

Causal analysis of conflict in tourism in rural China: The peasant perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the reasons for conflict within the tourism sector in rural China. A case-oriented qualitative research method was employed, in which unstructured interviews were used as the primary data collection approach. From the perspective of rural peasant communities this study found three causes for conflict: infringement of peasants' basic rights and interests, economic motivation, and unfair treatment. A deprivation model was then generated as the explanatory tool in which local villagers' experiences of relative deprivation and contractual deprivation were explored. The combination of these two types of deprivation serves to trigger discontent and contributes to conflict. The findings of this study provide valuable insights leading to a better understanding of this complex conflict phenomenon, and they can also help policy makers to better engage communities in relation to conflict reduction and promote sustainable tourism planning and development.

1. Introduction

The first national policy statement, jointly released by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council at the beginning of each year, is called the No.1 Central Document. It is widely seen as an indicator of the policy priorities for the upcoming year. From 2004 the No. 1 Central Document has been focusing on the *Three Rural Issues* (rural people, agriculture, and farmers), signaling the importance of rural China to the nation. With rapid modernization, rural regions are not just sites for large-scale agricultural production, but have become attractive locations for tourism, leisure, and specialty food production (Saxena, Clark, Oliver, & Ilbery, 2007). As a result, tourism and its associated activities are widely regarded as an important tool for poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement in lagging rural areas. The theme of the No.1 Central Document for 2018 was "rural revitalization," and tourism was set as a tool to achieve this purpose.

There are many villages with valuable and splendid tourism resources in China. In 2012, the Chinese government initiated a traditional village protection program. Traditional villages with important value (historical, cultural, artistic, economic, and social) will be listed in the program. Until 2021, 6,819 villages have been selected and brought into the list. In addition to these traditional villages, there are many more scenic villages with beautiful landscapes though they have not been

listed.

However, though rural tourism in China has grown rapidly in the past thirty years, there have been severe problems. In 2011, a series of conflicts happened in succession in a few of the famous tourist villages of Wuyuan County, Jiangxi Province (Wang, 2011). First, a few days after negotiations in June with a tourism company on ticket revenue distribution in Likeng village, the son of a local negotiator was stabbed. Then, the Likeng villagers blocked the village entrance after the failure of the negotiations and did not allow tourists to enter from July. Afterward, a couple of nearby tourist villages joined the campaign and suspended their tourism in August.

Are these conflicts in Wuyuan unique, or are they endemic during tourism development in rural China? The answer is that there have been many media reports of conflict over the years between local peasants and local government/tourism companies. Table 1 outlines some of the characteristics of these conflicts: (1) They happen at both world heritage sites and non-world heritage sites; (2) They occur in both ethnic minority areas and ethnic majority areas; (3) They are not a new phenomenon; (4) Some of them are fraught with violence; and (5) They may repeat at a site.

Conflict in rural tourism is not unique in China, and it also happens in other countries (Gardner, 2012). Despite the steady growth of rural tourism worldwide, the frequent occurrence of conflict in this area of

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Table 1
Media reports on conflict in tourism destinations relating to peasants.

Year	Name	Location	Category	Description
2000	Hongcun and Xidi (Zhai, 2002)	Anhui	WH	Tourists were blocked and expelled by the villagers, and physical fights often happened between peasants and a tourism company.
2007	Likeng (Wang, 2011)	Jiangxi	Non-WH	The village entrance was blocked by the villagers; some villagers were beaten; and four villagers were detained by the police.
2008	Hongkeng (Chen, 2011)	Fujian	WH	Telephone lines of a tourism company were destroyed; a security booth was burned; the village entrance was blocked, and tourists were stopped from visiting; and some villagers were beaten.
2009	Baishuiyang (Zhou & Lu, 2009)	Fujian	Non-WH	Conflict often happened between the villagers and a tourism company; some villagers begged along the street in protest.
2011	Mount Wanxian (Han & Zhang, 2011)	Henan	Non-WH	Local people blocked the traffic to express their dissatisfaction.
2011	Likeng, Wankou, and Jiangwan (Wang, 2011)	Jiangxi	Non-WH	A villager was stabbed; tourists were blocked outside.
2012	Mount Cuihua (Liu & Meng, 2012)	Shaanxi	Non-WH	Thousands of tourists were blocked outside by local people.
2014	Mount Emei (Zhang, 2014)	Sichuan	WH	The road to Mount Emei was blocked by hundreds of villagers.
2014	Mount Laoshan (Hai, 2014)	Shandong	Non-WH	The road to this scenic spot was blocked by the villagers.
2015	Zhaoxing (Liping & Guizhou, 2015)	Guizhou	Non-WH	A riot happened in this village (an ethnic minority village).
2018	Gudong (Qiangshu, 2018)	Guangxi	Non-WH	The road to this scenic spot was blocked by the villagers.
2019	Puzhehei (Guo, 2019)	Yunnan	Non-WH	Tourists were stopped from taking tour boats by the locals.

Note. WH refers to world heritage, and Non-WH refers to Non-World Heritage.

tourism (Curcija, Breakey, & Driml, 2019) will undoubtedly affect the achievement of poverty reduction under the Sustainable Development Goals and may also cause damage to important heritage. Therefore, it is worth investigating this phenomenon to find the causes so that conflict can be reduced. However, the studies on conflict in rural tourism continue to lag (Yang, Ryan, & Zhang, 2013), and the in-depth exploration of causes for conflict has not been systematic.

Though some papers have mentioned such incidents in rural tourism, conflict is usually not their primary focus. These conflicts are mainly used to provide a background for the discussion of such themes as the roles of different community leaders (Xu, Zhang, & Tian, 2017), the co-evolution of rural tourism and rural development (Kim & Jamal, 2015), socio-economic impacts (Zhang, 2006), power relations (Xue & Kerstetter, 2018), tourism development and resistance (Cornet, 2015; Feng, 2015), the politics of land grab (Gardner, 2012); and community participation (Bao & Sun, 2006). In these studies, some reasons for conflict may be identified, such as unequal tourism revenue distribution. However, the reasons for the resulting conflict are often not complete and the relevant discussion not usually deep. While Curcija et al. (2019)

discussed conflict in community-based tourism from the perspective of management, Zuo and Bao (2012) attributed conflict in tourism to China's current land system. This study aims to explore the reasons for conflict in tourism from the perspective of peasants. Wang and Yotsu-moto (2019) discussed major conflict issues in rural tourism, examined their evolution, and identified major conflicting parties. Local government was found to be the most important conflicting party for villagers in their study. Villagers' committees were an important stakeholder, but they were often ignored by scholars. This research builds on Wang and Yotsu-moto's study, and focuses on the exploration of the causes of conflict.

