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Paper:

Chinese rural tourism development: Transition in the case of Qiyunshan, Anhui, 2008- 2015

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Abstract

The paper examines the political and social realities of China pertaining to its pro-poor rural tourism policies. It provides a discussion of those policies by drawing on an analysis of changes in the village of Qiyunshan, which is being developed as a tourist destination by the Huangshan authorities. It contextualises the wider policies of current rural reforms under the Xi and Li regime within the specificities of the experiences of this village based upon two sets of observations, (a) one based on several visits over a period of years and (b) a more structured period of participant observations by the first author since 2011. It points to the increased role of state owned enterprises under the Xi regime while highlighting specific differences between different actors in the process of transition toward becoming a major tourist destination.

1.   Introduction

        This paper examines the experiences of a Chinese rural village in Anhui province and its transformation from an impoverished community to one currently on the verge of becoming a major asset in Huangshan's portfolio of tourism products. The experience of Qiyunshan is not untypical of many Chinese villages (for example see the work of Chen, Li, & Li, 2013; Wu, Zhang, & Qiu, 2013), but because of the changing patterns of governance that have been in place since 1996 it has a twenty-year history that illustrates many of the problems facing such communities. The paper thus describes these problems, thereby illustrating the problems faced by many Chinese rural communities today.

        This paper suggest that China offers new challenges when considering these issues due to (a) the scale of its tourism (with 4 billion domestic trips in 2015 [Xinhua, 2016]), (b) the rapidity of its development and (c) the role of its government in formally pursuing tourism as a specific economic and social policy (Dai, Jiang, Yang, & Ma, 2013; Tang, 2014). Chinese scholars have made at least two responses to these challenges. The first is the conceptual emphasis that focuses on theories of development and system dynamics (Li, 2006a, b, Liu, 2006; Yang, 2013; Yang & Sun, 2013), and the second is arguably a political and ideological imperative, which is the concept of social harmony and the Chinese Dream (Ryan & Huang, 2013a, 2013b; Xu, Cui, Sofield, & Li, 2014), and the evocation of tourism as an exercise of political power (Dai et al., 2013), and social control (Tang, 2014).

        These issues of the social impacts of tourism under conditions of centralized policy and fast growth in demand are here assessed by reference to research based on Qiyunshan, a village with strong Daoist antecedents, found in Huangshan, Anhui Province, China. The research programme is one that has, at the time of writing, been evolving over a seven year period, and this paper draws

primarily upon observations, secondary sources and interviews with 20 government officials and 64 residents of differing villages on and around the mountain with specific reference to a period from 2011 to 2013, but also drawing on subsequent visits to the village and material collected from various surveys at other times. The purpose of the research is to describe, assess and evaluate how tourism has developed in the village under current Chinese rural policies. It does not delve into specific research problems but attempts to integrate the findings by offering a model that indicates how in this instance the Chinese Dream of 'moderate prosperity' translates into practical policies.

The next section offers a literature review commencing with a brief overview derived from western research in western countries as these findings have come to be considered by Chinese scholars faced with the practical realities of tourism policies being shaped by political imperatives in China. Subsequently the following section then reviews the Chinese literature and experiences to inform a discussion of the findings of the current study.

2.   Literature review

It may be noted that a consistent theme in the tourism academic literature for at least forty years has been that of the reactions of residents to the impacts of tourism. In 1973 Sir George Young questioned whether tourism was a 'Blessing or a Blight', and indeed as the work of Walton and others show, there are longer historical antecedents of such contentions (Durie, 2015; Martin, 2007; Travis, 1993; Walton, 2005). However the question continues to be pertinent despite these previous studies (see for example Du & Su, 2011; Huang & Gong, 2010). A number of reasons have dictated this, both conceptual and practical. Over the decades differing conceptualisations of tourism's impacts have evolved. Doxey's Irridex (1975) has been criticized as being both too linear and homogenous in its concept of community (Kuvan & Akan, 2005), and by the 1990s the concept of social exchange theory was being adopted, primarily based on the work of Ap (1992) and Ap and Crompton (1993, 1998). In turn, partly as a result of the 1991 Rio declaration, environmental issues came more to the fore, and analyses of environmental degradation and subsequently carbon emissions joined concerns of social impacts. A cycle of research moving from the descriptive to the more analytical followed. Hence Russell and Faulkner (1999) advocated the use of chaos theory, and, in a Chinese social context, and evoking the work of Murphy (1991), Gu and Ryan (2008) sought to apply concepts of place attachment as a filtering mechanism that shaped residents' respondents to tourism. Certainly tourism has been identified as a significant form of human activity comprising tourists, business, government, com- munity and environment (Williams & Lawson, 2001). When the tourist interacts with the local environment, economy, culture and society; of necessity a number of consequences can emerge (Liu & Zhu, 2006; Mason, 2008; Yang & Sun, 2013). Among the positive effects of tourism are the generation of both direct and indirect employment (particularly for women and young adults), increased tax revenue, foreign exchange for national economies, and, at least initially, an increased

economic diversity in the host community (Haley & Haley, 1997; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Siriporn & Youngsoo, 2010). Additional benefits include an enhancement of the residents' quality of life by increasing the availability of resources for recreation and entertainment, improvements in local infrastructure (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Cohen, 1984; Lankford & Howard, 1994); an improved image of the host community (Besculides, Lee, & McCormick, 2002; Mason & Cheyne, 2000); a contribution to cultural exchange and mutual understanding between tourists and hosts; a revitalization of the arts, crafts and local traditional culture (Beekhuis, 1981; Mason, 2008); and an increased awareness of the need to protect the environment (Mason, 2008).

On the other hand, it has been found that tourism can increase tax burdens, the cost of land, housing and goods, local government debt, inflation, generate high opportunity costs, generate an over- dependence on tourism and the emergence of Dutch disease (Ap & Crompton, 1993; Wall & Mathieson, 2006), lead to low wages, seasonality of employment, overcrowding that degrades the natural environmental and threatens the habitats of wild life, and which have negative impacts on local community life (Mason, 1995; Ryan & Gu, 2009). Other ills found to be associated with tourism include crowding, noise and pollution in the host community (Ap, 1992; Tatoglu, Erdal, Ozgur, & Azakli, 2002), a contribution to social ills such as drug trafficking, prostitution, begging, crime, and gambling, and sometimes tourism will change the traditional society and culture (Kuvan & Akan, 2005; Lankford & Howard, 1994). Finally tourism may influence host residents' values, life style, behaviours, and family relationships (Ritchie & Inkari, 2006), but whether this is beneficial or not is dependent upon value systems. Some may see the negation of traditional life patterns, while others may welcome the modernization of family structures such as a greater independence for women (Ryan & Aicken, 2005).

The theme of tourism impacts has thus received considerable attention in the tourism literature, and one of the main principles in the World Tourism Organization's conceptualization of sustainable tourism development is the constant monitoring of impacts (WTO, 2004). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has acknowledged that a systematic analysis of tourism impacts can provide planners with a database to develop an effective tourism plan aimed at addressing local concerns and thereby help government, local authorities, and host communities to maximise positive impacts while reducing the negative. It is with this in mind that in China a process of monitoring observatories have been established by the UNWTO at Sun Yat Sen University, Guangzhou. The existence of these observatories is in part premised on a need to manage visitors in tourist destinations, including: "regulating access, limiting visitation numbers and specifying behaviours; undertaking market research and marketing; monitoring visitors and research; implementing education programmes and facilities; modifying the heritage management; encouraging and assisting volunteers; and concentrating on destination accreditation and organisations" (Wall & Mathieson, 2006, pp. 210-212). Appendices Three, Four and Five therefore

provide a summary of themes derived from past studies, each of which informed the wider research project of which this paper is part.

In China research into the impacts of tourism dates back to the early 1980s. Zhong, Deng, Song, and Ding (2011) undertook a search of the Chinese core journals using the term "tourism environment". It was found that during the 20 year period from 1981 to 2000, a total of 155 papers had been published with an average of 7.8 papers per year. However, from 2001 to 2009, there were 380 papers published, with an average of 42.2 papers per year.

Consequently in China, as in the west, in the 1990s environ- mental studies became common, driven not only by the post 1991 Rio agenda but by a growing concern by both the Chinese authorities and public about environmental degradation in China. For example in an investigation of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park in China, Zhong, Deng & Xiang (2008) found that the park's air and ground water quality had deteriorated over four discernable tourism developmental stages (e.g., exploration, involvement, development, and consolidation stages). It seems that the environmental impacts of tourism are most likely to be reported negatively in most cases; yet, Chinese researchers also argue (like their Western counterparts) that tourism could bring positive environmental effects (Li, Zhang, Liu, & Xue, 2006).

With a burgeoning economy and the development of domestic tourism it became common to find many papers documenting significant economic gains and improvements in the living standards of previously poor rural inhabitants (Liu, 2003; Zhou & Wu, 2004). Not that these studies solely identify positive impacts. For instance, in Shenzhen, it was found that tourism had brought negative social and cultural impacts to Shenzhen communities by increasing the conflict between local residents and outsiders, adding to the number of beggars, increasing reported crime and even encouraging the sex industry (Li, 2002). Similarly while Gu and Ryan (2010) reported that, in Hongcun (a UNESCO heritage site close to the current research site), tourism had brought local residents a perceived better quality of life, and the handicrafts being produced by the village had significantly increased, at the same time the residents also reported that tourism created crowding, noise, poor water quality, and more rubbish.

