital requires that the society allocates a sufficient level of resources in the conservation and maintenance of the stock of values, in order to ensure no deterioration of values of the stock in next period (Throsby, 2006).

Moving from cultural capital to traditional folk crafts, as part of the cultural capital, craft values need to be developed sustainably. This leads to the question of how and who, to be discussed in the next two sections.

3.2 Valuation, evaluation and valorisation

How could craft values be developed sustainably? The answer is: by valorising them (Klamer, 2003).

According to Klamer (2003), valorisation is the creation, enhancement and affirmation of values. To get the values valorised implicate two previous steps and preconditions, the valuation and evaluation (Klamer, 2003). “To value something is to have a complex of positive attitude toward it” (Anderson, 1993, P. 2). “To evaluate is to make sense of a valuation” (Klamer, 2003, P. 10). “While valuing something can be a spontaneous process, evaluation involves the conscious reflection on the reasons for a valuation” (Klamer, 2003, P.10).

3.3 Identifying stakeholders

Once understood that the sustainability of craft values depends on the valuation, evaluation and valorisation of them, it is necessary to identify the stakeholders of this process.

General management theory refers to stakeholders to those who (individual, group, organisation) are vital to the survival or the success of an organisation (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). The theory could be perfectly applied here.

Before identifying the specific stakeholders, a general framework provided by Cominelli (2011) for analysing the governing of crafts shall be introduced in order to provide a structure of thinking and important guideline for the future analysis.

According to Cominelli (2011), governing traditional crafts could be divided into three levels: the market, government intervention and common-based institution level. The market approach is the most direct one. However, it could lead to market failure because of inefficient allocation of resources, which requires the government intervention (Cominelli, 2011). In addition, the common-based institution could be another alternative because of the nature of traditional craftsmanship as common goods (Cominelli, 2011).

Accordingly, the crafts values are generated from craftsmen and need to be valorised with the support of consumers (market), government and common-based institution. Therefore, government, including central government and local government, are important stakeholders. On the market level, there are consumers on the demand side. Apart from that, the role of common-based institutions is vital for the valorisation of craft values as well.

4. The ideal situation

This section will construct a framework of the ideal situation in which the sustainability of traditional folk crafts is very well guaranteed, by synthesising the theories developed until now and expanding them further based on the ideal framework of crafts of Klamer et al. (2013).

This framework will be used in the case study to assess the threats to the sustainability of crafts in China.

One thing to be emphasised firstly, is that the sustainability of crafts depends firstly on craftspeople to generate craft values by crafts making. Although crafts have tangible form, and we can appreciate crafts made thousands of years ago, even when the craftsmanship has disappeared, the sustainability of crafts lies in transmitting the craftsmanship from generation to generation and keeping being useful to human daily life (because of its utilitarian nature pointed out by Yanagi & Leach, 1989; Klamer et al., 2013).

Therefore, in order to get the craftsmanship transmitted, its values need to be valorised on the market so that craftspeople can sustain their life by crafts making. In order to keep being useful in daily human life, it needs people to appreciate its utility and be willing to pay for it.

However, economically speaking, crafts are less competitive than machine-made products with the same utility because of lacking of production effectiveness. But crafts have other values (see 2.3) that the machine-made products do not have.

Therefore, the willingness to pay for crafts can only be derived from the appreciation of craft values. An ideal society which fully recognise craft values is defined by Klamer et al. (2013) as “craft culture”. That is why the valorisation of craft values should not only be limited to the market sphere but also in the social sphere (Klamer, 2012)

To sum up, in the valorisation of craft values, the relationship goes like this:



Figure 1: Spheres of the valorisation of craft values

The valorisation of craft values on the market should be supported by the social sphere and most ideally craft culture. Moreover, government intervention acts on both social and market sphere. Common-based institutions act mainly on social sphere but has its influence on the market. What needs to be pointed out here is that, because of the nature of traditional folk crafts as forms of intangible cultural heritage and common goods, the participation of the government and common-based institutions in this process of valorisation is active and voluntary rather than being mobilised by craftspeople.

Table 1: Framework of the ideal situation

Stakeholders	Government	Craftsmen	Consumers	Common-based institutions
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuation Evaluation Allocate sufficient resources to support the valorisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuation Evaluation Valorisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuation Evaluation Willingness to pay (Klamer et al., 2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuation Evaluation Educate, encourage and raise public awareness of values(Klamer et al., 2013)
Tool	Cultural policy	Crafts making	Purchasing	Education, promotion, etc.

The ideal government intervention

The ideal government intervention values, evaluates and allocates sufficient resources to support the valorisation of craft values.

The ideal government intervention calls for the use of a good combination of instruments including public expenditure, tax expenditure, hard regulation and soft regulation (Rizzo & Throsby, 2006). Moreover, the scope of intervention and the degree of devolution are also matters of significance. The policy instrument should attach great importance to crafts holders to transmit their skills (Goto, 2013). Designing a well functioned system of the assignation of the master title plays an important role as well (Goto, 2013; Klamer et al., 2013).

In practice, ideal government intervention contributes to stimulate craft culture (Klamer et al., 2013). The local government highly values master craftspeople by means such as giving them opportunities to show their works and make them feel being valued (Klamer et al., 2013). The central government can provide support for the education of crafts from an early age (Klamer et al., 2013).

The ideal craftsmen

The craftsmen create craft values. Therefore the craftsmen, at the precondition of valuing and evaluating craft values, should not only guarantee the transmission of traditional crafts by getting their values valorised, but also generates new values to be passed on to the next generation, both vital to the sustainability of crafts.

The ideal activities of craftsmen could be classified into three aspects: the past, the present and the future. The ideal activities of craftsmen should never be separated from the past in the sense that people should have a strong sense of tradition, and keeps the tradition of apprenticeship (Klamer et al., 2013). The present practices of craftspeople should be guaranteed by a clear sense of mission, a strong sense of collegiality and recognition of masters (Klamer et al., 2013). Moreover, a good future of crafts is not possible without a spirit of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (Klamer et al., 2013).

The ideal consumers

The ideal demand is mainly characterised by a developed distinctive taste and high willingness to pay for crafts (Klamer et al., 2013). Meanwhile, the ideal demand includes both significant local demand and international interest (Klamer et al., 2013).

The ideal institutions

The ideal institutions should encourage, educate and raise awareness of the values of crafts to both craftsmen, local community and consumers.

5. Context of the case study

5.1 Introducing silverware craftsmanship of Miao ethnic group

Miao ethnic group originated from China and is currently distributed in Guizhou, Hunan, Hubei, Yunnan Province, and Thailand (Hu, 2010). Qiandongnan autonomous prefecture located in Guizhou Province, in which the field research was conducted, is the most concentrated area of Miao population in the world (Hu, 2010).

The history of Miao silverware could be traced back to 500 years ago in Ming dynasty (Hu, 2010). Stylish design, rich resources of ornamentation, delicate composition and exquisite craftsmanship have all contributed to the formation of its high artistic level (Dai, 1994). Moreover, traditional crafts of an ethnic group are the externalisation of its spirit and social system (Dai, 1994). The previous researches have found clues of totem worship, religious witchcraft,



Illustration 1: Traditional Miao silverwares

migration and daily lifestyle from the ornamentation and design of Miao silverware (Dai, 1994). Therefore, Miao silverware crafts contain in itself aesthetic values, spiritual values, social values, historical values and symbolic values, which together make it a precious part of the cultural capital.

Traditional Miao silverware craftsmanship can only be conducted on silver of very high purity (higher than 99.0%) since the silver of higher purity will become softer. However, a sheer quantity of machine-made fake silverwares made of white copper or silver of low purity are currently dumped on the market. The chaotic situation of Miao silverware market has formed the concept of Miao silver as white copper or silver of very low purity in the silverware market, whose definition is widespread in the Chinese Wikipedia Baidu (Miao silverware, 2015) and oth-

er website articles. All of these phenomena make the sustainability of Miao silverware craftsmanship questionable.

5.2 Field research location



Illustration 2: Xijiang (left) and Maliao (right)

There are four levels of local government in China; it's province>city>county>township. Qiandongnan is an autonomous prefecture (city) of Miao and Dong ethnic group located in Guizhou province. In order to fully understand the industry of Miao silverwares, the research has been conducted in three different sampling areas within Qiandongnan: *Kaili*, the capital (county) of Qiandongnan, is a modern city where many retailers of Miao silverwares collocate; *Xijiang* (township), is the largest inhabited cluster in the world of Miao ethnic group, for this reason it has been developed by the government into a touristic destination; *Maliao* (township), is one of the three villages in Leishan where people traditionally lived by making silverwares, and it still kept its original form since no touristic development has been imposed there.

There are 16 counties under the governance of Qiandongnan. 15 of them, including Kaili and Leishan are counties of poverty with an annual income of less than 2300 yuan, a title given by the national government (Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, 2015).

