



In Fenghuang County, China, The Economic And Socio-Cultural Impacts Of Tourism Development

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ABSTRACT

"The Chinese government has long acknowledged that tourism has the ability to greatly benefit the rural sections of the nation.

In an effort to enhance the local economy, private developers and local governments collaborate to preserve and enhance the area's cultural and natural landmarks. Development "rights" and control are sold by the state to private enterprises. The local government and the Yellow Dragon Cave Corporation (YDCC) are collaborating to increase tourism in Fenghuang County, Hunan Province, and this paper examines one such programme there. Among the many attractions of Fenghuang County are the recently discovered and extensively restored Ming Dynasty Southern China Great Wall, the nice weather, the picturesque scenery, the vibrant minority cultures, and the Great Wall of southern China. Among the 29 minority groups that will feel the effects of this initiative are 374,000 people, or around 74% of the local population. Increased economic development and "profitable returns for developers" are the outcomes, according to some researchers, of public-private partnerships. By adopting a power and scale perspective, this research identifies the first cultural, social, and economic effects of this paradigm of capital-intensive expansion on local communities.

We learn who has decision-making authority, where the money is going, and how the "tourism" sector is doing by combining economic and demographic statistics with in-depth interviews with residents, government officials, and company executives.

KEYWORDS: Fenghuang County, Tourism, Economic Development, Tourism Development.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Even while China's economy is growing rapidly, disparities between rural and urban areas, as well as between minorities, are widening, and environmental degradation is becoming worse. The gap between the haves and have-nots has widened ever since 1978, when Beijing adopted a "free market" economic policy. The top 10% of earners contributed less than 20% of the country's income in the 1980s, to begin with. 45% of the income in 2005 went to the top 10% of earners, while just 1.4% went to people in the bottom 10%. Despite China's status as one of the world's fastest-growing economies—with an average GDP growth rate of around 9.5%—the country's rural households saw a 42% decline in their earnings from 2000 to 2002. There has been a widening of the income gap between urban and rural residents since 1980, with the gap now at 3.3 to 1. This inequity is among the world's most egregious when contrasted with China. "Significant polarisation and growing societal discontent" ("Wen, 2006; Kahn, 2006; Khan & Riskin, 2001; Wen & Tisdell, 2001"). The Gini index, which is used by the UN to assess inequality, increased from less than 0.2 in 1980 to more than 0.45 in 2005. Along with growing faster, "China's Ecological Footprint is now more than 50% bigger than its biocapacity due to its shift from a labor-intensive to a fossil fuel- and capital-intensive development model (World Wildlife Fund 2006)". Among the most critical global challenges, environmental protection has risen to the 133rd position for China among 146 nations ("Smil 2004, 2005; Esty, et al. 2005). After the Deng era, China's economy took a turn for the extraordinary. Because of its size and the abundance of resources it offers in "terms of cheap labour and potential tremendous" consumption, China has far-reaching economic and environmental impacts (**Arntzen, 2007**).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

A more unequal distribution of wealth will "naturally" occur as a consequence of rising local earnings unless steps are taken to prevent this. To get a better understanding of the research topic and provide answers to research questions, this study investigates the usefulness of core/periphery models as well as anthropological power and scale theories. By combining anthropological and ecological viewpoints, we can gain a better understanding of the interconnected causes of poverty, environmental degradation and resource depletion, social conflict, and uneven capital accumulation, which are considered to be major threats to global sustainability. Experts "Hornborg and Bodley have combined cultural anthropology" with ecological perspectives to provide light on modern problems (**Beebe, 2001**).