Governments everywhere play a role in tourism policies and China is no exception. That they do so is due to the perception that tourism can quickly generate employment opportunities, provide quick economic returns and resolve political and social issues (Jeffries, 2001). Urry (2002) also stated "tourism is one of the only opportunities available for generating employment … tourism may help local states obtain funding from central government to initiate projects which may also benefit residents" (p.105). Both these points apply to China, where the central government has used tourism as a means of developing an infrastructure to improve rural economic development, and address issues of income disparities between rural and urban zones, and between east and western China (Ryan & Huang, 2013a, b).

It is widely recognized that China has adopted a "government-led" strategy for its tourism development (Dai et al., 2013; Deng, 2000). Thus Zhang, Chong, and Ap (1999) stated that the Chinese government has simultaneously played the roles of operator (providing the infrastructure, operating tourism business), regulator (formulating and implementing regulations), investor; promoter, coordinator and educator. In short the government has, in China dominated everything, making joint decisions with developers in a situation where communities lack the right to know (Bao & Sun, 2007).

However, reform policies under the Xi and Li regime have commenced changes to better provide local residents with rights. The 2013 Third Plenum listed rural land reform and farmers' land rights as one of the key issues to be tackled with the specific objective of averting cases of exploitative compulsory seizures of land (Salidjanova & Koch-Weser. 2013). In addition, the Plenum voiced aspirations to reinforce farmers' land rights as stakeholders in development, but at the time of writing fuller details have yet to be announced. Such policy changes would be significant.

One reason for this uneven organizational development of tourism policies may be the Chinese current vertical and parallel bureaucratic system. It is said to lack a clear definition of governments' perspectives, purviews and commitments in administration, and enables governmental organizations to intervene in tourism development according to their practical interests and needs (Ying & Zhou, 2007). Sometimes these may have more to do with developing prestige rather than rational economic policies (Ying & Zhou, 2007). Despite, or even perhaps because of this, in China regional government and companies have become the primary partnership in the tourism process because of the power and resources they hold. Often other stakeholders such as residents will only realize that their community is going to be developed into a tourist attraction when they notice the enterprise's entry into the destination, and even then, they will still not know any detail of the company's plans (Bao & Sun, 2007).

In this process, the Chinese government has created special typical governance models to transfer the managerial operation right to qualified tourism enterprises, such as the Leasing Model, the Non-listed Shareholding Model, and the Public- listed Shareholding Model (Su, Wall, & Eagles, 2007). Those models were developed in rural areas where the local governments lacked capital to invest in an attraction and wished to attract external companies to bring money to the local tourism industry.

Several tourist attractions have been developed under those models, such as Fenghuang County of Hunan Province (Feng, 2008), Bifengxia Valley in Chengdu (Peng, 2003), Wuyi Mountain Scenic Area in Fujian Province (Ye, 2005) and Wuzhen (Ryan, Pan, Chou, & Gu, 2014). Theoretically it is obviously good for the local economy and its tourism development, but the negative impacts cannot be ignored, and are associated with issues such as corruption, unfulfilled promises and

high leakage rates of profits (Bao & Zuo, 2013). In this study, Qiyunshan was also operated by a government tourism enterprises model as described below.

One response of western planners and academics to several of the issues raised above is the closer involvement of stakeholders including residents. The concept of the "stakeholder" was pioneered by Freeman (1984), who identified a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (p.46). Carroll and Buchholtz (1993) expanded the definition of stakeholders based on Freeman's concept as being "stakeholders are those groups or individuals with whom the organization interacts, and can affect or is affected by any actions, decisions, policies, practice or goals of the organization"(p.60). The concept has been accepted in tourism as evidenced by the Global Ethics for Tourism approved by the 13th General Assembly of World Tourism Organization who used the term "tourism stakeholder" to mark an official acceptance of the terminology (WTO, 2004, P.193).

In 2000, Zhang Guangrui translated the UNWTO Global Ethics for Tourism into Mandarin, which initiated a series of studies identifying stakeholders and patterns of relationships between them (Tao & Fuying, 2009). These included Bao and Zhong (2002) examination of the Guilin Tourism Development Master Plan, and the work of Liu and Bao (2005) who assessed the various relationships between local government and tourism operators; local government and residents; tourism operators and residents; tourism operators and visitors; as well as visitors and residents, under a Chinese view of ecotourism. Three years later Shi (2009) felt able to critique Chinese tourism planning as lacking stakeholders' involvement leading to conflicts between stakeholders or a lack of implementation of plans, while Zhou (2009) found stakeholders' expectations of tourism kept changing, which resulted in a lack of harmony in stakeholder development. For these reasons Chinese scholars increasingly endorsed the need for liaison among stakeholders in tourism planning. For example Liu, Ouyang, and Miao (2010), investigated the environmental attitudes of stakeholders (farms, government staff, business persons, and tourists) in the Protected Area of Jinyun Mountain in China, and found that improving community participation in a protected area can alleviate the protected area-community conflicts.

Certainly it appears that most Chinese research on community participation in tourism has relied on introducing Western community participation models (Bao & Sun, 2007), and many scholars believed that it was an indispensable mechanism within the macroscopic system of sustainable tourism development (Liu, 2000). Normally, there are two ways to evaluate the extent of community participation, by (a) involvement in the decision-making process and (b) by participation in the benefits of tourism. The former generally empowers local residents to determine their hopes and concerns for tourism, while the latter is always through employment (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1986). In many developing countries, community participation has been used to help local residents obtain economic benefits, such as encouraging local people to operate small businesses, or find jobs in the

tourism industry, rather than give residents an opportunity to make decisions of public policy (Tosun, 2000). Indeed, Wang (2006), and Bao and Sun (2007) confirmed that in China, participation in the benefits from tourism may be more important than participation in the planning processes, and local communities only participate in the economic activity, with a low or even no participation in decision making processes. On the other hand, Chen et al. (2013) argue strongly that the experience of controlling tourism in Landge Miao village had given residents a confidence that their voice mattered given the administration of tourism through processes of voting for representation on a village committee, and the transparency of many of the procedures adopted. Yi (work in progress) has also been finding evidence of the same processes in some villages in Shandong Province, which also include a growing importance attributed to females.

Historically, studies in China about community participation mainly focused on "comments and an introduction of theories from the West, macroscopic exposition of community participation modes in China, and advocacy of the idea of community participation in tourism planning" (Bao & Sun, 2007, p.11). However, as Ying and Zhou (2007) indicated, the problem is that it may not be possible for Chinese tourist destinations to completely copy western-style community participation principles, due to China's special socio-economic and political and cultural setting. Indeed, Ryan and Gu (2009) provide several reasons to explain why Western models cannot be easily transferred into a Chinese setting, pointing out the: "man-nature relationships, the Chinese predisposition toward taxonomic process, the economic imperative, the socialist market system and erosion (of direct States control), and cultural components including the importance of the concept of a harmonious society" (as cited by Ryan & Gu, 2009, p.221).

An additional legal factor is that in China the government owns the land, and has the right to designate any place for tourism development (Li, 2004). As such, local communities often have no knowledge of any planned development until an enterprise actually commences the process, and communities can only passively allow developers to use their land for any state-supported projects (Ryan, Gu, & Meng, 2009). Indeed Bao and Sun (2007) even argued that many Chinese local governments have long retained the notion that because community residents are weak and foolish it is therefore right that local government can freely make decisions for them without a need for consultation. Other possible reasons may include lack of skills, time, and money, and decision makers consider participatory planning process as a difficult process, which has high financial costs, and thus time consuming and unproductive (Swarbrooke, 1999; Boyd, 2000: Paul, 1987).

Under the Xi regime many of the past policies relating to social progress in rural areas have continued. Tang, Zhang, Wang, and Feng (2010) identify four stages in Chinese rural policies tackling issues of poverty, namely those of 1978 to 1985, from 1986 to 1993, from 1994 to 2000, and from 2000 a phase they entitle 'Consolidation and Improvement" (p.103). At the same time, they disclose details of a slow movement toward increasing levels of community actions and cautious endorsements

of community self- governance, as evidenced by those in Zhejiang Province (p.78). Tourism has a role in these developments as evidenced by development in Landge Miao (Chen & Li, 2013).

Yet Xi's *Chinese Dream* of a new prosperity sees relatively little role for greater democratization in China as that process is understood in Western countries. In December 2012 in a speech given in Fuping County, Hebai Province, Xi stated that it was impossible for China to be moderately prosperous if "the backward parts of the countryside are left behind" (Xi, 2014, p. 209) but continued to describe the solutions as being one where "Party committees and governments at all levels should strengthen their sense of responsibility and mission in development-oriented poverty alleviation" (Xi, 2014, p.209). The key was said to be in greater diligence on the part of the party, and that speech is silent on the issues on encouraging the self enhancement of communities and rural peoples. That stance was found to be reflected in comments made by a number of local government officials as reported below. Yet, as noted by Luo (2012) in a commentary on the Chinese Dream, Chinese officialdom remains tainted by corruption and hence the elimination of such corruption remains a key target. That this does impact upon China's rural tourism policies has been detailed by Bao and Zuo (2013).

In February, 2016, Xi targeted rural poverty alleviation as a significant policy target when visiting the village of Shenshan in Jinggangshan just prior to the Chinese New Year. He was reported as stating 'Policies should be made according to the (needs of) households and individuals' and to address 'root causes' e but the context of those remarks remain those of government directed help, including a redirecting of resources to new industries (Zhang, Y, 2016).