2. Literature review

2.1. Relative deprivation

The concept of relative deprivation was first articulated by Stouffer, Suchman, Devinney, Star, and Williams (1949) in their classic social psychological research monograph *The American Soldier* to account for the difference in attitudes/sentiments among soldiers with different statuses. Soldiers experiencing the same outcomes may have different attitudes due to different choices of targets for comparison (Merton, 1968). Comparisons and the choice of comparison referent are at the heart of relative deprivation.

Comparison is a natural part of human activity and cannot be excluded from human life. From antiquity until today people have been making comparisons with others in terms of their ethnic, religious, and cultural allegiances; material possessions; power and authority; and economic, social, and political positions (Landman, 2003). As a result of comparison, inequality, unfairness, or injustice, may be felt. One precondition of relative deprivation is "feeling that one deserves whatever it is one wants but does not have" (Walker & Smith, 2002, p.2), and people often use principles of justice to judge what they deserve (Tyler & Lind, 2002). Justice is viewed as the first virtue of social institutions by Rawls (1971). The idea of justice exists in each individual's mind, and judgements about justice and fairness strongly influence their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997). A variety of studies have shown links between perceptions of injustice and moral outrage (Montada, 1994), anger (Crosby, 1982), sabotage (Scott, 1985), riots, and protest (Miller, Bolce, & Halligan, 1977; Muller & Jukam, 1983). Relative deprivation has been commonly used in sociology and other social sciences to explain complex phenomena for more than seventy years (Walker & Smith, 2002), and is widely considered to be an important explanatory vehicle in social conflict (Abeles, 1976; Gurr, 1970; Tyler et al., 1997).

Tyler and Lind (2002) noted that people's feelings and their behaviors are not only a simple reflection of objective circumstances, but instead people will interpret and judge their experience against their internal standards. These internal standards are sometimes described with such terms as feelings of deservedness (Gurr, 1970) or expectations (Davies, 1969), which are derived from two sources: reference groups and oneself (Taylor, 1982).

The others who are used as a point of comparison for evaluations or to make judgements (Kelly, 1952) are called a reference group, a term coined by Hyman (1942) in his important study *The Psychology of Status*. In principle, the frames of reference used for comparison by the individual are almost countless (Merton, 1968). After an analysis of *The American Soldier*, Merton made a classification of their reference groups based on social connections and social status. Those who had sustained relations with an individual belonged to a membership group or in-group, otherwise, they were in an out-group.

When discussing relative deprivation, some scholars tend to research the outcomes of reference group comparison (Davis, 1959) while others extend its range and encompass intrapersonal comparison (Gurr, 1970; Taylor, 1982; van Dyk & Nieuwoudt, 1990). Gurr's (1970) study is a typical example. He identified three patterns of intra-relative

deprivation: decremental (capabilities decline while expectations remain constant), aspirational (capabilities remain the same but expectations rise), and progressive deprivation (expectations increase while capabilities decrease). Generally, there are various types of comparison due to different choices of comparison referent. This paper adopts its broader definition, namely relative deprivation involves both interpersonal/group comparisons and intrapersonal comparisons.

One of the most important conceptual distinctions in relative deprivation theory is the distinction between egoistic (personal) and fraternal (group) deprivation, originally introduced into the literature by Runciman (Tyler & Smith, 1998). According to Runciman (1966, p. 31), the distinction between them is “Did he [sic] want to rise out of his membership group or with it? If the first, then he was dissatisfied with his position as a member of what he saw as his group; if the second, then he was dissatisfied with the position of what he saw as his group relative to other groups in the larger system.” The former refers to feelings of deprivation deriving from a comparison between individuals; the latter refers to feelings developing out of a comparison between groups (Tyler & Lind, 2002). How do people determine what type of comparison they would make? It depends on what identity he/she chooses: personal identity or social identity. If personal identity is salient, people are more likely to make interpersonal comparisons as isolated individuals, but if social identity dominates, people are more likely to make intergroup comparisons as group members, producing feelings of fraternal relative deprivation (Tyler & Smith, 1998). This distinction is important because several studies support the viewpoint that egoistic and fraternal deprivation have different behavioral traits and consequences (Hafer & Olson, 1993). For example, if people are dominated by their social self and feel that their group is deprived relative to other groups, they tend to engage in collective behavior.

2.2. Contractual thinking

With the implementation of the economic reform and opening-up policy in the 1970s, Chinese peasants became more independent economically; at the same time, the end of a series of political campaigns also freed peasants and reduced the political risks of overt resistance, which promoted the development of rightful resistance, a category of peasant resistance coined by O'Brien and Li (2006). Rightful resistance is a form of popular contention that “entails the innovative use of laws, policies, and other officially promoted values to defy disloyal political and economic elites” (p. 2). The generation of rightful resistance in China is seen to have resulted from the inconsistency between the central government's commitments and local officials' implementation of them (O'Brien, 1996). Contractual thinking is a key feature of rightful resistance and plays an important role in inspiring rightful resistance in China (Brandtstädter & Schubert, 2005). Contemporary villagers often use a contractual way of thinking to justify their resistance activities (Pan, 2008). In discussing the role that ideology and culture play in the construction of responsible government in China, Pan defined contractual thinking as an “intersubjective understanding between the government and citizens that there exists an interdependent, reciprocal relationship in which the vital interest of each side is considered ultimately inseparable from its responsibility to the other” (p. 52). Contractual thinking is linked to “[a] reward mechanism and mutual empowerment logic” (p. 62). He also noted that citizens' loyalty and acceptance of the legitimacy of the regime, one of the government's interests, can be achieved by the implementation of the contract with citizens. If this contract is violated by the government, contractual thinking's punishment mechanism may function (Pan, 2008). Contractual thinking reframes peasants' attitude and behavior toward the government (Pan, 2008) and encourage them to “enter into conflicts with the powerful” (O'Brien, 2001, p. 423). For example, if eagle-eyed peasants in China find village cadres or government officials engaging in prohibited behavior and failing to respect the contract (e.g., unlawful taxes, inappropriate land use, and cadre corruption), then they may

consider this as a breach of contract and refuse to carry out their obligations under the contract (Cai, 2003; O'Brien & Li, 2006; Yu, 2010).