5.3 Chinese cultural policy regarding the preservation of ICH

According to the art.5 and art. 6 (Interim measures of state-level intangible heritage protection and management, 2006) of the interim measures of state-level intangible heritage protection and management published by the ministry of culture:

- The state council shall set up an overall annual plan of intangible cultural heritage protection, and conduct the regular inspection of the implementation of it.
- The cultural administrative department at the provincial level should make the annual overall plan of intangible cultural heritage protection within their administrative area, and submit it to the state council to be approved in the November of each year. Apart from that, the provincial culture administrative department should hand in a report on the works done in the previous year at the same time.
- The local department should put forward the concrete protection in their administrative area and submit the list of the protection unit, which should be examined by the experts in the provincial institution and be approved by the national department.

The Chinese political system of intangible heritage protection is neither completely centralised, since the local government could put forward and modify the protection work according to the local needs, nor completely decentralised, since the work conducted at the local level should be previously approved by the provincial institution formed by experts and the state council.

In the following part, concrete policy regarding intangible cultural heritage protection will be examined according to the structure mentioned above which distinguished instruments of government intervention into four kinds: direct expenditure, tax expenditure, hard regulation and soft regulation (Rizzo & Throsby, 2006),

The *direct expenditure* is denominated as the national special funds of intangible cultural heritage protection, which is applied by local government, collected by provincial government and approved by central government(The national special funds of intangible cultural heritage protection, 2012). Apart from that, there are also special funds at the provincial level depending on different situations of each province(Around the fiscal actively supports the non-material cultural heritage protection work, 2012).

The *tax expenditure* in folk craft sector is only provided to those folk handicraft manufactures located in “ethnic area”, more specifically, 5 autonomous regions including Tibet, Xinjiang province, Guangxi province, Inner Mongolia and Ningxia province, and 2 provinces in which there is high concentration of different ethnic groups, Yunnan and Guizhou Province (In the western region encouraged industry directory, 2015). Those manufacturers located in the provinces mentioned below could pay enterprise income tax at a reduced rate of 15% instead of 25% (About the catalogue of encouraged industries in the western region carried out on the problem of enterprise income tax, 2015).

It is difficult to apply hard regulation on the preservation of intangible heritage since it is held by humans (Goto, 2013). The *soft regulation* includes a state-level intangible cultural heritage list and selection of the master title on national, provincial and local level. The people who reached an excellent level of a certain form of traditional craftsmanship will be given the title and is responsible for its transmission (Intangible cultural heritage law of the People's Republic of China, 2014). Apart from that, there are instruments such as making archives, encouraging trade fairs and competitions of craftspeople.

6. Objectives and methodology

6.1 General approach

The research performed for this thesis was based on a mixed methodology combining quantitative and qualitative research, with the use of deductive theory. Previous literature review contributed to defining the scope of the research, forming hypothesis and questions for interviews and surveys.

The use of surveys, interviews and field observation aims to have a full vision of the situation of each kind of stakeholders: government, craftsmen, consumers and common-based institutions. 60 quantitative surveys were sent to tourists of Xijiang, who represent partially the consumers of the Miao handmade silverwares industry. Apart from that, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with other stakeholders of the Miao handmade silverwares industry, including retailers, craftsmen and one government official.

The research question is formulated as *what are the threats to the sustainable development of traditional folk crafts in China as a form of cultural capital*. This question will be investigated by a case study of traditional Miao crafts, and then try to generalise to other forms of folk crafts in China, or even other areas which share similarities with the Chinese case.

The field research of the case study will be conducted in three sampling areas within Qiandongnan (introduced above), the autonomous prefecture of Miao and Dong ethnic group where retailers, workshops and factories of Miao silverwares and fake Miao silverwares are densely located: Kaili (modern city), Xijiang (touristic destination) and Maliao (traditional village where people live by making silverwares).

6.2 Previous hypothesis

The previous documentation shows that a sheer quantity of machine-made fake silverwares made of white copper or silver of low purity are currently dumped on the market, which seems to be the most problematic aspect waiting to be solved right now.

Considering the role of each stakeholder in making this happen and the possible consequences of them, I came up with the following hypothesis:

- Craftsmen value the economic outcome of crafts making more than other craft values.

- The government failed to regulate the current chaotic situation by introducing effective regulations.
- Consumers have higher willingness to pay for crafts with lower prices rather than crafts with higher quality, which could mean that they lack a distinctive taste to appreciate crafts.
- Common-based institutions failed to raise the public awareness of the values of crafts.
- The sheer quantity of machine-made fake Miao silverwares circulating in the market is producing negative effects of the sustainability of crafts and is possible because of the incorrect valuation and evaluation of silverware crafts from stakeholders.

6.3 Units of analysis

Quantitative surveys

60 tourists of Xijiang were asked to fill in the survey on 4th April of 2015. The sample was selected in a random way without considering whether the tourist has bought silverwares or not. The surveys were sent in two long corridors where tourists could take a rest during the sight-seeing. The observed rest time was usually no more than ten minutes which could guarantee the circulation of people. The researcher passed from one side of the corridor to another side sending surveys to tourists one by one. This randomness could guarantee the representativeness of the sample. Besides, silverware shops or local people who wear silverwares can be seen almost everywhere in Xijiang. Therefore, all the tourists must have got in touch with silverwares before filling in the survey.

Qualitative interviews

The units of analysis are eight stakeholders of the handmade Miao silverwares industry, including 2 retailers of silverwares in Kaili, 1 retailer of silverwares in Xijiang, 2 owners of small workshops of handmade silverwares, 1 worker of a machine-made white copper jewelries (fake silverwares) factory, 1 government official who works for the city government of Kaili, and 1 owner of a studio which aims at designing and producing innovative handmade silverwares and other Miao crafts.

It is interesting to mention that, except for the last interviewee, all of the rest interviewees are cousins from the same family in Maliao village, where people traditionally earn their living

by silver making. The profession of the new generation has become largely heterogeneous in the new era after 1980s and largely concentrated in cities.

6.4 Triangulation

The methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970) is involved in this research to increase its credibility and validity, with the use of various research methods to gather data including interviews, surveys, observation and consulting various documents.

7. Results

This section will firstly introduce the results of the quantitative stage and the qualitative stage separately and then conclude with an analysis combining the findings in both stages.

7.1 Quantitative surveys

60 surveys were sent randomly to tourists in Xijiang on 4th April of 2015, the day of a traditional Chinese festival Qingming and legal holiday. Therefore, visitor numbers in Xijiang could be guaranteed. The surveys were filled in with the presence of the researcher, who gave instructions regarding filling in surveys correctly. Therefore, all the surveys were valid. The researcher did not attempt to influence the results.

Demographic characteristics analysis

Table 2: Demographic characteristics

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples	Percentage
Gender	Male	19	31.6%
	Female	41	68.3%
Age	Less than 20	19	31.6%
	21-30	23	38.3%
	31-40	15	25%
	41-50	0	0
	51-60	1	1.7%
	More than 60	2	3.3%
Education level	Lower than secondary school	0	0
	Secondary school	0	0
	High school	13	21.7%
	Bachelor	40	66.7%
	Master	7	17.5%
	Doctor or higher	0	0
Profession	Students	29	48.3%
	Primary industry	1	1.7%
	Secondary industry	9	15%
	Tertiary industry	20	33.3%
	Other	1	1.7%
Income	0	27	45%
	Less than 1000	2	3.3%
	1000-3000	9	15%
	3000-6000	14	23.3%
	6000-10000	8	13.3%
	More than 10000	0	0

The randomness of the way to send surveys could guarantee the representativeness of the sample, covering people with all kinds of demographic features in a similar proportion like the total visitors in Xijiang.

The participants of the research are predominantly female (68.3%). Male participants were also included because they could buy Miao silverwares for various reasons like collection purposes, souvenirs or gifts.

Participants of more than 40 years old (only 5%) are not very well represented in the surveys, however the composition of age of the participants might be largely similar to the composition of age of tourists in Xijiang, since its location might signify large travel effort for tourists, which discourages the interests of senior tourists.

The education level might be in the same case since highly educated people are likely to be more interested in folk culture, which is the most representative feature of Xijiang.

As of the profession, students (48.3%) and people who work in the tertiary industry (33.3%) play a very significant role.

Furthermore, in the income section, all the participants who do not have income were found to be students, for which their purchasing ability is not limited by their income.

Purchasing situation analysis

Table 3: Purchasing situation

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples	Percentage
Amount of money spent on buying Miao silverwares	0	38	63.3%
	Less than 100	15	25%
	100-500	7	11.7%
	500-1000	0	0
	1000-2000	0	0
	More than 2000	0	0
Amount of bought silverwares	0	38	63.3%
	1	18	30%
	2-3	4	6.7%
	3-10	0	0
	More than 10	0	0

Generally speaking, 36.6% of tourists have bought Miao silverwares. Among people who bought Miao silverwares, 68.2% have spent less than 100, and 81.8% bought only one piece of Miao silverwares. According to my field observation, the products sold in Miao silverwares shop mainly consist of earrings, necklace, bracelet, and the average price is around 10 yuan per gram. Most products, especially the necklace and bracelet have the weight of more than 50 g. However, people mostly spend less than 100 yuan on buying Miao silverwares, which could have two kinds of possibilities, one is that people buy light Miao silverwares, another is that people buy fake white copper silverwares which they consider Miao silverwares. Therefore the willingness to pay for traditional Miao silverwares was found to be relatively low.