For a commentator such as Wang (2014) the Chinese Dream is a revocation of the old themes of rejuvenation which he argues hearkens back to a pre-Maoist period concept of a sense of Chinese humiliation in the period from 1849 to 1949. The Chinese Dream emphasizes 'closeness-myth-trauma', and in Xi's version it is a closeness between the party and people wherein the party works for the people to develop a sense of progress and a recovery of China's past greatness. The context of application of such CCP thinking within the rural context is problematic in many ways. The rural sector suffered enormously under the Great Leap forward of the 1950s, failed to recover during the Cultural Revolution but became the backbone of early Chinese economic growth in the 1980s and early 1990s, primarily because of the introduction of private ownership of surplus production and an emergence of private ownership rights under various guises such as long term leasing (Putterman, 1995). However, that revival has not been uniform, and the ways of achieving revival have also been far from uniform (Wu et al., 2013). Nonetheless, aided by the usage of the internet it seems that the Chinese rural population is far from quiescent when it feels that it rights are infringed, and this is true of the current location of study as shown by demonstrations in December 2015 over logging practices being changed by the Qiyunshan Tourist Company.

3.   Research methods

This paper draws upon the specific research of the first author that commenced in 2012 that included an eight month stay on the mountain, and which included interviews with residents and officials. That period represented her second long stay at the village. Since that time, several repeat visits have been made to the mountain, including one by both authors in September 2015. The first author has made several other visits including in December 2015 when residents demonstrated again the Qiyunshan Tourism Company, and again in February 2016. The study was part of a continuing programme initiated by the second author when he first visited the site in 2007. Since 2007 the research programme has been continued with the help of staff and students from Huangshan, Beijing International Studies and Waikato universities.

In terms of methodology the total research project might be said to be a case study of the evolution of tourism in a Chinese rural village, and the repeated visits seek to overcome an issue noted by Pearce when he commented that "The comparative approach has yet to emerge as a distinctive, readily recognizable methodology in tourism research" (Pearce, 1993, p.20). While subsequently comparisons between tourists of different nationalities, and between different locations has become more common in the tourism literature, there remains a dearth of longitudinal research over time as an individual destination evolves. Getz (1994) made the same comment and continued "This is particularly true in the measurement and evaluation of residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism, of which there have been many one-time efforts" (Getz, 1994, p. 247), and it seems that much the same state of affairs continues with some exceptions such as the work of Gu and Ryan and their work in Beijing's hutongs (Gu & Ryan, 2008, 2012; Ryan & Gu, 2006, 2007), which the current authors believes still continues.

Given the total amount of data collected over the years this paper focuses on the primary research conducted by the first author over the eight month period of 2012, but it is informed by past and more recent studies and visits. Much of the data and its interpretation are thus drawn from numerous conversations with residents and the collection of formal and informal materials from them including structured questionnaire completion. All of this has been accompanied by a constant taking of photographs that have recorded the changes that have taken place, while finally documentation of both a private and governmental nature has been made available to the researchers.

The research paradigm tends to sit within a functionalist approach - that is the stakeholders form a network of status connected by various roles. Relationships are assumed to exist between social classifications to form social groups. These groups form networks from which actions arise. However it is recognized that functionalism as an approach to ethnographic or anthropological work tends to the descriptive with little explanation of causality (Layton, 1997). The situation in Qiyunshan, however, suggests that this form of research is applicable given the dynamics of change in the village itself and in China more widely. One of the issues in adopting an analysis based upon more

interactionist principles is that often this school of thought is generally premised upon notions of equality of power between stakeholders or social groups. These assumptions are derived from Polyani's initial work that sought to disentangle structure and exchange - arguing that each is inter-dependent (Polyani, 1944). This is arguably not so in Qiyunshan, where government is the dominant partner, and indeed until very recently, geography also served to separate villagers on the mountain from those resident below the mountain. The study can hence be regarded as a case study that however is not unrepresentative of similar situations occurring throughout rural China in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. As such a case study has value by describing what is happening in a real-world situation (Yin, Bennett, Glatter, and Levacic, 1994), and unlike a study dependent solely on responses to questionnaires, it does not seek to abstract from reality, but rather delve deeper into the complexities of those realities. Nonetheless, each case study may build into better understandings through comparisons (Ryan, 2012).

The work is thus consistent with a case study approach as defined by Yin et al. (1994), namely that it is an appropriate form of research when 'A how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control' (p. 9). Additionally, as Swanson and Rinehart (2016, p.97) note, data need context, and equally require involvement on the part of the researcher. Charmaz defines ethnography as meaning 'recording the life of a particular group and thus entails sustained participation and observation in their milieu, community, or social world. It means more than participant observation alone because an ethnographic study covers the round of life occurring within the given milieu(x) and often includes supplementary data from documents, diagrams, maps, photographs and, occasionally formal interviews and questionnaires" (Charmaz, 2006, p.21). This was the process followed as noted above. Living for periods of time in the village means that the researcher becomes a temporary resident, especially when repeat visitation is made time and time again. Conversations are frequent, it is easy to ask questions such as 'what has happened since I was last here.' The presence of the second researcher along with the first is always a subject of local conversation as he is 'the foreigner' - but one recognized as having made prior visits.

A brief example of a dairy entry and photographs of the data collection process are provided in Figs 1-3. Appendices One and Two provide information about respondents, but details of government officials are withheld for reasons of compliance with promises of privacy.

In this way data and context are entwined in a process that is consistent with the principles of a case study espoused by Eisenhardt (1989, pp.548e549) who writes that a case study is 'Particularly well suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate. This type of work is highly complementary to incremental theory building from normal science research. The former is useful in early stages of research on a topic or when a fresh perspective is needed, while the latter is useful in later stages of knowledge.' However, these assertions by Yin et al (1994) and Eisenhardt (1989) perhaps are premised on a situation of relatively slow social change, and such a

picture is not consistent with the reality of pro-tourism policies in rural China. Since the second author's first visit to the area significant change has occurred as is described in the next section of the paper.

3.1 *The location of the research: its status prior to the current research*

Qiyunshan is located in Xiuning County within the Huangshan Municipality e and the County receives a number of visitors that is fast approaching 1 million by 2016. This is expected to significantly increase under the current tourism development plans. The authorities have specifically embarked upon the development of a portfolio of tourism product to extend stays and attract repeat business based upon the initial attraction of the Yellow Mountains (Huangshan) which is one of China's foremost tourist attractions, having more than 3 million visitors annually (Huang et al., 2016). Huangshan City now possesses one World Natural and Cultural Heritage site, one World Cultural Heritage site, one World Geological Park, three national geological parks, three national forest parks, two national nature reserves, three national scenic and historic interest zones, one national AAAAA class tourism area, and 15 national AAAA class tourism attractions. With reference to culture and heritage, Huangshan city is the original area for Huizhou culture. Huizhou culture covers many aspects, such as architecture (e.g. horse-head walls), economics (e.g. the Huizhou Merchants Guilds), Xinan medicine, science (hand-made ink techniques), arts (e.g. Xinan School of Painting), as well as Xinan philosophy. This specific philosophy is listed as one of the three major regional cultures in China, together with Tibetan and Dunhuang culture (Huangshan Committee, 2012).

Qiyunshan brings to this portfolio its own Daoist heritage, its unique "Red Cloud Land Form" (Danxian landscapes), numerous cliff inscriptions, dinosaur's footprint and the beautiful Huizhou style countryside scenery. Thus, it is a Daoist religious site for the faithful, a heritage site for those interested in Chinese heritage, a place of research for those interested in geography, and a tourist location for the simply curious. The height of Qiyun Mountain is 585 m above sea level. The ancient Daoists believed that immortals lived in mountains that are as high as the clouds (Zhang, Ding, &Shen, 2002); thus, its cloud cover can be seen as one primary reason why early Daoists chose Mt Qiyun as a place to practice Daoism meditation. In the past 30 years, Qiyunshan gained many awards, including "China National Tourist Resort (1994) "China National Forest Park" (1995), "China National Geopark" (2001), and "China National AAAA Scenic Area" (2005). Partly as a result Qiyun tourism experienced rapid growth from 2010 to 2012. In 2010, the total number of arrivals reached to 355,700, and the revenue was 11,130,000 RMB, while in 2011, the arrivals increased by 40.15%e 498,570, and the revenue increased 49.88%. As of the end of June, 2012, Qiyunshan's arrivals rose by a further 32.09% when compared with the same period in 2011 (Qiyun Tourism Authority, 2012). In 2015 arrivals were estimated as being over 600,000.

Date : 3/3/2012
Site: Taisu Palace
Start time: 10:10 am
End time: 10:40 am
Descriptions: Today is the birthday of Zhenwu god, which is the most important day for those pilgrims. They normally, arrived at mountain one day or two days ago, and have a vegetable diet to wait today's events. They prepared lots of candles and incenses at home. Pilgrims not like the visitors, brought incense on the mountain. I ask one pilgrim that how many of them came to the mountain at this time. She told me: "nearly 150 villagers in my village come to the mountain for this pray; this is a traditional event for their village every year. I come to this mountain for 7 years at present…"
Photography:

Notes: Many pilgrims pray in the temple
Note: First author (on the right) talking with a pilgrim

Fig. 1. Example: Extract of diary entry and data collection.

Fig. 2. Photographs of conducting semi-structured interviews. a: Resident on the mountain b & c: residents below the mountain d: visitor.

Fig. 3. Construction of Resort and Five Star Hotel at the foot of the Mountain.