2.3. Rural tourism and conflict in tourism development

Rural tourism plays an important role in rural development and revitalization in many aspects, such as absorbing surplus rural labor (Gao, Huang, & Huang, 2009), restructuring rural industry (Kim & Jamal, 2015), increasing locals' income, and improving their living conditions (Malek, Carbone, & Alder, 2017). Rural tourism began to develop in China in the early 1980s through the actions of individual villagers residing around famous tourist attractions (Gao et al., 2009). In 2005, “building a new socialist countryside” was set as a primary task in the government's five-year plan (2006–2010). To cooperate with the implementation of this national strategy, the National Tourism Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture issued the *Notice on Promoting Rural Tourism Development* and planned to establish 10,000 rural tourism development examples. In 2018, tourism continues to be set as an important means of achieving the aim of rural revitalization by the central government.

The approach of community-based tourism has received a lot of attention since it was discussed in detail by Murphy (1985) due to its potential for community empowerment, community participation, and the attainment of benefits. Accordingly, residents' active participation is widely regarded as an effective way of promoting sound and sustainable tourism development, including rural tourism (Malek et al., 2017). Decision-making and benefits obtained are two essential indicators for evaluating the degree of community involvement (Timothy, 1999). However, in contrast to these indicators, community participation in China's rural tourism development is far from being universal (Wang & Yotsumoto, 2019; Xue & Kerstetter, 2018). Community-based tourism requires the participation of various stakeholders in the process of decision-making (Jamal & Getz, 1995). However, many studies show that local villagers, one of the most important stakeholders in rural tourism, are often ignored due to their weak position. (Cornet, 2015; Ma, Dai, & Fan, 2020).

Political structures (Weng & Peng, 2010), cultural traditions, rural land systems (Zuo & Bao, 2012), poor economic conditions, high illiteracy rate (Malek et al., 2017), and lack of expertise and understanding of tourism are components constraining locals from participating in decision making in developing countries (Timothy, 1999). Ying and Zhou (2007) argued that community residents participate more in benefits distribution instead of being involved in decision-making due to such reasons as a lack of democratic awareness. Davies (2011) noted that local leadership plays a key role in achieving “successful endogenous development activities” in rural communities (p. 61). Taking two old Chinese villages as examples, Xu et al.'s (2017) study shows that rebel leadership is key to the start-up of tourism in the beginning, but this leadership is hard to maintain due to limited power. Xu et al. emphasize the role of official village heads, but do not give much attention to the unofficial community leaders who often play an important role when arguing for their rights and interests while facing powerful stakeholders (O'Brien & Li, 2006).

However, in contrast to many other studies, Wang and Yotsumoto (2019) found that the interests and behavior of official village heads may not be consistent with ordinary residents in rural tourism development and concluded that the vague recognition of roles of different stakeholders may lead conflict resolution in the wrong direction. In China, the process of rural tourism development is often led by local government, with the coalition composed of political elite and economic elite as its core (Ma et al., 2020). This development mode often harms the interests of community residents, generating a variety of issues and triggering conflicts between local villagers and local government/tourism developers. Cornet (2015) noted that ethnicity is an important component causing conflict in rural tourism development in an ethnic minority village in China. However, the connection between conflict and

ethnicity is not obvious in the study conducted by Wang and Yotsumoto (2018) at the same site. Rural tourism is often initially developed by local villagers (mostly village elite and village cadres) but ends with the transfer of management rights to local government or external capitals in China. This has been seen in several examples, such as Zhaoxing (Wang & Yotsumoto, 2018) and Tangde (Xu et al., 2017).

Reviewing the above literature, we can see that scholars have carried out a lot of research on rural tourism. However, research on the reasons for conflict over rural tourism is lagging. Single-case study is often adopted as a major research method by scholars to conduct relevant research relating to conflict in rural tourism. To get a more complete and clear picture of this topic, multiple-case analysis may be more appropriate considering the variety of villages in China. Therefore, villages with different features were selected in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore and interpret these reasons through multiple case studies from the perspective of peasants, and to abstract and conceptualize the direct reasons at a higher level. Three research questions guided the research: (1) What happened to these sites; (2) What are the direct causes of conflict; and (3) How to more generally incorporate the many otherwise different empirical findings? The research methods and the context of the case studies are presented in Section 3 and Section 4.

3. Research methods

This paper aims to explore the underlying causes of conflict in tourism. In rural China, unrest is a sensitive topic on which relevant information is scarce, and fieldwork is also fraught with uncertainties (O'Brien & Li, 2006). Furthermore, conflict is a complex phenomenon, and relevant data have not been collected very effectively in the field of rural tourism. To offset this, a case-oriented qualitative method was employed in this study that could attend to the complexity and its real context (Ragin, 1989).

The characteristics of conflict in tourism show its prevalence and complexity. To take them into account, four tourist villages in different provinces with different features were selected. They were Hongkeng,

Likeng, Hongcun, and Zhaoxing villages (Fig. 1). The selection rationale included the following criteria: Both world heritage and non-world heritage sites should be included; they should be located in different provinces; both ethnic minority and non-ethnic minority villages should be covered; and conflict must have happened at these sites.

Interviews, participant observation, and document analysis are three favored approaches in understanding and interpreting phenomena. Decrop (2004, p. 162) noted that “triangulation” is one of the most comprehensive techniques to achieve trustworthiness, an important issue in qualitative research. Therefore, different data collection methods were adopted, and a variety of data sources and data types (written materials, pictures, news programs, phone recordings, and so on) were used in this study to enhance trustworthiness. Unstructured interviews and participant observation were the two main approaches to collecting first-hand data in this study. The interviews were conducted in September 2015 and March–April 2016. Establishing rapport with interviewees is paramount for unstructured interviewing (Fontana & Frey, 2005), and is essential for a successful interview especially if the topic is sensitive (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). To build rapport with them, the author stayed in some villagers’ homes during the two rounds of fieldwork.

Who should be interviewed to achieve the research purpose? Rudestam and Newton (2015) noted that individuals who experienced or are experiencing a phenomenon are appropriate informants and are usually identified in a phenomenological study. Following this principle, people who were closely related to conflict were located, including people who organized or participated in conflict activities, and people who know these issues clearly although they did not get involved in them directly. Generally, informants cover conflict participants, villagers’ representatives, village cadres, and villagers whose houses were demolished or whose farmlands were expropriated. Sixty-one people (Hongkeng: 37; Likeng: 9; Hongcun: 6; and Zhaoxing: 9) were formally interviewed, made up of 49 men and 12 women.