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To assemble information on "tourism's revenues, profits, and costs in order to estimate the distribution" of advantages.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Located 50 km west of Tuo River Town is the mountain of the same name, which is the inspiration for the name Feng Huang, which means "phoenix" in Chinese. Since the word "Phoenix" was thought to bring good fortune, the peak was so named due to its avian resemblance. Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou dynasties regarded the inhabitants of what is now Feng Huang County as barbarians. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the Chu State claimed Feng Huang as part of their domain. In 221 B.C., the Qin State united China and established the Qin Dynasty. One of the first forms of hierarchical administrative division in China was the Jun (commandery) and the Xian (county) during the Qin Dynasty. Weiyang County, Qianzhong Jun, and Wuling Jun were all founded during the Han Dynasty. Feng Huang Ting and Zhengan Zhen were also founded during the Ming and Qing dynasties, respectively. From the Qin to the Qing dynasties, the Hmong stockaded people of Fenghuang County maintained their traditional tribal way of life, according to the Committee of Gazetteer of Fenghuang County's Ethnic Groups.

In history, this region has gone through cycles of conquest, rebellion, and trade, as well as alternating eras of cooperation and conflict with the central government (e.g., the Ming and Qing dynasties). Not only were the Hmong notoriously poor, but their tribal culture was also notoriously barbaric. The wall near Fenghuang that is now called the Southern China Great Wall was built by the Han-dominated central government during the Ming Dynasty to keep the Hmong out of their territory. Generally speaking, Hmong communities differ from one another in terms of political organization and economic status.

They make most of their money from subsistence farming. Their previous lifestyle included cyclic widening, but now they've settled into a more sedentary farming style (**Davis, 2019**).

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:



6. METHODOLOGY:

To "explain" the disparity in development between the urban and coastal sections of China and the rural, interior, and minority areas, a modified "greening/ecologies" version of the core/periphery models is used. One way of looking at tourism in China is as an internal colonialism (Oakes 1998). To increase overall tourism revenues, local governments and "major outside metropolitan business developers" in China collaborate on managing and developing cultural and natural resources as part of the country's present rural tourist development strategy. A small number of wealthy individuals may end up reaping the benefits while the local poor bear the brunt of this public-private partnership's unintended consequences. Increases in energy

dependence, social inequality, and social unrest are all possible outcomes of fast economic growth, which may also worsen environmental deterioration.

a. Research Design

According to "power-elite theory" (Bodley 1999, 2001, 2003), when elites guide the growth of businesses and regions, it concentrates power in a few hands while distributing expenses among many. Based on this idea, this study was conducted. This research utilises the specific analytic methods proposed by power and scale theory to show "how this form of elite-promoted, highly expensive, capital-intensive tourism development affects the community, and how the community perceives it," since the core/periphery model puts a low value on individuals. Money and wealth as power sources, the significance of human decision-makers, personal power networks that transcend institutional hierarchies, etc. are all crucial factors according to Power and Scale Theory. One of the main ways to analyse this data is by following the proposals made by power and scale theory. This involves creating power network maps and sorting families according to how much they spent on home construction and housing areas according to occupancy. This allows us to draw parallels between the ranks and a power law distribution. The "power law equation: $N=CrD$ " is a linear representation of the power law distribution on a graph. These three variables make up this equation: In this case, N and R are two variables, such family size or income level, and "C is a fixed constant of zero, and D is a negative constant" (often approaching "-1"). A "distribution with a negative slope and an extremely skewed distribution" is the end picture. As a whole, this research found that "poorer households will lose ground to wealthy households" over the long run. Throughout history, both in the West and elsewhere, this emergent property of complex systems has been observed.

b. Sampling and Data collection

This project will include an ethnographic case study in Hunan Province to look at how the actions of big companies in the centre affect the areas around them. According to predictions, locals will have to deal with social and environmental impacts while foreigners benefit disproportionately from economic distortions caused by "major corporations" based in more strong core regions penetrating outlying economies. Experiencing rural Feng Huang County in Hunan may be likened to a kind of "internal colonialism," in which China's incredible economic success is fueled by "cheap natural resources and low-paid" social and environmental services provided by the periphery, but which also worsen social unrest and environmental degradation. Even though it is a testable theory, no research has looked at Chinese tourism from this angle. Based on the power-elite hypothesis, this research will examine the particular path of China's development in the case of Feng Huang County via the lenses of power and scale theory.