Qiyun Mountain has a significant history of Daoism, and is regarded as one of the four main Daoist Mountains in China. The others are: Mt. Wudang in Wuhan Province, Mt. Qingcheng in Sichuan Province, and Mt. Longhu in Jiangxi Province (Zhang et al., 2007). Daoism was introduced to Qiyun Mountain during the period of Tang Dynasty in (758e760) when the Daoist Gong Xi Xia visited Qiyun Mountain and lived here. He is generally regarded as Qiyun Mountain's first Daoist. Qiyun flourished in the period of the Ming Dynasty, because it was strongly supported by the Emperor Jiaqing, who came to Mt Qiyun to pray to give birth to a son, which request was granted. In ancient times, Mt Qiyun had the same or even higher reputation than Huangshan. Lixun, the Ming Dynasty poet, once said "there are lots of mountains in Xinan area, only Qiyun and Huangshan are the best (新安多佳山,而齐云与黄山为最). However, Qiyun Mountain suffered a very difficult time during the period of the "Cultural Revolution" (1966e1976). The Chinese government attacked Chinese religious beliefs as "feudal superstitions", and as one of the "four-olds" associated with "traditional culture, ideas, customs and habits" (Ryan, 2011, p.112). Most religious sites were destroyed by the Red Guard; they broke the temples, churches, other religious buildings, and arrested many ritual specialists (Dean, 2003; Zhu, 2003). Qiyun Mountain was ruined by the Red Guard during this revolution, leaving no temples, no Daoists priests, and no pilgrims.

The village therefore remained in a decayed state until 1978, when the vice-governor of Anhui Province provided funding for restoring temples, and then established the Qiyun Daoism Association in 1984 (G. H. Cheng, personal communication, December, 23, 2011). Qiyun Daoism belongs to the "Zhengyi" school of thought, which differs from the more traditional "Quanzhen". The

latter is more monastic and based on the Buddhist model of monastic communities (Schipper, 2000), while "Zhengyi" Daoists follow a more normal life, being married, having children, and jobs.

The research period from 2008 has been one of significant change for the communities. When the second author visited Qiyunshan in 2008 the level of tourism was relatively small despite the prior construction of a gondola system to take visitors to the top of the mountain. In the intervening years a road has been blasted through the mountain that now connects the village more directly to the outside world, while at the foot of the mountain following compulsory land purchases a new resort complex has been constructed that provides a base for car borne exploration of the mountain and immediate vicinity (see Fig. 3). Whereas in 2008 the surrounding villages had no experience of tourism, today the government has developed strip retail developments whereby locals can enter into the tourism industry through small cafes, souvenir retailers and other similar small scale retail developments. Initially the accommodation at the top of the mountain was limited and rudimentary; comprising of rooms for pilgrims and the curious that could often entail sharing a room with mice scampering around at night. Today a small boutique hotel has been developed under the ownership of the Qiyun Tourism Corporation competes with locally owned more modest accommodation offered by residents, while in October 2015 a second modern hotel was under construction near the temple. The economic and social impacts are thus significant and it has been noted that the village now offers employment to those of working age. Much of the data has still to be fully analysed as it continues to be added to. Two examples of the village's attractions are indicated in Figs. 4 and 5.

Fig. 4. Qiyunshan. An attractive destination.

Fig. 5. Daoist Temple at Qiyunshan heritage tourism attraction.

The location thus has its unique resource, but has lacked a stable management system, and from 1999 to 2011, Qiyunshan experienced a number of changes in its management system. The Huangshan Government formally established the Qiyun Tourism Authority as early as in 1996, at the level of a vice-county administrative authority. Executive responsibility was given to the Authority to manage Qiyunshan, but only two years later, Xiuning County government entrusted development for 30 years to the Huangshan Authority, hoping they could bring new ideas to the destination. The Huangshan Authority invested in improving facilities at Qiyunshan, by rebuilding the pathway and installing toilets. Indeed, from conversation with local residents, the authors found that residents set a high value on "Huangshan Authority Performance". But, the stability was illusory. The Xiuning County Government unilaterally broke the contracts in March 2003. The official reason was the Huangshan Authority had not been able to avoid losses. Later, in June 2003, Xiuning County sold the operating rights to a private tour company for 50 years - the Xiehe Travel Agency.

Only seven months later this contract was also broken, and the company took 3,000,000 RMB in compensation and 450,000 RMB in ticket revenue retention. In 2004, Xiuning Government again sold the Qiyun operating rights to an external group, which came from Zhejiang Province, again for 50 years. But before this company begun handling Qiyun business, the contract was again unilaterally broken. No one knows the real reason. This corporation cost the Xiuning Government 400,000 RMB in compensation to the com- pany. In 2005, the Xiuning Government found another company - the Guangling company. This company promised that they would invest 20,000,000 RMB in the mountain. However, by the end of 2008, they had invested nothing, but had taken 70% of the ticket revenue and all of the cable car revenue, which totalled 6,000,000 RMB (Fang & Zhang, 2011). Again, the contract was stopped by the government. In October 2009, when the first author visited the mountain, local residents told her that the mountain operational rights had returned to Qiyun Tourism

Authority 5 months previously, and they hoped the mountain could really develop this time. Later, in October 2011, the operational rights were then sold to a large real estate company from the eastern coastal provinces, only to be sold back to the Qiyun Tourism Authority some three years later. Currently, from the above evidence, it might be said that Qiyunshan had lost a decade after 2000, a decade when the domestic tourism industry in China developed rapidly.

In July, 2011, the Xiuning Government constructed a new overall Qiyun Mountain Tourism plan to re-define the development strategy for the period 2011-2030, with the objectives of achieving the status of "National AAAAA Tourist Attraction", "National Ecological Culture Tourism Demonstration Area", "National Culture Industry Demonstration Area", and "National New Socialist Countryside Demonstration Base". The plan was divided into three periods: the short term "Year 2011 - Year 2015 for Development Construction Period", "Year 2016 - Year 2025 for Steady Development Period", and the "Year 2026 - Year 2030 for Integration and Optimization Period" (Xiuning Government, 2011a). In the plan, it was stated that Qiyun Mountain will focus on the Chinese "long triangle" (长三角, sometimes referred to as the 'Golden Triangle - the area of main population formed by the triangle of Beijing, Xi'an and Shanghai) and its immediate vicinity as its core market, and develop six main tourism product orientations, namely: sightseeing, leisure, business tourism, wellness tourism, rural tourism, and cultural-heritage tourism.

The Xiuning Government regional plan indicates that within the current five year state planning regime Qiyun Mountain will finish the work of converting from sightseeing tourism to a more comprehensive leisure-vacation type of tourism, which requires government and external investors to build a number of advanced facilities to meet visitors' needs, like star classified hotels, spas, business centres, health centres, sports clubs, bars, and places of entertainments and theatres (Xiuning Government, 2011b). In this plan, the government also places an emphasis on protecting the natural environment, and realizing social and economic benefits for the local community. To finish the transformation, the plan lists 5 goals for further development based on the involvement of government, external investors, visitors and local residents. First and foremost is the goal of economic growth, with the objectives of increasing total arrivals, improving facilities, and driving other industries to develop together; the second goal is related to social benefits, which are designed to improve the quality of life for local residents and create employment, especially for residents below the mountain; the third goal is mainly protecting traditional Huizhou culture and promoting Daoism culture to visitors; fourth is the focus on protecting natural resources and recovering previously destroyed areas; and finally the improvement of the current management system, and provision of more opportunities for visitors to gain a richer travel experience (Xiuning Government, 2011b).

3.2.   Research findings

As indicated in the section on research methods the authors possess significant quantities of information derived from numerous visits to the research site over a seven year process. This section therefore does not attempt to provide findings from any specific part of the research process (these are being prepared for other publications and papers) but seeks to draw our general themes as an overarching paper of a more discursive nature. Based on this case study of Qiyunshan Fig. 5 provide a listing of concerns for the various stakeholders e thereby indicating the problems any such harmony plan would need to address.

At the same time, each of the stakeholders also proposed potential solutions to the various dilemmas, and these are shown in Fig. 7. These data are drawn from conversations, formal interviews and secondary data sources. Taken together, the two tables provide a basis for the following discussion about environmental, socio- cultural and economic impacts that tourism has brought to the local communities. Appendix Six also provides a more detailed classification of the views of various stakeholders. Fig. 6.

By comparing the views summarized in the tables, it can be clearly seen that government officials are more likely to focus on the positive environmental impacts than the other stakeholders. Additionally most were of a view that the local environment had improved because of tourism, although it is also interesting to note that many of the improvements related to issues of cleanliness and aesthetics rather than more significant factors. As Su, Cao, and Lin (2005) explained, government authorities often pay more attention to local income and employment opportunities rather than wider implications for the environment, society and culture. As for the resident groups (those living on the mountain and those living in villages around Qiyunshan), both clearly realized the benefits and costs which tourism had brought to the local community. However, only a few respondents agreed their own activities could potentially prejudice the local environment; while most preferred to blame facilities construction and visitors. Certainly, the mountain residents frequently mentioned the negative impacts created by a number of visitors' activities, like 'visitors increase litter', 'mass painting and carving on the wall' of 'inscriptions and 'dinosaur footprints weathering by constant touching'. As Zhong et al. (2011) stated, " Tourists' activities and environmental conditions interact in a way that the former can damage or promote the latter while the latter can affect tourists activities or tourism development negatively, leading to a decline in tourists numbers" (p.2980).

For their part visitors perceive the environmental impacts of tourism even more negatively than the other three stakeholders. However, in going back to the transcripts, visitors are primarily concerned about the possible negative impacts that arise from the behaviour of other visitors and secondary activities of residents such as 'washing in the scenic pool', 'drying cloths and vegetables on the main tourists street', and 'throwing waste food into the forest'. In short, it is other tourists that are the cause of problems. Paradoxically tourists also voiced concerns about new buildings because a

dirty river or damaged landscapes reduced the quality of their own experience. That such construction was about improving the totality of tourist resources was not generally considered. Both residents and visitors confirmed the official view of positive impacts such as an improvement in 'cleanliness', 'improving residents' environmental awareness', and 'reforestation'. It might also be mentioned that while the literature often refers to the issues of 'visitors being noisy' and 'over-crowding', in the current study both these issues had a fairly low profile, and only a few of the mountain residents mentioned their existence during the high season.