Snowball sampling was adopted in this study to identify key informants. There are two considerations in the use of this method: The

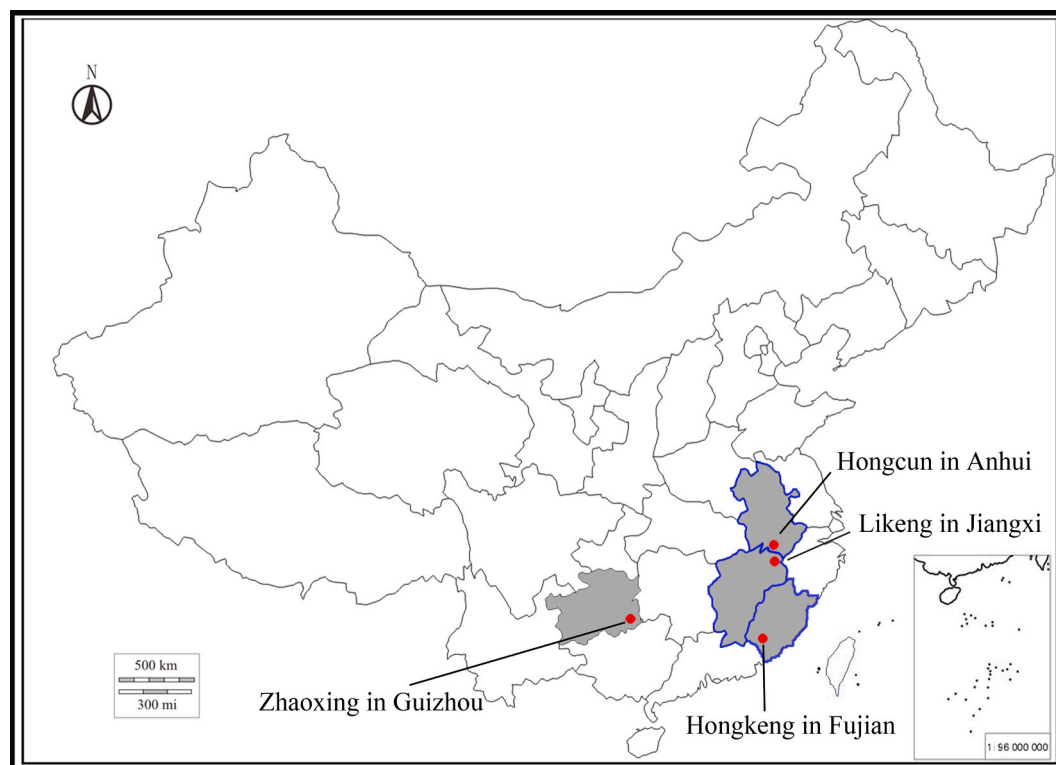


Fig. 1. Location of the four study sites in China.

first is that China is an acquaintance-society, and it is easy to locate appropriate informants through this method. Local people have been living in their village since they were born, so they know very well what happens in the village and who is involved in conflict. The second is that snowball sampling is a good approach to build rapport with informants rapidly, especially when the study involves sensitive topics (Wang & Yotsumoto, 2019). If an interviewee introduces some potential interviewees to an interviewer in person, the rate of a successful interview will rise because to some extent, his/her participation can help to dispel these potential interviewees' worries in an acquaintance-based society. In practice, snowball sampling saves much time in seeking informants and conducting interviews.

Mishler (1999) noted that interviewees may not divulge details until they establish rapport with researchers. Meanwhile, some of them may have stories which cannot be fully articulated in one interview. To increase credibility and clarify details, some key informants were interviewed a couple of times in their environments. In an interview by CCTV (the predominant television broadcaster in China) in 2011, a villager mentioned that they negotiated with a tourism company sixteen times (Geng, Hu, & Luo, 2011). However, he admitted that the number was exaggerated when talking with the author during the fieldwork though they said that they did negotiate with the company many times. To some extent, this shows that their trust can be successfully gained. Due to a good relationship built with local villagers during the fieldwork, some of them also provided useful information afterward through WeChat and QQ, the popular instant-messaging tools in China.

In this study, participant observation was mainly used to collect data in two situations. The first was casual interviews with local peasants on the street. Sixteen people were informally interviewed, including fourteen in Hongkeng and two in Likeng. The second was observing and verifying the events described by interviewees, such as the issue of entry restrictions (please see Section 5.1). In addition, secondary data (government documents, newspapers, magazines, TV programs, and so on) were collected as an important supplement. We found that much information from different sources (media reports and interviews) is consistent, proving the credibility of the research.

All the primary data and secondary data at each site were transcribed in Word format. The transcribed data was then processed through three steps. First, words/sentences that indicated conflict behaviors and reasons were selected, sorted, and synthesized after a close reading of the transcripts (Table 2). This initial approach helped to define core categories in the later steps (Charmaz, 2014). The second step involved further synthesizing, refining, and developing Table 2 into categories (Section 5.1.1–5.1.3). The third step involved abstracting and conceptualizing the categories based on the way of peasant thinking, linking the relationships of conflicting parties with abstracted concepts, and constructing a rural tourism-based deprivation model at a higher level (Section 5.2).

4. The case studies

Hongkeng village is in Yongding County, Fujian Province. There were about 3000 residents in 2015, and all of them belong to the Lin patriarchal clan of the Han Chinese. Their traditional residence, called *tulou*, is a large multi-storey rammed-earth building that can house hundreds of people. The *tulou* are mainly built in accordance with the ancient idea of round heaven and square earth as well as to meet the needs of a whole clan living together and for defensive purposes (The State Administration of Cultural Heritage of the People's Republic of China, 2008). In 2008, the Hongkeng *tulou* cluster was inscribed as world cultural heritage. Tourism development in Hongkeng started in the 1980s. In 2007, Fujian Hakka *Tulou* Tourism Development Co., Ltd., a county-owned enterprise, was established and began to develop Hongkeng's tourism attractions.

Likeng village, situated in the Wuyuan County of Jiangxi Province, has a population of 1,180 (Interviewee 53). Likeng is well known for its

Table 2

Direct causes of conflict issues at the four study sites.