Table 4: Purchasing behaviour vs. gender

Statistics	Number of samples	Percentage
Male who did not buy Miao silverwares	15	25%
Female who did not buy Miao silverwares	23	38.3%
Male who bought Miao silverwares	4	6.7%
Female who bought Miao silverwares	18	30%

Most Miao silverwares buyers are female, consisting of 81.8% of all the participants who bought Miao silverwares, and 43.9% of the female participants have bought Miao silverwares. On the other hand, male participants are less likely to buy Miao silverwares.

Table 5: Purchasing behaviour vs. education level

Statistics	Education level	Number of samples	Percentage
People who did not buy Miao silverwares	High school	9	23.7%
	Bachelor	22	57.9%
	Master	7	18.4%
People who bought Miao silverwares	High school	4	18.2%
	Bachelor	18	81.2%
	Master	0	

Although people with a bachelor degree are more likely to buy Miao silverwares than people who completed high school, all of the master participants did not buy any Miao silverwares.

Table 6: Purchasing behaviour vs. profession

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples	Percentage
People who did not buy Miao silverwares	Student	12	31.6%
	Primary industry	1	2.6%
	Secondary industry	7	18.4%
	Tertiary industry	17	44.7%
	Other	1	0.03%
People who bought Miao silverwares	Student	17	77.3%
	Primary industry	0	0
	Secondary industry	2	9.09%
	Tertiary industry	3	13.6%
	Other	0	0

Students are a very important group of Miao silverware buyers, accounting for 17 among all 22 people who bought Miao silverwares.

Table 7: Purchasing behaviour vs. income

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples	Percentage
People who did not buy Miao silverwares	0	10	26.3%
	Less than 1000	2	5.3%
	1000-3000	6	15.8%
	3000-6000	12	31.6%
	6000-10000	8	21.1%
	More than 10000	0	
People who bought Miao silverwares	0	17	77.3%
	Less than 1000	0	0
	1000-3000	3	13.6%
	3000-6000	2	9.1%
	6000-10000	0	0
	More than 10000	0	0

Most people who bought Miao silverwares are people with no income (students), and all the people who have the highest income among our participants (6000-10000) did not buy Miao silverwares.

Table 8: Purchasing behaviour vs. age

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples	Percentage
People who did not buy Miao silverwares	Lower than 20	2	5.4%
	21-30	22	59.5%
	31-40	10	27.0%
	41-50	0	0
	51-60	1	2.7%
	Higher than 60	2	7.4%
People who bought Miao silverwares	Lower than 20	17	73.9%
	21-30	1	4.3%
	31-40	5	21.7%
	41-50	0	0
	51-60	0	0
	Higher than 60	0	0

People who have less than 20 years old are the main group of consumers of Miao silverwares while the people who have between 20-30 years old show relatively low interest in buying Miao silverwares compared to other groups.

Cognitive analysis

The people who bought Miao silverwares did not show a strong difference in cognitive level with the people who did not buy Miao silverwares (see table 9 below). Even though the people who bought Miao silverwares had a slight advantage in knowledge of the Miao craftsmanship, they showed various disadvantages in some other aspects.

In order to quantify the cognitive level of different individuals regarding crafts and Miao crafts, a grade was given to each of them. There were five questions (listed below) regarding the cognitive level, and the first choice is an ideal one, which counts for three points. Consequently, the second choice counts for two points, and the third one counts for one. In the third question, there were only two choices, so the second option counts for one point. In this way, the result is listed below. We could see that (see table 10 below), the people who get more than 11 points are the group of people which have a better cognitive level, however, the people who did not buy Miao silverwares had even a strong advantage compared to people who bought Miao silverwares

Moreover, some other findings worth to be mentioned and will be discussed further are: firstly, the participants generally do not show a strong interest in Miao culture (only 26.7%); secondly, nobody claims to know well about Miao craftsmanship and only four people are able to

distinguish handmade and machine-made silverwares; thirdly, people tend to believe that the prices of handmade silverwares should be higher than machine-made ones because they are made with more labour (58.3%) rather than because they are more beautiful (36.7%).

Table 9: Cognitive level

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples (people who did not buy Miao silverwares)	Percentage (people who did not buy Miao silverwares)	Number of samples (people who bought Miao silverwares)	Percentage (people who bought Miao silverwares)
Interested in Miao culture	Highly interested	13	34.2%	3	13.6%
	Do not mind knowing some information	25	65.8%	18	81.8%
	Not interested	0	0	1	4.5%
Knowledge of the Miao craftsmanship	Know	0	0	0	0
	Partially know	11	28.9%	8	36.3%
	Do not know	27	71.1%	14	63.6%
Previous implication with crafts	Have crafts which I like or with good memory	15	39.5%	8	36.4%
	Do not have	23	60.5%	14	63.6%
Be able to distinguish handmade and machine-made silverwares	Able	4	10.5%	0	0
	Not able, but with them to be distinguished	26	68.4%	17	77.3%
	Not able, does not care	8	21.1%	5	22.7%
Appreciation of crafts	Think the prices of handmade silverwares should be higher because they are more beautiful	14	36.8%	8	36.4%
	Think the prices should be higher because they are made with more labour	22	57.9%	13	59.1%
	The prices should not be higher	2	5.3%	1	4.5%

Table 10: Cognitive level quantified

Statistics	Number of samples (people who did not buy Miao silverwares)	Percentage (people who did not buy Miao silverwares)	Number of samples (people who bought Miao silverwares)	Percentage (people who bought Miao silverwares)
11-15	13	34.2%	4	18.2%
6-10	25	65.8%	18	81.8%
0-5	0	0	0	0

Correlation analysis

In this step, Pearson correlation analysis was used to measure the degree of association between two factors measuring the degree of linear dependence between two variables (Field, 2000). All the factors mentioned above, including gender, age, profession, education level, income and cognitive level will be used to go through Pearson correlation analysis provided by SPSS, in order to determine their relationship with purchasing behaviour. The main results are listed below (see more in Appendix).

Table 11: Pearson Analysis result

	Gender	Age	Profession	Education level	Income	Cognitive level
Pearson correlation	-0.281 (p=0.030)	0.483 (p=0.000)	0.677 (p=0.000)	-0.103 (p=0.433)	0.652 (p=0.000)	0.018 (p=0.892)

The results of Pearson correlation analysis show that profession, income and age are positively correlated with purchasing behaviour. More specifically, considering the method of calculation, it signifies that: the younger one person is, there is more possibility that he or she would buy Miao silverwares; the less income one people have, he or she is more likely to buy Miao silverwares, and the likelihood that one person would buy Miao silverwares could vary according to its profession, of which students> primary industry workers> secondary industry workers> tertiary industry workers> others.

The results could be rather biased since the number of samples is limited. And the result is likely to be largely influenced by a group of 17 female students under 20 years old who bought Miao silverwares (77.27%). That could explain, to some degree, the reason why people with less

income are more likely to buy Miao silverwares, being an odd result, according to common sense.

Meanwhile, a certain pattern of people can be observed among the people who bought Miao silverwares. The most important buyer group of Miao silverwares are female students under 20 years with no income.

Motivation analysis

Table 12: Non-purchasing motivation

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples	Percentage
Motivations of people who bought Miao silverwares	Not beautiful	0	0
	Out of fashion	7	18.4%
	Not useful	15	39.5%
	Prices too high	6	15.8%
	Not sure about silver purity	23	60.5%
	Not sure about whether it is handmade or not	12	31.6%

The questions are multi-optional with the possibility that people could add other motivations if necessary. Since nobody added other motivations, it means that the options available are enough to cover the reasons why people did not buy Miao silverwares.

The most elected option is that people are not sure about the silver purity of Miao silverwares. Chinese consumers attach a lot of importance to the purity of silverwares, and there are different standards of the purity like 800, 925, 990, which can largely determinate the prices of silverwares. However the purity of every silverware should be marked in the silverwares and examined by national institutions, which could mean that either the national institutions or the shops which sell Miao silverwares do not have a reliable image among consumers.

In addition to that, the consumers are not sure about whether the silverwares are handmade or not, which could also be explained by the bad reputation of Miao silverwares shop. Furthermore, a large amount of consumers did not buy Miao silverwares for utilitarian reasons, which is an inherent reason of silverwares themselves.

For those who bought Miao silverwares (see table 13 below), the most important reason is its beauty (72.7%), a worthy price (64.6%) and good craftsmanship (54.5%). What was surprising was the fact that nobody bought Miao silverwares as a gift for others since it is supposed to be a very common thing that people bring souvenirs for their friends or family from touristic destina-

tions. That could also explain why buyers of Miao silverwares are mainly female according to the previous result since nobody bought them as a gift, male buyers would hardly buy something that is not useful for them.

Table 13: Purchasing motivation

Statistics	Composition	Number of samples	Percentage
Motivations of people who bought Miao silverwares	Beauty	16	72.7%
	Silver material	7	31.8%
	Utility	4	18.2%
	Social use (gift)	0	0
	Prices (worthy)	14	63.6%
	Craftsmanship	12	54.5%
	Collection	2	9.1%

7.2 Qualitative interviews

Various interesting findings were found during the qualitative research stage. The field observation and interviews gave insights of the role of the stakeholders including the local government, craftsmen, retailers and common-based institutions. Moreover, some consequences of developing ethnic tourism were also found. However, the role of the central government is hard to judge from the field research experience.