The same procedure was used to assess the views of the four groups with reference to social-cultural impacts. Firstly, it seems that residents on the mountain are the most affected group when compared with the other three stakeholders. They specifically mentioned 13 tourism social-cultural impacts, including 'conflicts between residents and tourists', problems with 'maintaining Daoism culture, traditional custom, and heritage', 'see people outside, know new things', 'improve facilities', and 'residents' relationship change'. Without question, residents on the mountain have experienced more than 20 years' of continuous and growing contact with tourists, and it has gradually changed the way they live.

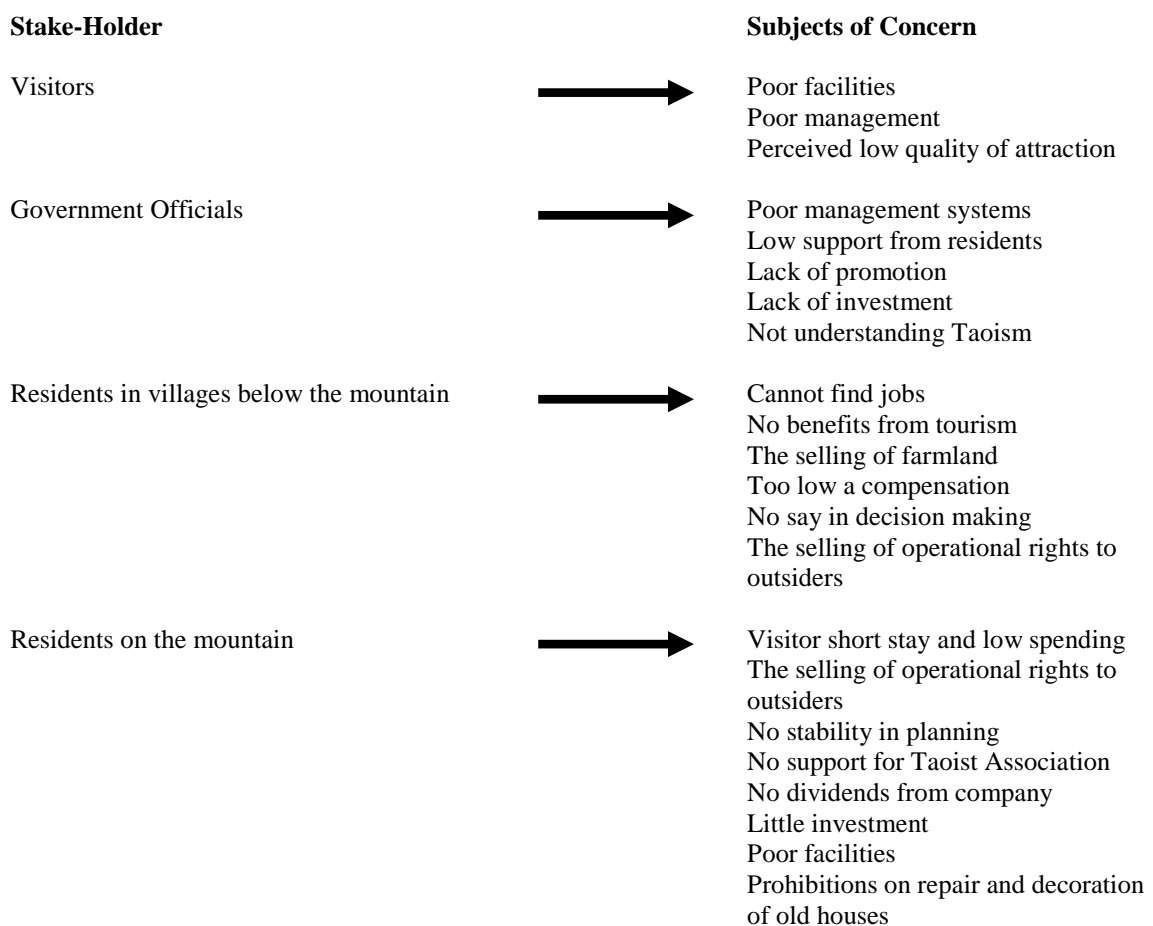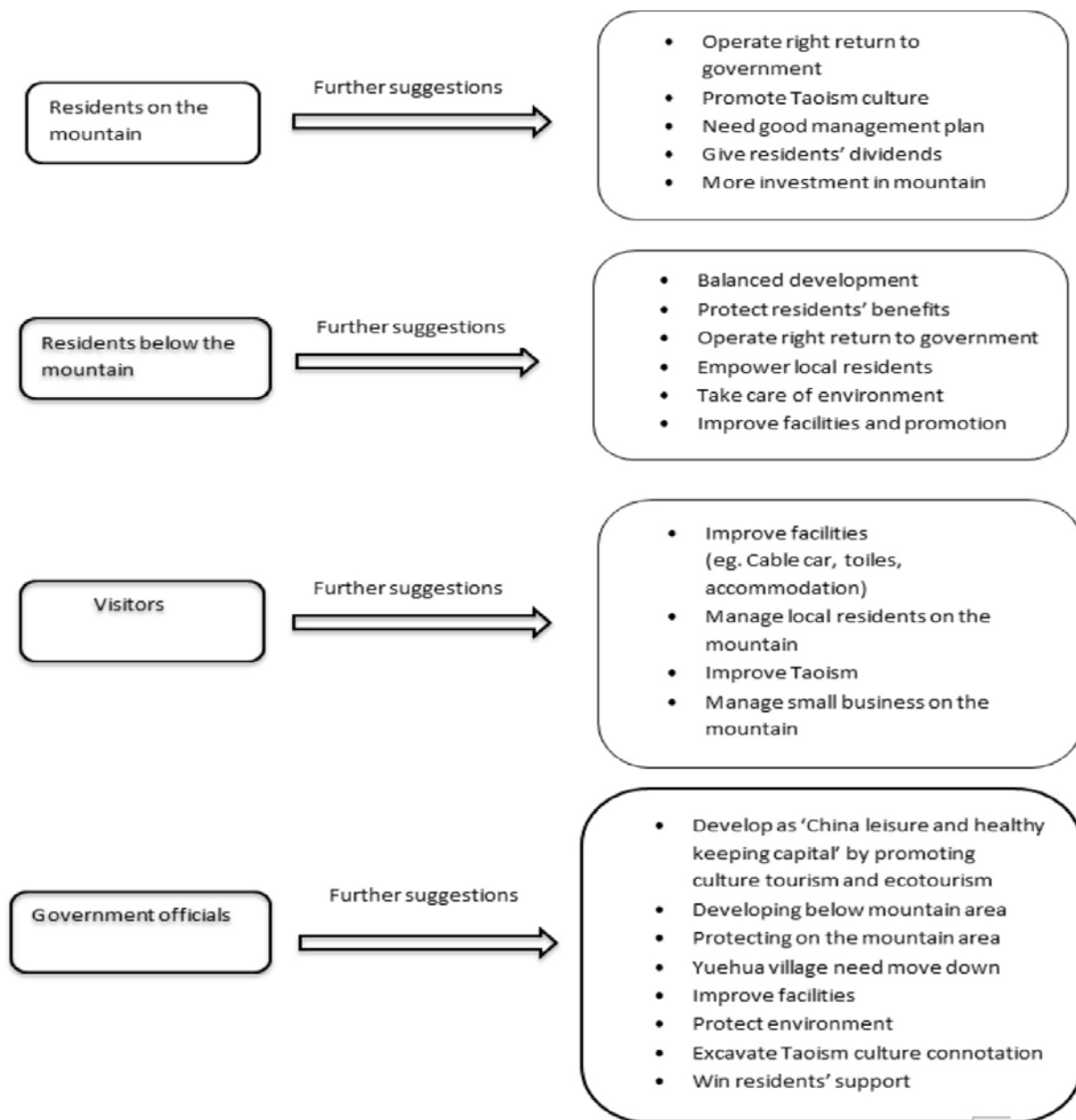| Stake-Holder		Subjects of Concern
Visitors	→	Poor facilities Poor management Perceived low quality of attraction
Government Officials	→	Poor management systems Low support from residents Lack of promotion Lack of investment Not understanding Taoism
Residents in villages below the mountain	→	Cannot find jobs No benefits from tourism The selling of farmland Too low a compensation No say in decision making The selling of operational rights to outsiders
Residents on the mountain	→	Visitor short stay and low spending The selling of operational rights to outsiders No stability in planning No support for Taoist Association No dividends from company Little investment Poor facilities Prohibitions on repair and decoration of old houses

Fig. 6. Stakeholders' concerns

Fig. 7. Stakeholders' suggestions of further development.

It also seems that both government and visitors have little awareness of the extent of existing social-cultural impacts. For visitors who come for but a couple of hours, it is really difficult for them to assess how tourism influences local life, culture, and value systems. Equally most government officials lived in Xiuning county, worked in Qiyun town, and most travel to the mountain only a few times per year. Although they have the ability to make policy on development, they may fail to personally experience how those policies may affect residents' daily life. Additionally, the government prefers to care more about positive impacts and indeed when officials were asked if they

could describe negative social-cultural impacts, most thought there were no such significant negative effects.

The four stakeholder groups have clearly different perceptions of economic impacts; and the distinction between the two groups of residents is especially clear as previously indicated in Fig. 5. Generally, those residing on Qiyunshan mountain agreed with the statements that tourism 'increases job opportunities', 'increases family revenue', and 'improves life quality', but these views were not reported by residents of the other villages. For example, those latter respondents stated that 'tourism development may decrease family income at present'. The reason underlying this answer is the 'land problem' as noted above. Some residents below the mountain have both land and farming jobs, and had not been able to find other employment locally when compulsory purchases have taken place. Additionally, residents below the mountain showed their dissatisfaction over many other economic items. They strongly agreed with a view that tourism development leads to an 'unbalanced industry structure', 'unfairness of income distribution', 'higher living expenses' and 'increases the income gaps between rich and poor'. Indeed many residents living in villages below the mountain expressed their concern that tourism is bringing many negative economic impacts to their village; while only residents on the mountain can enjoy the benefits.