Conflict issue	Cause	Site
House demolition	Low compensation; being forced to move out	Hongkeng
Land expropriation	Low compensation; local government' illegal expropriation; false promises from the township government	Hongkeng
House building	Increasing house need with no resettlement and no approval of house building; being treated unfairly; false promises from local government	Hongkeng
	The need for housing but no approval; peasants' economic motivation; being treated unfairly	Likeng
	The need for housing but no approval; economic motivation; being treated unfairly	Zhaoxing
Vending rights	Losing farmland due to land expropriation but not allowed to vend along the street to make a living; being beaten by government staff; products being confiscated by government staff	Hongkeng
	Being beaten by local government staff	Likeng
	Dissatisfaction with local government' management and arrangements on vending	Hongcun
Ticket revenue distribution	No distribution in the initial development phase; low percentage of distribution afterward; perceived corruption	Hongkeng
	The actual reduction of the distribution due to taxes being abolished; being cheated by the tourism company and local government	Likeng
Village elections	Perceived corruption of the villagers' committee; electoral fraud; the elected village committee head being dismissed illegally by the township government	Hongkeng
Entry restrictions	Much inconvenience brought to local people (picking up their friends and relatives in person, questioned by the security guards, and the restraint on cars); being treated unfairly	Hongkeng
Tourism management rights	The villagers were deprived of the right to develop tourism by themselves; low ticket revenue distribution percentage	Hongcun

unique *Hui* style architecture and golden fields of rape flowers. In September 2001, Jinniu Company, a private investor, signed a twenty-year contract with the Likeng villagers. According to the contract, 19% of ticket revenues would be distributed to the villages in the first ten years, and this percentage would rise to 21% in the following ten years (Geng et al., 2011). In 2003, it was listed as a famous historical-cultural village at the provincial level. In 2007, Wuyuan County Government started its plan of integrating main tourist spots of the county into one and asked Jinniu Company to quit the tourism operation in Likeng. Then, the Wuyuan Tourism Company was established, which re-signed a three-year contract with the township government directly without the participation of Likeng villagers. This contract expired at the end of 2010, and a road blockade happened in 2011 due to failure to agree on its redistribution plan.

Hongcun, located in Yi County, Anhui Province, was first established in 1183 during the Southern Song Dynasty. It lies at the foot of Leigang Mountain and had a population of 1,680 in 2016 (Interviewee 65). It is well known for its layout, architectural style, construction techniques, and decoration which retain the original features of Anhui villages of the Ming and Qing dynasties (Ministry of Construction, 2000). There are 137 ancient buildings between the 14th and 19th centuries, and a 400-years-old system winds through each household in the village. In December 2000, Hongcun was afforded the UNESCO world heritage site status, and in 2011, it was rated as "National 5A-rated Tourist Attraction" by the National Tourism Administration, the highest level of a tourist attraction in China. From 1986 to 1996, some of Hongcun's historical buildings were used by the local tourism administration to develop tourism (Liu, 2004). In 1998, Jingyi Tourism Company was established with the involvement of local government and this company has been developing Hongcun's tourism since then (Zhang, 2006).

Situated in Liping County, Guizhou Province, Zhaoxing village is the

seat of the local township government. Being envired by mountains, it has a population of around 4,000 people, and 98% are from the Dong minority (Cornet, 2015), one of China's fifty-five official ethnic minority groups. Zhaoxing is well known for its typical Dong culture, such as *Ganlan* style buildings, drum towers, and Kam Grand Choirs. Tourism in this village started in the 1980s. However, due to its isolated geographic location and inconvenient transportation services, the pace of development was slow until the 21st century. In 2003, a company named Guiyang Shiji Fenghua began to invest in and develop Zhaoxing's tourism. In 2014, Zhaoxing Tourism Development Co., Ltd., a county-owned enterprise, took over the business and since then has been running its tourism attractions. In the second year after the introduction of the new company, a serious conflict occurred between Zhaoxing villagers and local government. Police cars were overturned, and some tourism facilities were damaged in the conflict (Wang & Yotsumoto, 2018).

5. Findings and discussion

5.1. Causal analysis

In this study, eight major conflict issues were found. These were house demolition, land expropriation, house building, vending rights, ticket revenue distribution, village elections, entry restrictions, and tourism management rights. Table 2 lists the direct causes of these conflict issues.

Based on the criteria of outcomes and process, plus the commonplace in character, the above direct causes can be classified into three main categories: (1) the infringement of peasants' basic rights and interests; (2) economic motivation; and (3) unfair treatment. For example, houses are villagers' basic means of livelihood, so demolishing their houses with low compensation and without their agreement in the name of heritage protection and tourism development infringes their basic interests and rights. Category one and two are based on past, current, or expected outcomes; and category three is based on actual treatment.

5.1.1. Infringement of peasants' basic rights and interests

In the process of tourism development, local peasants' rights and interests were often infringed, which is an important cause of conflict. It is embodied explicitly in the following issues:

5.1.1.1. House demolition. In rural areas a house is not just a place for living but has special meaning for people. The physical "house" is an important and necessary part of "home" in Chinese eyes. They are willing to spend much money even all their savings on it (Cheng, 2016). For the status of world heritage and the need of tourism development, many houses in Hongkeng were demolished. According to interviewee 15:

They (the government) demolished all houses in *Dabaxin* (A place in Hongkeng). Living there was very comfortable, with one river and one stream on each side. Villagers did not want to move out... The place we are living in was a farmland with no road and electricity, and no one wanted to move here at the time.

In addition, the villagers were dissatisfied with the low compensation for the demolition. A villager (Interviewee 9) said:

Previously, I had a house near Zhencheng Lou (A famous *tulou* building in Hongkeng), and it was demolished later. Initially, the compensation standard was only ¥100 (\$15.24) per square meter. We did not agree.

A primary law on house demolition is the *Land Administration Law*. However, it does not stipulate the details of compensation standards, demolition process, and the identification of evaluation agencies. The law authorizes local government to decide and act these matters, which leaves a lot of uncertainty in the process of demolition. Due to low

compensation, some Hongkeng villagers refused to pay taxes in protest (Interviewee 9) and lodged complaints with higher authorities (Interviewee 39).

5.1.1.2. Land expropriation. According to the *Land Administration Law*, there are only two types of land ownership in China, state ownership and collective ownership. For rural land, Article eight of the law states that it is collectively owned by peasants unless otherwise stipulated by law. In other words, an individual can only claim his/her right as a member of a collective, and no specific land belongs to a specific individual. The law states that the land use rights of peasant collectives shall not be leased, transferred, or rented for non-agricultural construction (Article 66), and any unit or individual that needs land for construction purposes should apply for the use of land owned by the State (Article 43). Therefore, land acquisition by the State is the only way for collective land to enter the market used for construction. The government monopolizes the land market in the current land system, and the land price cannot reflect its real value (Xiao, 2008). This system has long been criticized (Zuo & Bao, 2012), and low compensation has been an important reason for land conflict (Yu, 2005).