7.2.1 The role of the local government and common-based institutions

Finding 1: Local government building clusters to pull GDP growth rate in the name of preserving traditional folk crafts



Illustration 3: Folk crafts cluster in Kaili

During the field research, I visited a cluster created by the local government of Kaili for craft makers and retailers, where there was not even one visitor. Such phenomenon was also confirmed by my interviewees.

The most direct reason for this is the lack of local demand in Kaili of local crafts. Most local crafts retailers seek their buyers through personal relationship and trade fairs in other provinces since the

local economic situation is not very likely to create enough demand for local craft, as mentioned by my interviewees. Kaili is an industrial city and not a common

touristic destination, for which people from other provinces are not frequently seen there.

The local government rationalises the establishment of this cluster, saying the purpose is to preserve local craftsmanship. However, building a large construction like this without considering its market possibility and measuring its demand, is to some extent not logical.

This project was launched in 2008, during the period of the worldwide economic crisis. A large number of constructions of various kinds including transportation infrastructures, government buildings and cultural institutions were built during this period.

The deep reason for these phenomena was that the local government has their own revenue stream and is responsible for achieving a certain goal (number of GDP) set by the central government (Yu, 2013). The Chinese economy has been developing rapidly before the economic crisis of 2008 with the GDP growth rate of above 10%. The economic crisis created obstacles to continue this growing trend. At this point, the central bank invested 4 trillion yuan in key areas such as housing, rural infrastructure, transportation, health and education, environment, industry, disaster rebuilding, income-building, tax cuts, and finance (Yu, 2013). The local governments have also increased their investment in order to boost the local economy and create jobs. The cluster was built mainly at that time in order to maintain the GDP number. A lot of similar projects like that which use “preserving the local craftsmanship” as an excuse to maintain the GDP number can be found in Qiandongnan (like the one in the similar situation in Leishan).

The only official announcement published by local government about this cluster reported that it has attracted 147 enterprises, created total business sales of more than 1 million yuan of crafts and 2.7 million yuan of tourism revenue in 2012, and created 1200 new jobs in 2013 (Guizhou national folk arts and crafts trade base achieved remarkable results). This shows that the local government only counts the economic outcome while assessing effects of its investment in local crafts preservation.

Finding 2: The master title given through personal relationship

The local government introduced a system of giving titles of different levels to craftsmen (Qiandongnan local government awarding local crafts talents, 2010). The most outstanding craftsmen are regarded as the “living heritage” and are responsible for the transmission of their craftsmanship, for which they receive an annual subsidy of 3000 yuan annually (Qiandongnan local government awarding local crafts talents, 2010). From the education level, the university of

Kaili recruits 100 students with an excellent talent of folk culture who will study five years there (Qiandongnan local government awarding local crafts talents, 2010).

The actual effects of these rules are hard to determine. Both Jiang (2013) and my interviewees pointed out that the people who were given a master title do not own the best craftsmanship but have the strongest relationship with government officials. However, this title has a good reputation on the market and can bring great economic benefits, which is also why people pursue them. This principle works the same for titles of other levels, according to my interviewees. In this case, the economic outcome is once again more strongly emphasised than other craft values.

Finding 3: Common-based institutions making efforts to promote craft values

Regarding common-based institutions, the association of crafts and arts offer craftsmen information of international and national trade fairs on a regular basis and help craftsmen to send their works to the trade fairs, according to my interviewees. Moreover, the association of crafts and arts organised competitions for local craftsmen regularly. The prizes got in the competitions are highly valued within the craftsmen circle. The academy of art frequently arrange meetings between art students and Miao silversmiths (one of my interviewees was invited), which provided beneficial communication for both students and craftsmen.

7.2.2 The craftsmen

Finding 4: The craftsmen only talking about economic outcome

What was found in common in all the craftsmen and retailers of Miao silverwares, being handmade or machine-made ones, is that they only talked about making money and establishing social relationships. Other craft values are totally ignored. They chose different professions mainly because of their different personal experience and skills, and the fact that they see the economic outcome differently. For example, the craftsmen who only make high quality handmade silverwares chose this profession because his work is hourly and higher paid. The interviewee who chose to work for the factory which produces white-copper jewellery with the machine did not want to learn craftsmanship since it costs a lot of efforts. He worked for this factory because he thought the work is easier to do and is well-paid to sustain his life.

Finding 5: The heterogeneity of buyer groups gives opportunity to both cheap products and high-quality crafts

Both owners of the workshop of handmade Miao silverwares opposed the opinion that machine-made silverwares are squeezing their market share. They argued that the people who loved handmade Miao silverwares will always buy handmade Miao silverwares since the differences of craftsmanship between handmade silverwares and machine-made silverwares are extremely obvious. Demand for their crafts largely exceeds supply. And they all developed a close relationship with big retailers in other provinces during years. That is to say, they are never worried about demand.

Both of them consider their field very promising and insist to focus on high-quality handmade products. Therefore as long as the demand of high-quality handmade silverwares exists, it is not necessary to worry about the transmission of craftsmanship.

Finding 6: The craftsmen lacking of an awareness of tradition

However, the lack of the awareness of the uniqueness and value of the tradition of their own culture leads to the fact that they blindly follow the taste of consumers in large cities. The craftsmen think that the design of traditional Miao crafts are out of date and useless. Instead of considering innovating the design of traditional Miao silverwares using traditional elements as design inspiration, what they are producing now is basically modern silverwares made by traditional Miao craftsmanship, which means that the craftsmanship might be preserved and transmitted without preserving the historical, cultural and symbolic values within it.

Finding 7: The lack of local demand

While there is an increasing demand of handmade Miao silverwares from the outside, the internal demand of local people is going down. Miao people are traditionally silverware lovers, and all the females have a set of bracelet, necklace, silver belt and headwear of good quality. The exposure to modern lifestyle makes more and more young people prefer modern silverwares.

Finding 8: The awareness of tradition from the young generation

However, not all people of young generation choose to abandon the tradition. The awareness of cultural tradition was found in a handmade silverware studio established by two current bachelor students who are making efforts to product innovation using traditional elements while

learning traditional craftsmanship at the same time. Their studio is not generating income for the moment. However, they are very satisfied with the current situation and are planning a classroom of teaching Miao craftsmanship to craft lovers.

7.2.3 The role of tourism

Finding 9: Ethnic tourism failed to promote local culture to tourists

In the case of Xijiang, developing folk touristic destination is not very likely to produce effects such as promoting folk culture and preserve local craftsmanship like it has been suggested in theories. The result of the quantitative stage shows that, after visiting Xijiang, only 26.7% of the visitors are highly interested in Miao culture, and nobody claims to know about traditional Miao silverware. In practice, the poor condition of the local economy is the main driven force that make people consider any business opportunity with shortsightedness. Developing local tourism has been abused by local people as an opportunity to make quick money with very low-quality products.

Finding 10: Silverware shops in touristic destination selling cheap silverwares produced by machine bought from other provinces (not local crafts at all)

During the field research, one of the phenomena that I observed was that almost all the silverware shops in Xijiang sell very similar products, from which it can be deduced that most shops have the same supplier.

This phenomenon was explained by my interviewees that most shops purchase their products from factories located in the province of Fujian, which fabricate sheer quantity of machine-made silverwares and offer very low prices. However, most silverware shops in Xijiang had advertisements in their showcases mentioning that the silverwares were handmade by their family, which is actually fake information according to my interviewees.

One of my interviewees who is the owner of handmade silverwares workshop provided the information that the cost of 999 silver raw material is about 4 yuan per gram. The factories normally charge the cost of labor with 0.6 yuan per gram. The conventional price in Xijiang for silverwares made of 990 silver (much cheaper than 999 silver) is 10 yuan per gram. Shop owners in Xijiang are making a very good amount of money out of their business, which is also confirmed by one of my interviewees who owned his shop in Xijiang. His income is more than

10000 yuan per month. In addition, I was told by one of his cousins that he became millionaire five years after he opened his shop in Xijiang.

This could also explain why the cognitive level of Miao silverwares and crafts is generally not in any way correlated with Miao silverwares purchase behaviour in the quantitative stage. Since the silverwares sold in Xijiang are not handmade Miao silverwares at all, knowing more about Miao silverware craftsmanship naturally does not help to increase the willingness to pay in Xijiang.

Finding 11: Crowding out effects not found to be obvious

Moreover, the possible “crowding out” effect of tourism development in a certain area suggested in theories is not found to be obvious in Xijiang. Both field observation and the research of Wang et al. (2015) suggests that the development of tourism contributes to increase local economic revenue without significantly crowding out other industries in Guizhou province due to the lack of mainstay industry previously.

7.3 Conclusion of the empirical part (comparison with the ideal situation)

Generally speaking, the main threat identified is that both local government and craftsmen ignore craft values and the importance of a supportive social sphere (craft culture). The market logic where quantity and economic benefits predominate has been largely used to judge craft values.