This study confirmed the findings of other studies in terms of the existing degree of community participation in tourism and policy making. Only a small number (less than 5) village leaders had some level of participative experience; yet as Simpson (2009) indicated, community leaders are one of the more important stakeholders. However, the role of village leaders in most rural Chinese communities almost always focuses on conveying the message from government to residents, and to help government and residents arrive at a consensus. They have insufficient power to influence final decision making. In other words, a village committee is an intermediary to make a connection between government and the local community, but often little more. Li and Rozelle (1997) argued that village leaders used resources under their control to induce villages to behave in ways that are consistent with the government's objectives.

Most residents passively got to know of the decision through the village leader after government officials had made the new plan. Indeed Qiyunshan residents were more likely to feel 'trapped in the system' than residents below the mountain and therefore made statements such as: "… government and company prefer to carry out planning using a strong, hard way …", "…Government thinks we are the people of low cultural quality, (and know) nothing about tourism …", "… both government and local residents don't have enough democratic consciousness …", and "… the government and tourism authority ignore residents' suggestions, unless they want our land, and they will tell us before …". Indeed in a visit subsequent to the writing of this research local villagers were demon- strating against the government sponsored Qiyunshan Tourism Corporation in dispute about

village logging rights that the company had sought to stop and about which they claimed to have had no prior knowledge.

These potential reasons are consistent with previous studies (Bao & Sun, 2007; Qiu, Zhang, & Ap, 1999; Timothy, 1999; Wang, 2011; Ying & Zhou, 2007). Furthermore, as noted above, the perception of many government officials towards the residents' participation in tourism lends support to the residents' complaints. As stated, most officials did not feel residents should be considered during decision-making. In the eyes of the officials, residents did not know how to develop tourism, and were only focused on personal benefits. Furthermore, many officials believe that a highly centralized approach is the most efficient way to make decisions that are appropriate for the communities for which they are responsible. Consequently officials suggested that external companies and research institutes should play a major role in making tourism decisions as they hold the financial resources and research skills (Bao & Sun, 2007). What was lacking in any of the conversations with officials was any notion of training local people and encouraging the development of social capital within local communities. Yet despite this, local residents, when asked if government needs to seek local community support for tourism planning, still expressed their willingness to participate in such processes (cf. McDowall &Choi, 2010). Some reasons given to support community participation included: "… we are the right group that can affect tourism directly …", "… Government should respect us …", "… If they can give us an equal opportunity to participate, I think we can change the negative relationship with government …", "… we are more familiar with some things than those officials who come from other places …".

To increase community participation in rural Chinese communities, Sun and Bao (2006) suggested that residents in the community could be mobilized and organized to form a united force for community participation. Such a community association "can increase the community's social capital and its effectiveness in negotiating with government" (p.140). Chen and Chiang (2005) have also encouraged government to undertake public forums, opinion polls, public meetings, tourism promotion exhibitions et al., to help local residents better understand the tourism industry and its impacts. In addition, the authors emphasized the essential role of the community elite, and encouraged community leaders to set a good example to other residents in community participation (Sun & Bao, 2006).

The main reasons for these sceptical beliefs are related to external companies' past opportunistic behaviours, such as fake promises and no real investment occurring. Most companies only focused on ticket revenue generation, neglecting the desired development of the community and failing to contribute to its social capital. During the process, both time and capital were often wasted in changing systems between different companies. It was Bao and Zuo (2012) who stated that in many Chinese rural areas, local government attempts to realise 'capitalising resources' meant a transfer of managerial rights to external investors in return for cash (Su et al., 2007). Whether or not the transfer

of operating rights to outside companies is good for rural areas is closely debated by many Chinese tourism academics and government professionals. In some supporters' eyes, such as Gu and Ryan (2013), they believe that transferring operating rights to external investors does not change ownership, nor is it against the law and it does help to generate financial resources to develop poor areas that might not otherwise occur. However, Xu (2003) argued that it was the government's obligation to manage these resources, and use them to benefit the local communities. Until 2014 it seems that in Qiyunshan, the transfer of operating rights has not wholly produced the desired outcomes, although by late 2014 there were signs of some improvements eventually beginning to occur when permission to build new accommodation units on the mountain was given to some village people. Overall though, in the past outside investors did not undertake real investment in the mountain yet extracted significant revenues. Thus, although the mountain has been developed more than 30 years, it remained certainly at the end of 2013, at an early stage of development.

However, in the last two years the development has certainly accelerated significantly, As noted in the earlier text, there has already been built one boutique hotel that offers massage and other treatments and a second hotel is being developed. The Qiyun Tourism Corporation is thus making a significant difference, and this new approach is consistent with a more general one that the Huangshan authorities are undertaking. For example, at Xidi, long upheld as an example of a community led initiative, policies were reversed in 2013 and the tourism development of the village was handed over to the state owned enterprise e the Huihuang Tourism Group. In as far as it can be assessed this model appears to be driving tourism development in the major components of the Huangshan tourism portfolio.

3.3. *The role of 'Social Harmony' and the 'Chinese Dream' concepts*

It was earlier noted that Chinese rural development policies have a history from 1989 under various official pronouncements. As noted, especially from the early 2000s, the Chinese central government identified 'social harmony' as an important national development goal, which was divided into the sub-goals of 'people first', social equality, social stability, and social cohesion (CCPCC., 2005; Li & Chui, 2011). It was conceived as a means to settle conflicts and contradictions within the Chinese State (Ai, 2008; Chau & Yu, 2009) that include uneven development, huge income gaps, and growing conflict between government and local residents. Additionally it made an appeal to the confirmation of a sense of being 'Chinese' by reference to earlier classical Confucian thought, although the occurrence of 'river crab' literature displays a high degree of scepticism by many Chinese (the term 'river crab' being a play on words used by bloggers to both get around censorship and to express discontent with the government - 'river crab' is a homonym for 'harmony') (Anon, Carter, Henochowicz & Qiang, 2013; Crab, 2014). Xu et al. (2014) argue that concepts of harmony remain embedded in Chinese culture through concepts of 'tian ren he yi' (heavens, earth and humans

as one) and with renewed interested in environmental matters it fits well with official policies. On the other hand there is a wide disparagement of politics and its various ideologies at both an intellectual and popular level with among the former the work of Chinese thinkers such as Li Zehou and Liu Zaifu setting an agenda of the role of subjectivity in the reality of politics of the post Maoist period that continues today.

Since 2013 government rhetoric changed under the Presidency of Xi Jingping, who sought to emphasize a forward looking 'Chinese Dream' of moderate prosperity, but from a practical position current policies remain oriented toward achieving the implementation of many of the same goals as his immediate predecessors. In what is being increasingly termed 'the new normal' Chinese official policies are indicating not only lower levels of economic growth and an emphasis on quality investment, but a linkage with issues of reform and in some instances initiatives with implications for tourism. As an example one need only note the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiatives. Commentators such as Zhou Tian (2014) have also emphasized the importance of hukou reform signalled by the State council's December 4th 2013 discussion document as a key for both rural and urban reform. Combined with the much noted anti-corruption drives aimed at 'tigers and flies' the whole emphasis is towards greater transparency in policy formation, which will indirectly create closer ties between government and governed in the age of blogs but still constrained freer statements of opinion.

At the level of social policy, 'harmony' and the 'Chinese Dream' requires finding an effective way to ease potential conflicts among various stakeholders including in this case, officials, the Qiyun corporate interest, real estate investment companies, tourists, residents below the mountain, as well as residents of the mountain. From the viewpoint of many residents (and some officials) a lack of 'social harmony' existed between the government and the Qiyun Tourism Company due to inequitable income distribution, unbalanced power structures, and differing ideologies as well as past low levels of investment by corporates. As Hardy (2005) pointed out, a social (and tourism) system containing significant conflicts among stakeholders is not sustainable; but "a sustainable tourism system exists where conflict is minimised by understanding stakeholder perceptions and involving them in decision making, to reduce conflict and maximising their empowerment" (p.126).

To achieve political transparency, many Western researchers indicate that every stakeholder needs to recognize each other's interest and rights. This theme has been noted by a number of Chinese academics. Residents need to recognize private sector interests; government must recognize the rights of residents, and both the private sector and government need to recognise residents' role, if only to protect long term profits if not the dictates of 'green hotel' initiatives and benchmarking against best practices in corporate socially responsible policies (Gu, Ryan, Bin, & Wei, 2013). For example, government officials and developers should understand the general interests of the community, and those with specific interests must be considered in the tourism plan (Liu, 2000). This may increase the

residents' support of tourism development. In that case, a better understanding of each stakeholder's interests and rights will help reduce mistrust and conflict among stakeholders, and lead to strengthening social harmony. At this point community participation, as well as stakeholders' cooperation as a managerial implication of the study is a means to empower stakeholders to negotiate with each other, avoid the cost of long-term conflict and improve the performance of stakeholders (Yuksel, Bramwell, & Yuksel, 1999).

However, this case study, and other work being undertaken by the current research time, are finding significant differential practices across China (Tang, 2014; Wu et al., 2013; Yi & Ryan, 2016), and despite the arguments for greater resident participation there remains a tendency for state sponsored corporate action to increasingly come to the fore unless there are strong local figures with good political guanxi who are well ensconced in the system able to promote local action. One such example would be that of the leadership provided by Chang Desheng at Jianxiang Rural Tourism area, Jiangsu Province (Gu & Ryan, 2010) or Tian Yueshui in the village of Yang Sanyu in Shandong Province. What is notable about both these examples is that their influence has long historical antecedents and in some ways they may represent past models.