To build tourist infrastructure and facilities, much farmland in Hongkeng was expropriated by the county and township governments with low compensation. In 2005, the Fujian Provincial Government issued a notice (No.: M. Z. W. [2005] 592) on detailed compensation standards for expropriated cultivated land. In accordance with this notice, the Yongding County Government issued another one in 2009 (No.: Y. Z. Z. [2009] 375). However, real compensation did not comply with any of them and was much lower than the stipulated standards. Although local government officials admitted to a villager that the compensation was low and unreasonable, there was no change in the compensation (Interviewee 33). In this study, we can see that the right of enjoying the gains from land appreciation in the process of land usage transformation has been denied to the peasants. In addition, the real compensation given is lower than that stipulated by law.

5.1.1.3. House building. House building is a common issue which happened in the four tourist villages and is still severe in some of them. Due to the status of world heritage and the concern of tourism development, building new houses on these sites is very strict. However, the need for housing has been urgent and continues to grow due to increasing population and the pursuit of modernization. The ban of building houses even influences young people's normal marriage patterns because owning a new house is a tradition and a must in many rural areas. According to interviewee 27 in Hongkeng:

Who will marry you if you do not have a new house? Which girl does not want a new house? No one is willing to live in an old house. (Pointing to a man standing near her) Look at him. He is already 36 years old and has not got married due to the house issue.

Local government had realized this problem as early as the world heritage application period but just ignored it and did nothing. For example, in a reply to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Yongding County Government promised to resettle Hongkeng residents to release the increasing population pressure, which was included in the Thematic Conference Summary of Yongding County Government on April 24, 2007 ([The State Administration of Cultural Heritage of the People's Republic of China, 2008](#)). However, the fact is that the county government expropriated a piece of land, but it was not used for local peasants' resettlement. On the land, facilities such as a new ticket center, an administrative building, a hotel, a large shopping and leisure center, and a huge parking lot were built. However, no land was used to settle the villagers. Restrictions on house building is a common issue and has happened in other tourist villages (Dong, 2011; Han & Zhang, 2011), but has not been resolved. In March 2019, some villagers protested again in front of the landmark of Hongkeng,

requiring the government to resolve this issue.

5.1.1.4. Vending rights. According to research by the World Bank (Cai, Giles, O'Keefe, & Wang, 2012), on average rural elderly are poorer than rural young people and poorer than the urban elderly. There is a striking difference between urban elderly and rural elderly in sources of support. A pension is an important source of income for the urban elderly, but people in rural areas did not receive this social payment until recently and the amount rural residents received is very small. Cai et al. (2012) noted that, as a result, labor income and family support from adult children remain the primary sources of support for the elderly in rural China. Rural people in their sixties are thus likely to support themselves through labor income. However, in Hongkeng the villagers have lost most of their farmland due to land expropriation. Farmland in rural areas has been a security guarantee, and losing it means the loss of economic security. So, it is easy to understand why they must find a way to make up for this.

To some extent, vending is a proper replacement for farming because it is near their houses, does not need much capital or special skills and has a market. However, they have also been deprived of this right by local government in the name of keeping a tidy environment and reducing commercialization (Chen, 2011). One villager (Interviewee 17) said "Previously, it was not allowed to vend along the street. They (the government staff) threw vendors' stuff away or confiscated it directly." In addition, physical fights between vendors and government staff happened in Likeng (Interviewees 52 and 54) and Hongcun (Interviewee 65).

5.1.1.5. Ticket revenue distribution. Yang et al. (2013) noted that the uneven distribution of economic benefit is an important cause of conflict, which was also found in this study. Tourist attractions in the four villages are local people's private property, but have been operated and controlled by tourism companies and local government. However, these groups refused to share the benefits with local people, which made them angry. In Hongkeng, there had been no distribution until they blocked the entrance to the village in 2008 (Interviewees 9 and 18). In Likeng, Wuyuan Company bypassed the villagers and directly signed a three-year contract with the township government on ticket revenue distribution in 2007 (Geng et al., 2011). In a negotiation in 2011, the tourism company and local government used false data to cheat local people and tried to let them accept a low distribution rate, which angered Likeng villagers who blocked the entrance to the compound (Interviewees 52 and 53; Wang, 2011).

5.1.1.6. Village elections. In Hongkeng, many villagers have a negative impression of village cadres. The words "corrupt," "dining and wining," and "eating money," were often used to describe them. According to interviewee 1:

Before the distribution of the ticket revenues, no one wanted to be the villagers' committee head. After that, the campaign becomes fierce because there is much money to control. Vote buying was very common, and each candidate did that. Previously, a lot of Hongkeng villagers working outside came back before elections because they could get money from candidates. The candidates even went to Xiamen (the capital of Fujian Province) to pick them up and then sent them back after elections (for free). Many people in our village are working in Xiamen. Everyone coveting that position wants to rake in money.

According to the *Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees*, no organization and individual has the right to designate, appoint, and replace the villagers' committee head. There are only two exceptions: First, he/she is dismissed by the villagers themselves through voting; second, he/she is incapable of legal transaction or given criminal punishment. However, an elected villagers' committee head (ZY), who was given

high profile by the villagers, was dismissed by the township government illegally (Interviewee 18).

According to the villagers, a direct reason for ZY's dismissal is that he/she planned to hold a villagers' conference and distribute unused money managed by the villagers' committee to the villagers. He/She was warned not to do that by the township government and was dismissed immediately after sending out a conference notice (Fig. 2). In the middle of the notice, there is one line of words written by hand which are "湖坑镇党委书记非法剥夺了洪坑村民选举权" (the Party Secretary of Hukeng Township deprived Hongkeng villagers' election right unlawfully). And the handwritten numbers in the top right corner are a tip-off hotline opened to report official misconduct to the NO. 9 central inspection team dispatched by the Central Leading Group for Inspection Work to Fujian Province in 2014. Some villagers did call the number, but they were not satisfied with the result (Interviewee 18).

Based on their study in Xidi and Hongcun, Ying and Zhou (2007) concluded that the villagers participate more in benefits sharing rather than decision-making and attributed this to the lack of democratic awareness. In this study we can see that some villagers spared no effort in pursuing their political rights. For example, interviewee 18 and some other villagers spent ten months petitioning in 2014, and one of their appeals was about the village election. Though there were only a few villagers participating in specific petition activities, they were given money by many more villagers to support their petition trips. The handwritten words in Fig. 2 show that they know clearly that village elections are their political right conferred by the law. The lasting petition activities led by interviewee 18 indicate that they tried to argue for their political rights with action. Similar situations can be found in those Hongcun village residents who petitioned and filed legal cases to get the tourism management right, which lasted for a couple of years. However, we can also see that the process of maintaining their rights is very tough, though some villagers have strong democratic awareness.