This makes the sustainability of crafts questionable because under pure market logic it is not possible for crafts to compete with machine-made products. The competitiveness of crafts lies in craft values and the appreciation of craft values in the social sphere.

More specifically, the role of each stakeholder could be summarised below:

- The role of the *central government* is left unknown because of a lack of information. But the cultural policy, as seen in section five, encourages the valorisation of craft values, and no obvious weaknesses were found.
- The *local government* allocate resources without valuing craft values, making its investment not able to bring about any real positive contribution to the sustainability of traditional crafts.

Table 14: Local government intervention assessment (comparison with the ideal situation)

Local Government			
• Valuation	✘	Stimulate craft culture	✘
• Evaluation	✘	Highly values master crafts people	✘
• Allocate resources to support the valorisation of values	☑		

There is an excessive economic inclination of the local government when dealing with intangible cultural heritage preservation, speaking of both large construction projects aiming at pulling local GDP numbers and developing ethnic tourism in the name of preserving intangible cultural heritage.

Moreover, we could see how people abuse cultural policy, which encourages valorising craft values, to pursue economic outcome, because of lacking control from the local government, for example in the case of competing for winning the title of “living heritage” to get their products sold at a higher price.

- *Craftsmen* are the most important stakeholder in the valorisation of craft values since they generate craft values by making crafts. The current situation is very unfavourable in the sense that crafts values are totally ignored accompanied by a lack of sense of mission and tradition. Therefore, craftsmen stopped generating crafts values and only pursue economic outcome (See table 15 below).

From a long-term perspective, if the situation keeps being the same, we could already predict a dead end. The reason is that craftsmen compete in the market in a way that kills their competitiveness (craft values and the appreciation of craft values in the social sphere).

Regarding other practices of craftspeople, they did not fully abandon the tradition in the sense that nowadays the transmission of skills is still carried out keeping the tradition of apprenticeship, with a strong sense of collegiality and recognition of masters.

The creativity of the silversmiths shows in the fact that they are trying to figure out the preferences of people in cities and make modern silverwares with traditional craftsmanship. But this

creativity does not lead to innovation of traditional silverware, because of a lack of sense of tradition.

Table 15: Craftsmen activities assessment (comparison with the ideal situation)

Craftsmen			
• Valuation	✘	Strong sense of tradition	✘
• Evaluation	✘	Keeps the tradition of apprenticeship	✔
• Valorisation	✘	A clear sense of mission	✘
		A strong sense of collegiality	✔
		Recognition of masters	✔
		Creativity	✔
		Innovation	✘
		Entrepreneurship	✔
		Young people view it as a career worth striving for	✔

Young people are willing to learn the craftsmanship for very diverse reasons, some of them value more the economic outcome, but there are also people who want to learn the craftsmanship with a deep awareness of tradition, such as one of my interviewees who is a bachelor student and establishes his studio of Miao crafts.

- *Consumers* value beauty and craftsmanship of crafts (the result of the quantitative stage) but do not know how to evaluate them. The willingness to pay for high quality-crafts is hard to judge since tourists can only find low-quality products on the market.

Table 16: Consumer behaviour assessment (comparison with the ideal situation)

Consumers			
• Valuation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Distinctive taste	✘
• Evaluation	✘	High willingness to pay	?
		Local demand	↓
		International interest	↑

A large amount of consumers who bought silverwares from tourist silverware shops do not know how to evaluate the quality of traditional Miao silverware crafts (lack of distinctive taste), since the result of the quantitative stage shows the possibility that a lot of consumers bought fake silverwares which they believed to be traditional Miao silverwares.

The reason for this phenomenon could be explained by the theory of learning-by-consuming. First of all, the major distinctive feature of cultural goods is that the consumer needs to learn how to consume them (Brito & Barros, 2005). And the theory of learning-by-consuming (Brito & Barros, 2005; Ulbarri, 2005) is pointing out that consumers need to learn their subjective preferences through a process of consumption which generates positive or negative feedback.

In this case, it means that if consumers are not given the choice to buy high-quality traditional Miao crafts in Xijiang, they will never know whether they like them or not, and neither will they be able to learn to evaluate them.

However, the fact found in the qualitative stage, that tourist silverware shops are selling machine-made silverwares bought from another province at low prices, is actually depriving tourists of the opportunities of getting in touch with real high-quality crafts.

Moreover, the local demand was found to be decreasing because the young generation of people prefer modern dressing style in general. The international interest is going up because the participation of Miao silverwares in international art fairs such as in France, Italy and Japan is greatly increasing recently (Miao silverware towards worldwide, 2012).

- *Common-based institutions* are carrying out their responsibilities by activities such as offering international trade fair information to craftsmen, organising craftsmanship competition, etc. ,

and enjoy a very high reputation among craftspeople. However, it might take a lot of effort and time in the process of raising awareness of people.

Table 17: Common-based institutions activities assessment (comparison with the ideal situation)

Common-based institutions	
• Valuation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Educate, encourage and raise the awareness of values	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

8. Conclusion

8.1 Theoretical contribution of the thesis

This thesis aims to explore the possibility of providing a complete framework to assess the sustainability of a specific form of folk crafts. In order to do so, this thesis firstly established the basic approach to view folk crafts as part of the cultural capital, based on the theory of cultural capital by Throsby (1999).

Viewing folk crafts as part of the cultural capital could open up new possibilities for academic researches because of two reasons: firstly, it creates the possibility to identify parallels between cultural capital and natural capital, and develops the theory to a further step by establishing the concept of sustainable development of cultural capital (Throsby, 2005); secondly, it narrows down the scope of researches by focusing on the values embodied in cultural capital when analysing its sustainability.

This thesis developed the theory of Throsby in the sense that viewing cultural capital as an asset of values creates the possibility to introduce the theory of valuation, evaluation and valorisation (Klamer, 2003) to argue that the sustainable development of cultural capital depends on the valorisation of values in the cultural capital stock.

At last, the thesis created a framework which established the ideal situation where traditional folk crafts are totally sustainable, specifying activities of each stakeholder, by combining the framework of Cominelli (2011), the theory of valuation evaluation and valorisation (Klamer, 2003) and propositions of Klamer et al. (2013) regarding craft culture. To assess the sustainability of folk crafts and identify its possible threats with these frameworks only requires comparing the actual situation with the ideal situation, as it has been done in the empirical part.

8.2 Sustainability of traditional Miao silverwares: threats and hopes

Going back to the case study and answering the questions established in the preface, the threats to the sustainability of folk crafts and the reasons which lead to the current chaotic situation on the market, all lie in the fact that for two important stakeholders, the local government and craftsmen use pure market logic to value crafts. The problem here is that crafts lack competitiveness by its nature in pure market logic. Its competitiveness can only be found by the valorisation of craft values in the social sphere.

Craftsmen stopped valorising crafts values and only pursue economic outcome, and the local government did not attempt to stop this tendency but reinforced it. The taste of consumers is supply driven, for which a distinctive taste which appreciates crafts is still not totally formed. All of these facts constitute the threats to the sustainability of crafts.

Moreover, the thesis has emphasised the lack of awareness of tradition of craftspeople and other local Miao people, because the awareness of tradition could be essential in forming craft culture—by understanding and respecting the history and the past. Japanese people rediscovered their national pride in Mingei movement by rebuilding the appreciation to traditional folk crafts, because the appreciation to crafts represents the respect to tradition. Appreciation to traditional folk crafts, respect to tradition and national pride are things that can never be separated from each other. What happens now is that people are driven almost blindly by the eagerness of modernisation and income generation, and ignore their tradition without even understanding it, including people who are doing business related to tradition themselves—the craftsmen.

People might ask why there is this obsession with money. The answer could be simple: because of poverty and lack of education. However, can we say that economic condition and education determine the awareness and esteem of tradition? This is a complicated question left to be reflected.

If we apply the theory of cultural capital both in the sense of Klamer (2002) and in the sense of Bourdieu (1986) to interpret this phenomenon, there could be some interesting insights. Currently, the fact that people do not value crafts could be directly explained by lack of cultural capital in the sense of Klamer (2002), meaning “the capacity to inspire and be inspired” (Klamer, 2002, P.367). And this lack of cultural capital in the sense of Klamer (2002) could be explained further by the lack of cultural capital in the sense of Bourdieu (1986), meaning forms of knowledge, skills and education.

Moreover, Bourdieu (1986) argues that cultural capital could be derived from economic capital (economic resources like cash and assets) at a cost of an effort of transformation, and economic capital is always the root of this transformation. That is to say, the accumulation of economic capital is the first step, which could or could not be transformed into cultural capital depending on the exact context.

Having a clear sense of this and looking back to the case of Miao silverware crafts, we could understand that this eager impulse of pursuing economic outcome is derived from the lack of economic capital, which is absolutely natural in these counties of poverty with average annual income of less than 2300 yuan (around 350 euros).

In this period of transition from the accumulation of economic capital to cultural capital, the only way to maintain the sustainability of folk crafts is to make records and make sure that the craftsmanship is transmitted from generation to generation. At this stage, other solutions which are not related to this objective, such as product innovation suggested by theories, could be very hard to apply, since the current education level of craftspeople could not allow that to happen.