Yet the role of officially sanctioned 'Social Harmony' and 'Chinese Dream' thinking at the official level cannot be under- estimated in contemporary Chinese policy making e at least as a justification for actions taken. However, under Xi it appears, as noted above, that the thrust is toward economic improvement, and this takes priority over schemes of participative decision-making. Yet there remains a stress in Chinese policy making as is evidenced by the examples Qiyunshan, Xidi, Nanping and Hongcun in Huangshan Municipality alone.

4.   Summary

The paper draws on several visits to the village and in this case specifically from an eight-month period of residency by the first author. Various data collection methods were used, including participative observation, writing field notes, maintaining a diary, taking photographs, accessing secondary documents, having conversations, semi-structure interview, as well as a more formal survey. As Deery, Jago, and Fredline (2012) maintain "… a new research agenda based on 'layers' of social impact understanding through the use of ethnography is required" (p.64), a call reinforced by Huang, Der Veen, and Zhang (2014) in the case of Chinese tourism research. As a result, the study provides a practical micro- ethnographic study to fill such a gap.

5.   Conclusions

When comparing past research in China and western democracies such as New Zealand, Australia and Canada the political differences are apparent. In these latter countries, concepts of residents' rights are premised in the belief that all have rights of participation in a planning process to

some greater or lesser degree, and this informs the researcher's views. In China scholars are often closely involved in destination planning, but their concerns are about resident's rights of equity with reference to economic development and receipts of income. There is generally an acceptance of political objectives to generate rural income (Wu et al., 2013) but if income can be increased through corporate investment rather than locally based entrepreneurship, then the former is as good as, and perhaps even better, than the latter, in terms of generating local incomes. The paradigm is economics, the politics are pragmatic, and the purpose is the maintenance of government by the Chinese Communist Party (Dai et al., 2013). These viewpoints are arguably expressed in the new China National Tourism Administration's 515 strategy announced in January 2015. A key component of this strategy is the role of private sector-state partnerships, and it is expected that these will drive poverty alleviation rural policies for the three years to the end of 2017 (China Travel News, 2015). This certainly appears to be a model emerging in Huangshan as evidenced at Xidi and Qiyunshan.

Yang and Wall (2014) have noted that in China tourism based on ethnic peoples is often subjected to 'political mandates' (p. ix), but this is general throughout much of Chinese policy making. Indeed Dai et al. (2013) state that even outbound Chinese tourism is a specific application of Chinese soft power. Political processes in China possess several tensions, one of which is the relationship between the State and the individual, and it is these that in part explained the significance of the Bo Xilai case and his model of local democracy in Chongqing based on Bo's personal popularity as against that of the Wenzhou model based more on individual entrepreneurship (Garnaut, 2013, Brown, 2014). Fewsmith (2013) provides significant insights into the experimentation that has taken place in China with regard to limited degree of political re- form and local democracy. Hence as Yang and Wall point out, any study of tourism in China should never ignore the issue political structures and policies.

From a theoretical level, the study leans on past research into tourism impacts. In each of six past decades the focus of that research has changed. For example, researchers focused on the economic effects in the 1960s; examined the socio-cultural impacts in the 1970s; the environmental impacts in the 1980s; and integrated all aspects in the 1990s. Interestingly, in the first decade of the 21st century, the majority of tourism impact studies have again focused on exploring local residents' perceptions (Sharma & Dyer, 2009; Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001; Tosun, 2002). However relatively few studies of tourism impact studies involving a grounded studies approach including multiple stakeholders seems to exist, especially in the context of Chinese literature (Byrd, Cardenas, & Greenwood, 2008). Many seem to follow a conventional form of interview plus questionnaires (e.g. Yang, 2011, who ends by specifically calling for a longitudinal study of which this is one of a seemingly small number of example - another is arguably that of Yang, Ryan, and Zhang (2013), Gu & Ryan 2010), Yang, Ryan, and Zhang (2016) which lasted a period of 12 months). Therefore, this

study helps to build on the existing body of knowledge about stakeholder perceptions of tourism impact in a rural Chinese community.

The study also provides evidence for the wider tourism literature as to the low level of community participation in developing countries, and reinforces prior findings that communities in most developing countries have little or no opportunities to participate in any decision making process (Linton, 1987; McDowall & Choi, 2010 ; Xiao & Li, 2004). As Tosun (2000) stated, community participation in some developing areas had been used to help local residents obtain economic benefits, rather than involve them in decision making and thereby contribute to local social capital by enhancing local skills and understanding. Residents have passively accepted decisions made by government and external companies as the latter two stakeholders hold the power and resources (Bao & Sun, 2007). In that literature the power of the powerless has received scant attention. Nonetheless this case suggests if only through a lack of homogeneity in the views expressed by officials that in the changing circumstances of China the 'powerless' are not without power in setting agendas. Government policies at a local level may well alter in response to the demands of local communities, and this has been evidenced in other locations (e.g. at Gu & Ryan, 2010; 2013). Yang, Ryan and Huang (2013), Gu & Ryan (2010) note that when residents wring concessions from government, each concession itself reinforces the role of government wherein it is shown to be the only body able to concede some benefit, thereby paradoxically reinforcing its role as the powerful body. It is a political system where residents do not question the system *per se*, by the level of benefit it bestows. Additionally, from a Chinese perspective, this lack of questioning of the legitimacy of government is appreciated within a Confucian social system of reciprocal responsibilities - which system is condoned and referenced often by Xi (2104).

China has an ideal of a socialist market system incomes are to be distributed to all stakeholders that, in tourism, include residents, and not just corporate interests. It is these issues of income allocation that lie behind much of the problem defined by the Chinese as 'the ticket economy'. This relates not simply to prices to be charged, but also to what is being covered by the fee when entering an 'ancient village', and how employment opportunities are created for local residents, and what share of income they derive (Chen et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2013). The ideal is not always achieved, but as with any ideal a standard is being set by which activities can be evaluated.

As with any study, there remain limitations. The authors are aware as this paper is being concluded that already further changes are occurring in the community of Qiyunshan, and indeed the first two authors will again be visiting the village in the immediate future to continue their observations in the belief that better understandings come from sustained longitudinal comparisons. Equally, while it is suggested that the case has credibility as being representative of other similar Chinese rural developments, they are aware that the specifics of place, context and time will always mean that each individual location may inhibit generalization (Ryan, Zhou and Deng, 2011). Any case

study rep- resents acts of selection, and indeed such selection becomes an abstraction from reality, and hence a simplification of complex dynamics and in the fast changing social and political world of China - this must always represent a limitation of any one study. As Huang et al. (2014, p.379) note, there is a 'New Era of China Tourism Research' which requires a new paradigm. This paper seeks to provide insights into the complexities such a paradigm might need to address.

Appendix 1. Demographics of respondents living in villages below the Mountain

Demographic of respondents living in villages below the Mountain			
Variable	Category	Frequency	Valid percent
Gender (N=768)	Female	446	58.1%
	Male	322	41.9%
Age (N=768)	66 years and over	78	10.2%
	61-65 years	78	10.2%
	56-60 years	136	17.7%
	51-55 years	173	22.5%
	46-50 years	97	12.6%
	36-45 years	61	7.9%
	26-35 years	56	7.3%
	19-25 years	53	6.9%
	18 years and under	36	4.7%
Self-perceived income level (N=768)	Little income	173	22.5%
	Below average income	162	21.1%
	Average Income	350	45.6%
	Above average income	72	9.4%
	Significantly above average income	11	1.4%
Years live (N=768)	below 10 years	69	9.0%
	11 years - 30 years	270	35.2%
	31 years - 50 years	265	34.5%
	above 51 years	164	21.4%
Do you often visit Qiyun Mountain? (N = 767)	Yes	445	58.0%
	No	322	42.0%
What's your purpose of visiting (N = 764)	I don't know	111	14.5%
	Travel	280	36.6%
	See friends or relatives	167	21.8%
	Do some jobs	206	26.9%

Appendix 2. Respondents among village residents

Demographic of respondents			
Variable	Category	Frequency	Valid percent
Gender	Female	30	40.0%
	Male	45	60.0%
Age	66 years and over	5	6.7%
	61-65 years	3	4.0%
	56-60 years	5	6.7%
	51-55 years	9	12.0%
	46-50 years	14	18.7%
	36-45 years	18	24.0%
	26-35 years	14	18.7%
	19-25 years	6	8.0%
	18 years and under	1	1.3%
Self-perceived income level	Significantly above average income	2	2.7%
	Above average income	15	20.0%
	Average Income	31	41.3%
	Below average income	18	24.0%
	Little income	9	12.0%
Years lived in mountain	61-80 years	7	9.3%
	41-60 years	33	44.0%
	21-40 years	30	40.0%
	<20 years	5	6.7%