5.1.1.7. Tourism management rights. In 1986, a few old buildings in Hongcun were used by the local tourism administration to develop tourism, and this period lasted until 1996 (Interviewee 65). During this period, Hongcun villagers got no benefit from the sale of tickets (Zhai, 2002). Based on their strong request, the villagers were allowed to develop tourism by themselves in 1997 (Interviewee 65; Zhai, 2002). However, the local government signed a contract with a big company from Beijing in the same year to replace the village company without informing the villagers or getting their agreement (Interviewee 65; Zhai, 2002). The listed world heritage is the villagers' private property, and they were discontented with the unilateral decision made by the

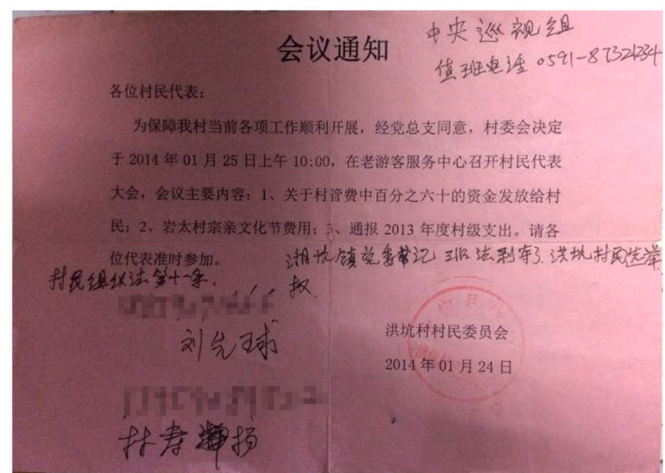


Fig. 2. A conference notice.
(Source: provided by a villager.)

government. They petitioned, but this did not work. They filed legal cases but failed (Interviewee 66; Zhang, 2006). They had to accept the fact that their property would be operated by other people. According to the law, a villagers' committee is a self-governing organization and local people have the right to make their own decisions and manage their own affairs. However, they were deprived of this right.

Wang and Yotsumoto (2019) noted that farmland supports peasants' basic means of production, an important economic security guarantee; houses are peasants' basic means of livelihood; voting and self-governance are peasants' basic political rights. These are local peasants' basic needs and rights that influence their daily life directly. In Scott's (1985) words, many of them are bread and butter issues. Therefore, if these basic needs and rights are infringed seriously or deprived thoroughly, local peasants would resist.

5.1.2. Economic motivation

Economic motivation is observed obviously in Likeng and Zhaoxing. In Likeng, more than sixty old buildings were torn down or reconstructed for tourism businesses without official approval (Interviewee 52). To stop a villager from tearing down his old house, local government offered him vacant land as a replacement, but he refused because he thought a new house at the current site could bring more income compared to the arranged location. To build a big house and to stop his newly-built house from being demolished by local government, different tactics and resistance forms including extreme ones were used. According to this villager:

They (government staff) planned to demolish two houses on that day. After demolishing one house, they came to demolish mine. I watered myself with petrol and opened the fuel tank cap of my motorbike. If they had come closer, I would have burned myself and made a bomb of the motorbike. Then they suspended that demolition.

After completing his new house successfully, he used most of the rooms for tourism businesses. In Zhaoxing, many people built new large houses without approval. Some of them have built more than one building (Interviewee 69). Instead of living in the houses by themselves, they rented them out for tourism businesses. Some people even rented their own buildings out and leased cheaper ones for themselves (Interviewee 72).

5.1.3. Unfair treatment

Unfair treatment, an important catalyst of conflict, appeared in many issues in these four villages, particularly in the house building issue. There are three types of unfairness issues relating to house building: The first is that some villagers built houses, but others were not allowed to do that, which was observed in Hongkeng (Interviewee 27), Likeng (Interviewee 53), and Hongcun (Interviewee 63). For example, a villager in Hongkeng said:

They (local government) do not allow us to build houses, but there are still many people building new houses, and they do not deal with them. The "head and foot" (the two ends) of the village is Macau, and the middle is Mainland China.¹ People living at the two ends are rich and powerful, and they are allowed to build new houses. Even people who have *guanxi* (connections) with a very small official can do it. Everyone should be treated fairly.

The second is that the request to build houses by villagers were not approved, but outside businessmen (including tourism companies) were, which was seen in Zhaoxing (Cornet, 2015; Interviewee 71) and

Hongcun (Interviewees 65 and 68). The last is that local government constructed new buildings, but local people were not allowed to, such as in Hongcun (Interviewee 64) and Zhaoxing (Interviewee 71). Similar conditions on unfair treatment can be seen in other tourist villages, such as in Chongdugou (Xue & Kerstetter, 2018).

In addition, unfair treatment is observed in other issues, such as the issue of entry restrictions in Hongkeng. The Yongding county government issued a regulation that the villagers could not drive their cars inside the village from 10 am to 4 pm on ordinary days and from 9 am to 5 pm on national holidays. Local people complained that if cars were banned, all the people should be treated equally but actually they are not (Interviewees 1 and 2). In reality some people who are on good terms with the security guards of a local tourism company may be allowed to enter in the daytime, which angers other people. Due to dissatisfaction with the security guards, one of their security booths was burned up and the telephone lines of the company were sabotaged at night (Chen, 2011; Interviewee 8).

5.2. An explanatory model of rural tourism conflict

To achieve parsimony of theory but also expand its explanatory scope, it is necessary to further refine and conceptualize the above findings. The following section abstracts the above causal analysis based on the way of peasant thinking.

Contractual thinking played an important role in the conflicts seen in our case studies. For example, local government should resettle local people if they are not allowed to build houses for the aim of heritage protection and tourism development. If not, local government violates the contract with local peasants, and this becomes a possible source of conflict. The failure of implementation of the contract by local government will cause the deprivation of peasants' normal rights and interests. Here, this process is temporarily called contractual deprivation. In these case studies, local government, tourism companies, and villagers' committees are the originators of deprivation, and local peasants are the object of deprivation. This deprivation covers the whole group of peasants, so it is universal and undifferentiated (Fig. 3). Table 3 shows the main contents of contractual deprivation.