7. RESULT:

Returning to Fenghuang in the summer of 2006 was quite surreal. Results from my return visit, which took place a year after my first, are detailed in this chapter. Two techniques for developing rural tourism are compared. While Gouliang Hmong Village was a prime example of elite-directed tourism, Yellow Silk Village was a model of collaboratively arranged tourists. The two, is situated around 25 kilometres (16 miles) away from Tuo River Town and is comprised of the settlements mentioned. The bulk of Yellow Silk Village's 475 residents were Han Chinese, and they lived in 97 individual dwellings. The former wall around Yellow Silk Village is one of eight sites that the local government has leased to YDCC. The local officials forcibly removed the villagers from their homes because YDCC planned to invest in restoring the hamlet to its pre-colonial appearance in order to increase tourism. The villagers remained and united in their defence of the use of their tourism resources, even though they were pressured by the local government to leave. Gouliang Hmong Village was home to about 1,986 individuals, the great majority of whom were Hmong, spread out across 402 dwellings. The local government and economic and political elites were guiding the hamlet's tourist development, but there was no direct contact between the two organisations, unlike in Yellow Silk hamlet. In terms of the overall tourist development background and the effects of tourists on women's roles, the two village tourism models have some similarities. Nevertheless, there are notable differences in the distribution of advantages, resolution of disputes, and implementation of management practices between the two communities' ethnographic development models. A village's economy is heavily influenced by its particular collection of stakeholders, personal networks, and power structures.

8. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Feng Huang County, like the rest of China, is plagued by poverty, which is a result of "inadequate modernization" according to the country's official narrative. A number of factors, including tourism, are believed to contribute to Feng Huang's economic development, including foreign direct investment and the commercialization of the rural economy. They" engaged Beijing-based consultants to create a blueprint for an 18-year urbanization plan for the county ("CACP and PGFC 2005). This method is enforced by the elite, and the locals have no choice but to accept it.

9. DISCUSSION

The Hmong and other local ethnic groups in Feng Huang are facing a similar dilemma as the number of tourists visits their homeland at an alarming rate: how to make the most of their cultural traditions, which are a strength of theirs, without turning them into a commodity. Wolf posits in his writings between 1982 and 1999 that cultural hegemony is both created and institutionalized.

It is still unclear how capitalism interacts with the communities where it first takes root (Wolf 1999:15). Traditional handicraft among indigenous Hmong women is declining as a result of the growing commercialization of handicrafts in Feng Huang for the benefit of tourists. At the national level, there is an imbalance of power between urban Han majority and rural minority groups; at the local level, there is an imbalance of power between elites from outside the area and the general public. Women are transitioning from their traditional responsibilities as carers for their families and keepers of cultural traditions to more active ones as entrepreneurs in the local tourist industry. Nobody could have stopped this. Just as the Han women of Yellow Silk Village were mentioned and the Hmong women, the ladies of this village are also rising to prominence both within and beyond the house. Not only that, but they're starting to be more involved in family and community decision-making and the local tourist industry. Through a mix of denial, adaptability, and competition, they are adjusting to the paradox that their lineage is both the source of their poverty and the solution to it.

10. CONCLUSION:

The "tourist development strategy" of Feng Huang County has changed several times, leading to many changes. It would seem from an economic perspective that people and families have more options than ever before for generating income.

There has been a dramatic shift in how locals in Feng Huang use and utilize the area's natural resources as a result of tourism. Near that spot, PATT has cornered the market on the most scenic stretch of the Tuo River and outlawed "significant involvement" of local boatmen in the tourist boat industry. Individuals residing in Yellow Silk Village may be coerced into leaving their houses due to PATT's economic aspirations. Many peasants had their property confiscated due to the rapid expansion of infrastructure and real estate development. The "downtown riverfront areas" of Tuo River Town have seen the most dramatic increase in property prices over the last many years. The rising prices of "the land" over the last few decades have allowed a select few, like the owners of stilt homes, to convert their land holdings into other forms of productive capital for more fruitful businesses. A significant "number of people, including the majority, with modest land holdings have been negatively impacted by the substantial rises in land" costs. Fenghuang finally sees the improvements it has been anticipating after a very long period.

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