If the economic capital accumulated could be successfully transformed into cultural capital, which requires the effort of government, common-based institutions and craftspeople themselves, the sustainability of crafts could be guaranteed.

In this sense, right now we see some hopes and threats. The *positive sides* of the current situation could be listed below:

- The craftsmanship itself is transmitted from one generation to another, and young people are interested in learning it.
- Most of my interviewees who succeeded in the accumulation of economic capital cared about the education of their future generation.
- There is already an awareness of values of crafts raising from the young generation who received a good education, who are willing to contribute to preserve and even innovate local crafts, such as in the case of one of my interviewees.
- The heterogeneity and big scope of craft market could provide an opportunity to all kinds of crafts, being high-quality ones or innovative ones.
- Common-based institutions are making a lot of efforts to raise the awareness of craftspeople of craft values.
- The cultural policy regarding intangible cultural heritage and crafts also encourages this trend.

On the other hand, the *threats* are:

- The large quantity fake machine-made products are damaging the reputation of crafts, which is not easy to be reestablished.
- The local government failed to encourage craft culture since officials are putting a lot of emphasis on the economic outcome themselves.
- The distinctive taste of consumers to appreciate crafts is still not largely formed.

8.3 Suggestions

According to what established previously, the measures needed to be carried out should be focused on two aspects: one is to make sure that the economic capital accumulated could be transformed safely to cultural capital; another is to reduce as much as possible the negative effects caused by current excessive emphasis on economic outcome, since some damages could be irreversible.

To address the first problem, both local government and common-based institution should make efforts to promote and educate the importance of traditional crafts to craftspeople and consumers. The effort from local government is currently missing, which might calls for the central government to rebuild a more powerful and arm-length supervision system to assess the effectiveness of the investment of local government in the preservation of traditional crafts. The current system with a high degree of devolution is not suitable for the current situation in China. The introduction of a more powerful arm-length system could increase the quality of assessment.

Moreover, the current effort in education from the part of common-based institutions supported by cultural policy, plays a very significant role and should continue in the future.

In addition, a more convincing standard which distinguishes clearly handmade silverwares, machine-made silverwares and white copper jewellery needs to be introduced by the local government to rebuild the reputation of traditional handmade silverwares.

Lastly, museums and a digital database of traditional crafts, which currently are already well established, should continue working on collecting crafts and making records.

8.4 Possibility of generalisation and limitations

The framework of the ideal situation developed in this thesis could be applied to analyse any form of folk crafts whose sustainability is under threats. The framework could be improved further in its process of application.

Moreover, traditional folk crafts under similar situations whose sustainability is under threats reflected on the sheer quantity of low-quality or even machine-made products dumped on the market, are very common phenomena in China. Even though there is no academic research which counts how many forms of crafts are in this situation, one proof could be that there are 389 results found in the Chinese “google scholar” CNKI which have keywords as “low quality crafts on the market”. Provinces like Shandong, Tibet, Guangxi, Yunnan, Jiangsu, etc. have been mentioned. Therefore, the threats identified in this thesis could be applied in these cases as well.

The limitation of the thesis is very largely due to the lack of data. On the one hand, interviewees who could provide insights and valuable information about the preservation of crafts of central government and local government are very hard to reach, which leads to the fact that the thesis could not provide an accurate assessment of the government intervention. In addition, the local statistics office of Qiandongnan did not reply to the application for data regarding crafts industry.

On the other hand, serious academic literature with well-conducted field researches about traditional folk crafts hardly exist in China, which leads to the fact that all the researches are repeating very similar opinion without any actual verification. This caused problems for the documentation of the thesis.

Moreover, the limitation of this thesis is also derived from the fact that tourists are the only reachable buyer group in the research. Even though other buyer groups who might prefer high-quality crafts and already have developed a distinctive taste could exist, they are hardly reachable. In this sense, the analysis of consumers of Miao silverware crafts could be rather biased. As a matter of fact, both the number of surveys and the number of interviewees are not enough to provide a complete vision of the status quo of traditional Miao silverwares.

Lastly, the limitation to use cultural capital theory to discuss issues regarding heritage preservation is that it is hard to determine the scope of preservation by accounting for the values each form of heritage has. Since the values are classified into several categories, and each form of her-

itage could carry values of all these categories, it is hard to argue the non-substitutability among different forms of heritage.

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Appendix A Surveys

1. Gender

A. Male B. Female

2. Profession

A. Student B. Primary industry C. Secondary industry D. Tertiary industry

3. Education Level

A. Below middle school B. Middle school C. High school D. Bachelor E. Master F. Doctor

5. Age

A. Less than 20 B. 20-30 C. 30-40 D. 40-50 E.50-60 F. More than 60

6. Income

A. Lower than 1000 yuan (120 Euros) B.1000-3000 C.3000-6000 D.6000-10000 E.- More than 10000

7. Are you interested in the culture of Miao Ethnic Group?

A. Highly interested, I automatically seek related information

B. I would not mind knowing something about it.

C. I do not want to know about it.

8. Do you have some understanding of the history of handmade silverwares of Miao Ethnic Group?

A. I think I know it very well

B. I've heard something about it

C. I do not have any idea

9. Do you have some knowledge of the techniques of handmade silverwares of Miao Ethnic Group?

A. Yes, and I am interested in knowing more about it

B. Yes, but I was forced to hear about it by others.

C. No, I have no idea.

10. Do you have any previous experience or good memories with any handmade products?

A. Yes B. No

11. Can you distinguish machine made silverwares and handmade silverwares of Miao Ethnic Groups?

A. I cannot distinguish them, but I want them to be distinguished

B. I cannot distinguish them, but I do not care either

C. I can distinguish them

12. Do you think the prices of machine made silverwares and handmade silverwares should be different?

A. Yes, because handmade silverwares are more beautiful and with better quality

B. Yes, even though they look the same, but handmade silverwares are made with more effort

C. No

13. Have you bought some silverwares of Miao Ethnic Group? If yes please answer all the questions from 14-16, if no please answer question 17.

14. How much did you spend on it?

A. 100-500

D. 500-1000

E. 1000-2000

F. More than 2000

15. How many silverwares did you buy?

A. 1

B. 2-3

C. 3-10

D. More than 10

16. What is the main characteristics the you care about when buying Miao silverwares (multiple options)?

- A. Beauty
- B. Material
- C. Utility
- D. Gift
- E. Price
- F. Craftsmanship
- G. Collection
- H. Others

17. Why didn't you buy it (Multiple options)?

- A. Ugliness
- B. Out of fashion
- C. Not useful
- D. Prices too high
- E. Silver purity unclear
- F. Not sure whether it is handmade
- G. Others

Appendix B Interviews

1. Interview to a retailer of mixed (handmade and machine-made) silverwares in Kaili

Gender: Male

Age: 48

Education level: primary school

Income per month: 5000-8000 Yuan

1) For what reasons did you decide to start the business as a silverwares retailer?

Both my wife and I were silversmiths in our village, selling our handmade silverwares to the local people. Around twelve years ago, some businessmen from other province started to visit our village to buy our handmade staff, meanwhile some of my cousins who did high school in the cities also found good opportunities there, so we decided to go out to see if there are any chances to have a better life. In Kaili we had various attempts, working for machine-made silverwares factory and handmade silverwares workshops, however as we are growing older it is no longer easy to do intensive labour ourselves, and also we have children and senior people at home to take care of. We also found out that a lot of our clients in the city do not care about the craftsmanship of a product but its material, meaning the purity of the silver, so we decided to start a business of mixed silverwares retailing.

2) Was it easy to star the business? I imagine it requires large investment in the beginning, right?

You could say it is hard, but not as hard as... if you compare it to other jobs that we did. We already knew some businessmen from other provinces with whom we built stable business relationship, so in the beginning we largely depended on their demand, and actually we had a very fast and quick cash flow.

3) So your target group is mainly businessmen from other provinces? But how do you promote your products (for example via internet)? How about local buyers?

We do not promote them. You see, both my wife and I we only went to primary school, we can not manage Taobao (a famous e-business platform in China). But we can do it in our own way, we treat our clients good and we build very long-term relationship; our prices are good, I have confidence in it. Sometimes, one of the clients bring other clients, that is our reputation within the

circle. Of course we also go to trade fairs in other provinces like the others, it also brought us new clients.

As you can see, Kaili is not a tourist destination, and the local people they all think our business is for “cheating” outsiders, so local people do not buy from us. That is to say, individual buyers are indeed very few.

4) But the government built this cluster and also try to promote it, do you think it brought you more buyers?

This cluster is still very young. We moved in here two years ago because it is free of rent, since then we have not seen many people visiting here. Of course the government is organising some festivals under there (a plaza near the cluster) to try to attract some visitors, but very few of them visit the cluster even though it is just nearby.

5) Are you satisfied with the business now? And what is your plan for the future?

Yes, I am quiet satisfied. We build our life in the city, and my children can have better education here. For now I do not have any specific plan, I just want to maintain the status-quo.

2. Interview of a retailer of handmade silverwares in Kaili

Gender: Male

Age: 23

Education level: high school

Income per month: 5000-8000 Yuan

1) For what reasons did you decide to start the business as a silverwares retailer?