Appendix 3. Economic benefits of tourism - a summary of literature

Economic benefits	Findings	Researcher
Employment opportunities	Tourism results in generating employment	Liu & Var, 1986; Ap, 1992; A Mathieson (2006); Lawson, V Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997, 2006; Kala, 2008
Standard of living	Increase standard of living for the local community	Liu & Var, 1986, Haralambo & Tideswell, 1997, Chen & C & Sdrali, 2006;
Foreign exchange earnings	contribute to the host nation's foreign exchange earnings	Mason (1995, 2008), Ap and C (2002)
Destinations economic growth	Tourism contribute to regional development	Lawson et al., 1998; Liu, Liu,
Government revenue	Tourism help government to increase revenue	Lickorish, 1994; Chen & Chia
Foreign capital investment	Tourism could attract foreign capital investment	Li, 2002; Jenkins, 1982;
Family income	Tourism could increase family income	Chazapi & Sdrali, 2006; Liu e Xu, 2008
Increased cost of living	Tourism results in increased costs of living for host community	Andereck et al, 2005; Wall an 2001
Increased prices	Tourism results in increasing the local prices, such as services, land, property, restaurant	Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Chazap Lawson et al., 1998; Williams Mendlinger, 2009;
Benefits not distributed	Tourism results in unfair distribution of economic benefits among locals	Din, 1997; De, Kadt (1979); I 1997; Sirakaya, Teye, & Sonr 2006; McDowall &Choi, 20
Employment is seasonal and temporary	Tourism development change traditional employment structure, and make lots of seasonal jobs	Tosun, 2002; Townsend, 199
Inflation	Tourism results significant inflation	Perez & Nadal, 2005;Wall and
Over-dependence on tourism	Tourist destinations become over-dependence on tourism industry	Wall and Mathieson (2006); I

Appendix 4 Socio-cultural impacts of tourism - a summary of literature

Positive socio-cultural impact	Findings	Researchers
Increased understanding of different cultures	Host residents could obtain an enhanced understanding of different	Ap & Crompton, 1998; Liu, Shelo Siriporn & Youngsoo, 2010; Esm Su & Teo, 2008;
Revitalized traditional culture	Tourism can revitalize and preserve traditional culture	De, Kadt (1979); Siriporn & You et al., 2011;
Greater pride in community	Because of tourism, local community acquire more pride in their community	Ap & Crompton, 1998; Lindberg Youngsoo, 2010; Esman, 1984; F McDowall &Choi, 2010 ;
Promotes cultural exchange	Tourism can attract many visitors from different cultural values to host destinations, which promotes different cultural exchanges	Belisle & Hoy, 1980,; Liu et al., 1981; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997;
Improve social status of women	As a result of tourism development, female residents improve their family and social status by improve confidence and earn money through tourism	Tatoglu et al., 2002; Harrill and P 2006; Keyim, Yang, & Zhang, 20
Increase in recreational facilities	Tourism contributes to increase in recreational facilities	Lankford & Howard, 1994, Willia 1978; Pizam, 1978

Negative social-cultural impacts	Findings	Researchers
Increase traffic congestion, overcrowding, crime, pollution, noise, social conflicts	Because of tourism development, host community will suffer some negative impacts by increasing traffic congestion, overcrowding, crime, pollution, noise, social conflicts and so forth	Nicholls, 1976; Ryan & Gu, 2009 & Milman, 1993; Backman & Ba Jing, He, & Gu, 2012;
Low wages and seasonal employment; change traditional employment structure	Tourism requires seasonal employment, which changes local traditional employment structure	Gee, Makens, & Choy, 1997; To Tosun, 2002; Collier (2003); Key
Misunderstanding of local culture	The local culture will be changed	Ap & Crompton, 1998; Shackley, 1994;
Affect traditional family values	Local residents will change their value systems by interacting with tourists	Kousis, 1989; Wilkinson & Prativ
Culture becomes commercialized	Tourism in many places will perceive traditional culture as a product, sell the experience to tourists, which leads to commercialization	Mitchell, 2009; Sun & Teo, 2009; &, Teo 2009;

Appendix 5. Chinese research on tourism impacts - summary of literature

Environmental impacts	Study areas	Findings
	Changbai Mountian National Natural Reserve	Discharge of sewage has polluted the River; the use of coal and diesel for heating and cooking
	Emei Mountain (Sichuan Provience)	Fir mortality rate in the highly used areas by visitors was several times higher than other regio
	Zhangjiajie NationalForest Park	Air quality and ground water quality have deteriorated
	Tuanmushan Nature Reserve	Vegetation destroyed, and the shortage of water supply
	Jiangxi province	Environmental destruction caused by on-going infrastructure construction projects related to t official data does not mention the negative environmental impact
	Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve	Existence of trampling problems and trail widening, the greater frequency of trampling proble with the circularity and connectivity of the trail network
	Hongcun Ancient Village	Negative environment changes such as crowding, noise, poorer water quality, more rubbish.
	Yulong Mountian Glacier	The glacier on the Yulong Mountain died away, and the number of tourists fell
	Shandong Province	A decreased local wildlife as tourism development begin to change the landscape
	Li Jiang ancient town	The water quality in Lijiang deteriorated sharply, due to the fast growing tourism
Socio-cultural impacts	Shenzhen	Increasing conflict between local residents and outsiders, adding the number of beggars, raisin encouraging the sex industry
	Ankang	Tourism could bring job opportunities, and improve their living standards
	Haierbin	Tourism made Harbin become a more exciting place, and enriched its traditional local culture
	Beijing hutong	'Traffic congestion' and 'visitors are far too intrusive in everyday lives' were the main negati
	Yunnan province	Tourism enhance the empowerment of women; improve of quality of life; Revitalization of et create prostitution issue; disruption of traditional kinship and community bonds
	Kaiping Diaolou, Guangdong	Tourism help to preserve the heritage of the diaolou, meeting visitors from outside seen as so
	Fenghuang County, Hunan	The conflicts among the local residents, local government, and the tourists are becoming fier is also changing; the rate of crime increase
	Zhangjiajie National Forest Park	Growth in total population, people migrate from other parts to park; quality of life was posit local residents' friendliness towards tourist has gradually faced over time
	Lijiang Old Town	The usage of historic buildings has drastically changed; the location of the residences of the i culture are rapidly changing as tourism develops
	Jiuzhaigou Scenic area	Tibetans residing in the Jiuzhaigou Scenic area have been largely influenced by tourists of Ha the food, oral language, dressing, and housing style
	Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve	Cause great changes for the economic structure and employment structure
	Zhangjiajie National Forest Park	Promoted whole economic development for Zhangjiajie City, increase tax revenues; but 81.9% the distribution of tourism income is unfair.
	Kaiping, World Heritage Site	Created job opportunities for local resident; benefits of tourism get distributed widely though negative economic impacts mentioned by villages
	Shenzheng	Attracting foreign capital investment, creating job opportunities, improving living standards a life by offering better consumer goods and services
	Xidi ancient village	Tourism increase family income, most of the increment results from two sources: ticket-based tourist commercialisation
	Zhouzhuang	Provide substantial job opportunities in Zhouzhuang, all the low pay jobs are filled by outside economic leakage is high.
	Beijing 2008 Olympic	Increase business opportunities in Beijing, increase employment opportunities in Beijing, also levels
	Dachangshan Dao	The price of commodities increases sharply, the cost of living increases.
	Shandong	Revenue generated in the local economy, jobs generated in the community, variety of shoppin investment
	Wuzhen	Wuzhen water town as an example of fantasme and a socialist market system in operation.
	Forest of Stone Tablets, Xi'an	Role of and understanding of calligraphic landscapes

Appendix 6. More detailed analysis of differences in views of participants

Variables environment impacts	Visitors	Residents below the mountain	Residents o
Residents' life behaviour negatively affect environment	√√	√	√
Visitors increase litter	√√	√	√√
Mass painting and carving on the wall	√√	X	√√
Inscription and Dinosaur footprints weathering by constant touching	√	X	√√
Damage trees, flowers, and plants	√	√	X
Pilgrim make smoke and rubbish in the temple	√	X	X
Pilgrim create hidden fire hazards	X	X	√
Destroy landscape	√	√√	√
Construction make street dirty dust and noisy	√	√√	X
River damaged by construction	√√	√√	X
Clean	√√	√√	√√
Improve residents' environment awareness	X	√√	√√
Reforestation	X	√√	√√
Noise	X	X	√
Crowd	X	X	√
Lose land	X	√√	X

√√ ¼ important mentioned √ ¼ few mentioned X ¼rarely mentioned

Comparison of social culture impact from stakeholders' perception

Variables social culture impacts	Visitors	Residents below the mountain	Residents o
Residents become commercial	√√	X	√
Taoism become commercial	√√	X	√
Visitor disturb residents' daily life	√	X	√
Visitors conflict with residents	√	X	√√
Maintain Taoism culture, traditional custom, Heritage	√√	√	√√
See people outside, know new things	√√	√	√√
Improve residents' communication skill	√√	√	√√
Make friends with visitors	√	X	√√
Improve women and elder residents' family status	X	X	√√
Improve facilities	X	√√	√√
Change resident traditional life	X	√	√√
Influence resident values	X	√√	√√
Population structure change	X	√√	X
Residents' relationship change	X	√√	√√
Feel proud of community	X	X	√√
Visitors bring bad effect, like gambling	X	√	√
Forbid building	X	X	√√
Children's life change	X	√	√√
Broke Taoism atmosphere	√	X	√
Family relationship change	X	√	√
Government and residents conflicts	X	√√	√
Get reputation	X	X	√

√√ ¼ important mentioned √ ¼ few mentioned X ¼rarely mentioned

Comparison of economic impact from stakeholders' perception

Variables economic impacts	Visitors	Residents below the mountain	Residents o
Increase job opportunities	√√	√	√√
Increase family revenue	√√	√	√√
Decrease family income	X	√√	X
Improve life quality	√√	X	√√

Easy sell native products	√	√	√√
Attract investors	√	X	X
Investors take away the majority of revenue	√	√	√
Seasonal job/income	√	X	√√
Unbalance industry structure	X	√√	X
Unfairness of income distribution	X	√√	√
Change traditional job structure	√	√	√√
High living expenses	X	√√	X
Start tourism real estate	√	√√	X
Raise rich gap	X	√√	X
Increase competition	X	X	√√
Generate tax revenue	√	X	X

√√ ¼ important mentioned √ ¼ few mentioned X ¼rarely mentioned

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