Now you have asked I have to think about it, because I have never thought about it. You see, I did my high school in Leishan and I wanted to go to other cities to have a look. I went to Shandong (another province) and did various job there, like worker of construction and waiter in restaurant. But I found them boring for me and also hard to do. Every time I go back home, my parents wanted me to learn silverware craftsmanship with my cousin, buy I just do not like it. One time I went to Kaili with one of my cousin (interviewed above), and worked in there shop for a period. I

just found there business quiet doable and also can interact with businessmen from other cities. So I decided to do this myself.

2) Why your parents wanted you to learn craftsmanship? Why did not you like it?

Because my two cousins who managed the craftsmanship very well are all earning a good amount of money. My parents think this is a stable job to maintain your life. But I am that kind of person who lacks patience you know. I do not want to stay at workshop every day. I like more interacting with people.

3) How is your business? Is it the same as your cousin or there are some differences?

In the beginning I didn't know any suppliers but my cousins, but most of their products are handmade and quiet expensive, so I had to select the most beautiful ones in order to sell a better price. But the good thing is that I do not need to buy any products myself but take pictures of the products and upload them in Taobao. When someone order a product, I would ask my cousins to start making them, so I do not need to invest anything.

4) That means demand from outside is larger than local demand, right? How did you promote your shop in Taobao?

Of course, nobody buy our staffs in Kaili. Old people like buying them from traditional silver-smiths, like my father. Young people do not need them anymore. They prefer modern accessories.

At first I just asked my friends to share it in Weibo (Chinese version of twitter) and Pengyouquan (Similar to Facebook), but it was not very useful. Then I started to meet some friends in Kaili who are also silverwares retailers or retailer of other Miao products. Some of them also had shops in Taobao. So I asked them if we could build a sort of "community" and promote our products together. This plan did work.

5) What is your target group now, and do you have certain strategies to attract them?

It is very hard to figure out your target group on digital platforms, but I guess it would be mainly young girls or some people who want to buy gifts to young girls. But as you might know, it is very difficult to apply any strategies to attract them in a digital platform like this where you can do very limited things. But we do care about the design of the shop and pictures we take of our products to make the products look more delicate.

6) Are you satisfied with the business now? Why? And what is your plan for the future?

I am quiet satisfied with the business because I do not need to worry about my life and have a lot of free time. I some times think about building my own brand, but I think I should have no rush,because my ability and resources is still kind of limited now. For example, I am still largely dependent on the products made by my cousins, but I want to have my own design.

7) Would you still insist in selling handmade products not the machine-made ones in the future?

Yes, of course, because they are way more beautiful and delicate. And people in cities like them and want to pay for them at a higher price. Some people told me that they can not distinguish them, but that is nonsense, I mean, if you have bought or take good look at real handmade silverwares, you would never buy handmade ones.

3. Interview of a retailer of machine-made silverwares in Xijiang

Gender: Male

Age: 42

Education level: Bachelor

Income per month: more than 10000 Yuan

1) For what reasons did you decide to start the business as a silverwares retailer?

It was more than 10 years ago when I decided to go back to Xijiang with my wife. At that time Xijiang was developed into a tourist destination by the government and I immediately thought that there were some opportunities of starting my own business there. And of course at that time we had two children to take care of, we were in need of a lot of money.

2) How did you start it?

We had some savings before, and what was funny was that the government planned some streets for shops, and because a lot of local people wanted to open their shops there, in order to make it fair, we decided the shop location by drawing lots. I had really good luck and got a very good location.

3) I went to Xijiang and did some surveys to the tourists there. A lot of them think that they are not sure whether the silverwares are made of real silver or not, what is your opinion about it?

That is not true. If we say that it is silver, than it is silver. We cannot lie about the purity of silverwares, because there is a national standard there.

4) But a lot of shops also claim their silverwares to be handmade, is it also the truth?

There are of course handmade silverwares in the shops. But to tell the truth, a lot of silverwares were cheap ones from Fujian so that we could sell it at lower costs. For example, in my shop sometimes the prices are three times higher than the original prices. We have an association of the local businessmen in which we sort of agreed on the prices. You can not sell neither too high nor too low because otherwise your neighbours would get angry.

5) The association are only made of businessmen or there are other craftsmen? What are the main activities of the association?

No, there are not craftsmen in Xijiang. Our association is like a community for neighbours. We organised some dinners in which we eat and talk about staffs. We never organise any formal meeting. We settled down everything in dinners. This community seem very informal, on the other hand it is very powerful, because our family live here, so if you have bad reputation in the community, you cannot live well here.

6) Does it also mean that you cannot be too outstanding, meaning that you cannot build a very powerful brand of your shops or you cannot earn too much more than other shops?

That is true. But you know, that is not a very serious problem, because I am satisfied of my earnings. I want to be honest with my friends and neighbours. I do not want to make a lot of money myself.

7) But would you say that keeping selling low-quality products like this could damage the image of the culture or crafts of Miao ethnic group?

What do you mean by images? People come here and want to have some fun, so they buy our silverwares as small souvenirs. We sell real silver products, that is what they want. They are happy with what they got, I am also happy with selling them. I do not see any problems in it.

4. Interview of an owner of small workshops of handmade silverwares in Kaili

Gender: Male

Age: 38

Education level: Secondary school

Income per month: 5000-8000 Yuan

1) For what reasons did you decide to start the business?

I learned the skill from one of my cousins. Then I went to Fenghuang and worked for a silverwares workshop there. But my wife and I are all from here. Our parents are getting older, so we have to go back to take care of them. I went back here and started my own business, I wanted it to be my own because the work is so much more flexible, and I also want to realise some of my own ideas through it. Lots of business want to hire me, but do not want to work for them.

2) That means you have really high craftsmanship compared to other silversmiths?

It really depends on each person, you know, like a lot of our cousins learned the skills from their father, but their father are silversmiths of the local Miao people, but what they made are not attractive to people in the cities, it is not to say that their craftsmanship is not good. I went to other places and got in touch with modern techniques and designs of silverwares, so I understand the taste of people in the cities. I like to think and I like to learn. I always want to challenge myself. Sometimes people give me very difficult design, but I will think about it for some days and finish it. I will not be satisfied with making money from simple tasks.

3) Do you enjoy the process of making them? Why do you enjoy it?

At first I did not enjoy it. But doing it these years I found out that it is a really promising field and really began to enjoy it and wanted to learn more about it. The association of craftspeople paid a lot of attention, like you see, they always call us to talk about some information of international or national trade fairs. The association is really putting effort to promote our products, which brought us a lot of clients. And universities in Shanghai and Beijing invited me to give some lessons and communicate with students there. So I really realised the value of silverware craftsmanship and want to keep doing it.

4) What are the values that you realise?

There are more and more clients and opportunities.

5) Is there anything of the craftsmanship or silverware itself that makes you value them?

Of course, I enjoy the process of making silverwares. As I told you, there is so much flexibility. You meet challenges and you create new things.

6) You said this is a promising field, by that you meant handmade silverwares, not the machine-made ones, right?

Of course. It is not hard to distinguish. Sometimes machine-made factories use our products to make models to have various copies. But the quality is way more lower. My labour is way more expensive than their labour.

7) Do you think the machine-made ones are producing some negative effects to your market?

Of course there are. But it also depends on consumers. I mean, some consumers just want to have cheap stuff and wear it for some time. But there are consumers who care about quality and want to keep the silverwares for a long time. Demand of our products always exist. Actually I do not care about those machine-made factories too much, because demand for my products largely exceed the supply.

8) You mentioned the association of crafts and universities, what about the local government? Are they doing anything to help you?

As far as I know, there are titles of masters that are very beneficial to your reputation on the market. But the problem is that people who have these titles are not the best craftsmen but the best in handling relationship with government officials. For example, if you know Yang Guangbin, who has the title of “living heritage” which is highest level (national level) of master, I would not say that he has the best craftsmanship.

9) Apart from giving master titles, are there other forms of support from the local government? For example, what about the cluster?

I don't know whether there are any other forms, but at least they are not benefiting me. The cluster, everyone knows it is a “image project”. If you go there, you will know what I mean.

10) I see you have very young apprentice here. Why did they decide to learn the craftsmanship with you? What is the relationship between you?

For various reasons. Like one of my apprentices, I wanted to have him myself, because I found him talented. His parents and I are friends. He really liked watching me working and helping me when he was younger. So I suggested his parents to send him here. Of course there are other people who came for a stable and well-paid job. We even offer them a place to live.

You know, this craftsmanship is transmitted from fathers to sons in our village. Now more and more people outside wants to learn this craftsmanship, but I still keep teaching them as my father and my cousin taught me. Our relationship is like this, like a family.

11) You mentioned that more and more people wants to learn this skill. How did you know it? And why do you think it happens?

Like I told you, this field is very promising. Everyone can tell it.

12) Are you satisfied with the current situation of your business, and do you have some plans in the future?

I am very satisfied with my business. I sometimes think about build my own brand, for now I just work with several designers who have their own brand and making products for them. But it is not a easy thing to do and it does not seem to be the right timing of doing it.

5. Interview of an owner of small workshops of handmade silverwares in Kaili

Gender: Male

Age: 35

Education level: Secondary school

Income per month: 8000-10000 Yuan

1) For what reasons did you decide to start the business?

My father was a silversmith who traveled around Miao villages and made silverwares for Miao people. He enjoyed making silverwares and kept learning new things about it in his whole life. He also went to other provinces where they had a different kind of silverware-making craftsmanship to learn from them. So he formed his own style of craftsmanship learning new useful things from other provinces and other ethnic groups of people. I learned from him not only his crafts-

manship but also the spirit of keeping learning new things. I enjoyed working alone, that's why I decided to establish my own workshop instead of working for other businessmen.

2) Your skills are similar to your fathers or you developed them?

During these years I kept learning new things, and I hired a designer to introduce new elements to my products. Basically, my father had more affection with staffs of our own ethnic group, like he used things from outside to make our things more beautiful, but he always sold them to Miao people. I wanted our staffs to be seen by people from outside, so I considered more the taste of people in cities.

3) But what you do is already modern silverwares using Miao silverware craftsmanship, basically people cannot see any connections of your products to traditional Miao silverwares.

Yes, that is true. I mean that is what people from cities like. We just offer what they like to them. Some silverwares of Miao, like silver belt or silver helmet, they were made with very delicate craftsmanship during many days, but they are not useful for people in the city, even though they are very beautiful, nobody would buy it.

4) Do Miao people still buy a series of traditional Miao silverwares for girls in the family like before? Or they also prefer modern silverwares?

Well old people like to keep the tradition. So basically old people buy silverwares for young girls in their family, but young girls prefer new things from the city. I think we are in the period of transition, now old people still insist in tradition, but 30 years after, you cannot even imagine what you might see. Of course, people pursue life with higher quality. All the young people want to build their life in cities and want to sort of be involved in the city life, so they dramatically changed their lifestyle or clothing in order to get the feeling of being involved.

5) What is your personal opinion about it? Do you think there is a need for the revival of appreciation to traditional crafts?

I don't think so. People don't like old staffs, then we make new ones. I cannot decide what others want. I sell them what they want.

(the rest of the questions and answers similar to the previous interviewee)

6. Interview of a worker of a factory machine-made white copper jewelries (fake silverwares)

Gender: Male

Age: 25

Education level: Secondary school

Income per month: 3000-5000 Yuan

1) For what reasons did you decide to do this job?

I guess it was because it was an easy thing to do. The income was also good which could give me a comfortable life in cities. I had no interest in craftsmanship, and I did not want to keep studying in school, so it was a good choice for me at that time.

2) Don't you think learning craftsmanship can give you a better life? Why are you not interested in it?

I do not know. My parents and all my cousins wanted me to learn craftsmanship, but I just don't want to learn it. Making white coppers is also hard job. I am not afraid of hard job, because I did a lot of hard job since I was still a child. But I just do not want to learn it.

3) For how long have you done this?

I've been doing it for about five years.

4) So you do not enjoy this job?

Whether I enjoy it or not, it does not matter. The life is hard, and you have to earn your living. That is what we do. We do not ask if we enjoy it or not.

5) How about the white-copper jewellery business? Is there a lot of competitions? Does that affect the prices of white copper jewelries?

Our prices are already really low. The boss really want to make sure the effectiveness, so all of the workers are young men like me, and we work for more than eight hours a day. So you see I will not be able to do this job within a couple of years.

6) To where these jewellery were sold?

Shops in Xijiang and other tourist destinations. Some local people bought them from us to sell in on the streets, you know, those poor people who do not own a shop.

7. Interview of a government official who works in the communication department in Leishan

Gender: Male

Age: 40

Education level: High school

Income per month: 5000-8000 Yuan

1) I heard that you want to promote your family's story to the local newspaper?

Yes, that's true. This is really not for our personal interest. I just think we are having a really different lifestyle compared to the life in cities, so I want people in cities to know about it and realise that there is not just one kind of life in this world.

2) What are the differences that you refer to?

I think we are a very big family, and we want to keep the attachment between family members. Not like people in cities, I think they are very isolated, just thinking about the interest of their very small family. Our family is very big, about forty members, but we are very closed to each other. And I want us to keep like this, I mean, we all have our small family life in cities, but we should all remember our big family here. That's why we have these reunions and we also have elected our "president", "manager" and accountant within the family. We have established a fund which provides us with money for activities and also support children who go to university within our family.

3) Do you think it is also a kind of traditional life of Miao people which is disappearing now?

Of course. More and more people leave their villages to seek a better life in cities, which is something normal, because you can have a better life in cities. But people are really easy to forget. I think a lot of Miao people are not proud of our tradition, that is something I want to improve in my job. You know we have really different and beautiful tradition, those craftsmanships, dances and singings, but people just forget about them.

4) You think people forget about them easily because they are not useful or because people are not proud of their own culture?

Both are possible. These traditions are disappearing really quickly. A girl went to cities to work and went back with silverwares of brand bought in shopping centre in cities. Then everyone would want it instead of our old traditional silverwares.

5) What does the government do to preserve the traditions?

We made large investment in developing tourism so that tourists could buy our traditional crafts.

6) What about the cluster that you built there?

That thing we build there very recently. You might see that few visitors come, but we are trying to promote it and I am looking forward it to be a city landmark in the future.

7) Did the government expect that few visitors would come before building it?

Yes of course. But you see it is almost full. A lot of craftsmen built their workshops and shops there.

8) What about tourism? Does that help to attract visitors or buyers of crafts?

Most people they go to Xijiang directly. The road from Kaili to Xijiang passed through Leishan before, so some tourists might drop by Leishan. Then a new road was built, and now people can go directly from Kaili to Xijiang, so nobody wants to visit here now.

9) What about local consumers?

Still very few, since the economic development is still limited.

10) What does the government plan for the future regarding preserving traditional craftsmanship?

What we could do in Leishan is very limited. We have no new plans yet.

11) Why is it limited? Is it financially limited or something else?

No, it is not. Because we already did all that we could, this is after all depended on the market.

8. Interview of an owner of a studio (established one year) which aims at designing and producing innovative handmade silverwares and other Miao crafts

Gender: Male

Age: 20

Education level: Student at university

Income per month: 0

1) For what reasons did you want to establish this studio?

I loved traditional Miao craftsmanship since I was a child. When I went to other provinces to study, I realised more clearly the uniqueness and beauty of Miao craftsmanship. I built this studio with my friends. What we do now is basically learn traditional craftsmanship in our free time, make products and sell them in our e-shop.

2) I guess you would not have so much free time as a student...

That's true. But we do not have any rush, because we enjoy the process of learning and making things. It is not a very large investment, and we do not seek profit for now. We mainly aim at promoting crafts and the culture of crafts. We also updated articles in our blogs in which we share interesting things of crafts with our readers.

3) What is your plan for the future?

When we graduate we want to really find a place and establish our studio. We want it to be a shop and a classroom at the same time. We would give lessons to people who are interested in crafts.

4) Currently are there a lot of stable buyers of your e-shop?

Yes there are some. We always insist that people who buy our staff to understand the craftsmanship that we used and to really like the spirit of crafts.

5) Do you think people of your generation all have this strong awareness of tradition as you do?

I would say that this awareness is shared by a very small group of people. A lot of young people prefer modern dressing style. It not only happens here but everywhere in China. Few young people truly respect our tradition.

6) You might know that currently Miao crafts are facing a lot of problems, like fake staffs and machine-made staffs. What is your opinion about it?

I feel really worried about it. But at the same time it is hard to blame anybody, since it is their right to have a better life, economically speaking. I feel like this really needs a long time to change, in which I have faith and hope.

Appendix C Results of SPSS Pearson analysis

Table 15 Results of SPSS Pearson analysis

Control Variables			Age	PurchaseBehaviour	Gender	EducationLevel	Income	CognitiveLevel	StudentOrNot
-none- ²	Age	Correlation	1.000	.483	-.281	-.103	.652	.018	.668
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.030	.433	.000	.892	.000
		df	0	58	58	58	58	58	58
PurchaseBehaviour	PurchaseBehaviour	Correlation	.483	1.000	-.221	.109	.500	.039	.441
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.090	.405	.000	.770	.000
		df	58	0	58	58	58	58	58
Gender	Gender	Correlation	-.281	-.221	1.000	.069	-.282	.055	-.157
		Significance (2-tailed)	.030	.090	.	.599	.029	.677	.232
		df	58	58	0	58	58	58	58
EducationLevel	EducationLevel	Correlation	-.103	.109	.069	1.000	.064	-.086	-.111
		Significance (2-tailed)	.433	.405	.599	.	.626	.515	.397
		df	58	58	58	0	58	58	58
Income	Income	Correlation	.652	.500	-.282	.064	1.000	-.151	.933
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.029	.626	.	.249	.000
		df	58	58	58	58	0	58	58
CognitiveLevel	CognitiveLevel	Correlation	.018	.039	.055	-.086	-.151	1.000	-.135
		Significance (2-tailed)	.892	.770	.677	.515	.249	.	.305
		df	58	58	58	58	58	0	58
StudentOrNot	StudentOrNot	Correlation	.668	.441	-.157	-.111	.933	-.135	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.232	.397	.000	.305	.
		df	58	58	58	58	58	58	0