In this study, the groups or individuals taken as bases for comparison by ordinary villagers fall into two types: peasants perceived to have enjoyed privileges in the same village, and people enjoying more benefits at other sites with similar status to the research cases. For the first type, they are the "acquaintances" of the ordinary villagers in Merton's words (1968, p. 286). Local villagers of the four villages experienced both egoistic and fraternal relative deprivation. Interviewee 63 wanted to build a two-storey building to run a hostel. She built one storey but was warned that if she continued building, it would be demolished. She was very angry because her neighbor finished a two-storey building and used it as a hostel. This is an example of egoistic deprivation. The following is an example of fraternal deprivation (Interviewee 9; Wang & Yotsumoto, 2019):

Last year (2015), we just got ¥620 (\$94.51). There are 365 days per year, and thus we got less than ¥2 (\$0.30) for each day. How can I live (with such little money)? ... Mount Wuyi is a world heritage site, so is Hongkeng; Mount Wuyi is a 5A-rated (tourist attraction), so is Hongkeng. (But) Our distribution is not enough for living expenses.

Here, the subjects of relative deprivation (the reference group) are the local peasants who are perceived to have enjoyed some privileges, such as being allowed to build houses, and the objects (the comparers) are the rest of the peasants. From the perspective of material, the subjects did not really take away any of the objects' possessions. However, unlike contractual deprivation, relative deprivation is felt through perceptions after comparison, so it is perceived deprivation or comparative deprivation. Relative deprivation is generally psychological and virtual deprivation. Only a part of the people were perceived to have enjoyed

¹ Under the policy of "one country, two systems," the Macau Special Administration Region of China maintains a separate political system from Mainland China and has a high degree of autonomy. Here, this villager's words mean that compared with people residing in the middle of the village, people at the two ends enjoy some privileges.

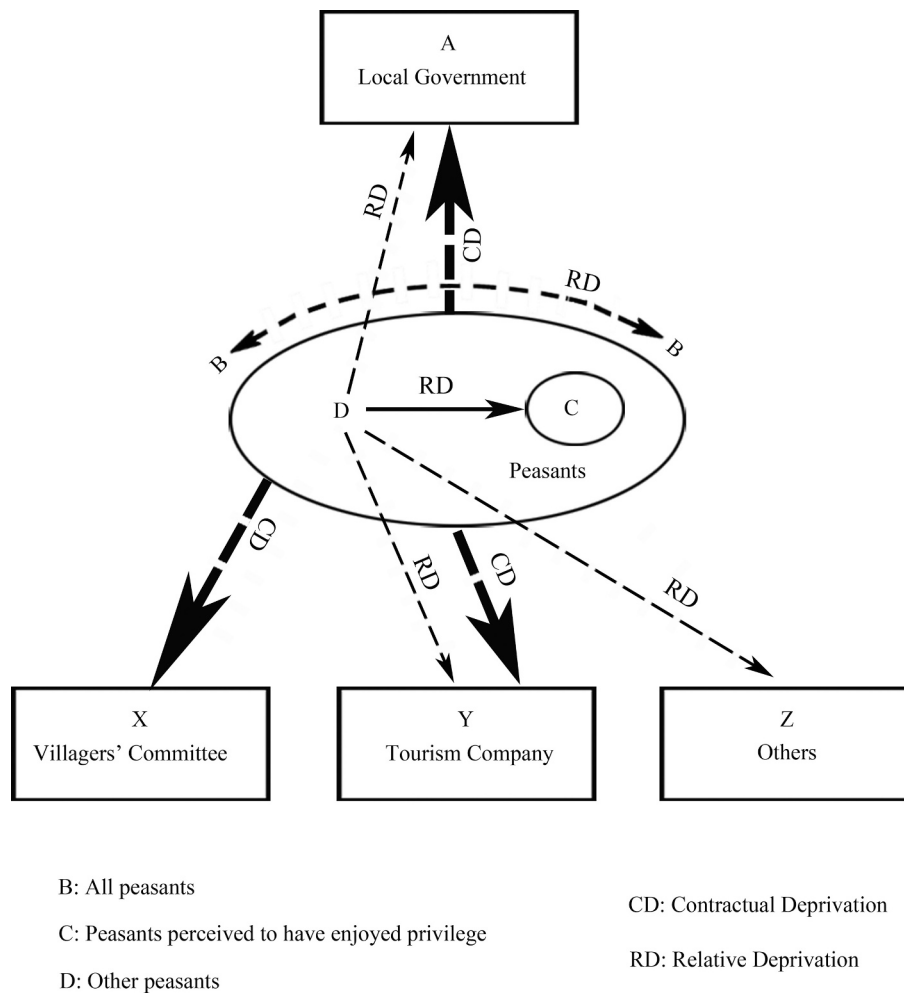


Fig. 3. Rural tourism-based deprivation model.

Table 3
The contractual deprivation suffered by local peasants.

Contractual deprivation	The subject that causes deprivation
Local peasants were not allowed to build houses, but local government did nothing about their resettlement (Hongkeng, Likeng, and Zhaoxing).	A
Before a “vendor incident” in Hongkeng, local government took all the ticket revenue.	A
In Likeng, the tourism company and local government had been viewed as cheating the villagers and refused to publicize the real number of tourist arrivals.	A and Y
In Hongkeng, local government did not compensate for expropriated land in accordance with the law.	A
In Hongkeng, local peasants were given low compensation for house demolition.	A
In Hongkeng, all peasants were banned from vending after losing most of their farmland.	A
The interference in the village election of Hongkeng caused the deprivation of local peasants’ basic political right.	A
How to develop tourism belongs to village affairs and should be decided by Hongcun villagers but was denied by local government.	A
In Hongkeng, local villagers commonly have a negative impression of the members of the villagers’ committee and think that the committee is useless.	X

Note: A = Local Government, X = Villagers’ committee, Y = Tourism Company.

privileges, so relative deprivation has the features of particularity and being differentiated (Fig. 3). Comparisons between individuals or between groups, caused their discontent and stimulated their individual or collective behavior. Relative deprivation is particularly apparent in issues like house building, ticket revenue distribution, and entry restrictions (Table 4).

Economic motivation or expecting to earn more money through constructing new buildings is also an important cause of conflict. Local people intend to build more and bigger modern houses to earn more money. To some extent, it may not be reasonable in places being famed for traditional residences. First, it may destroy the settings and influence the integrity and authenticity of cultural heritage. Second, this change may influence the tourist experience and cause a decline in tourist arrivals in the long run. Third, it is not fair for people who do not build or have no ability to build new houses because they may bear both economic loss due to the decline of tourists and emotional loss owing to the loss of cultural integrity.

Although the government has the duty to promote economic development and improve local people’s living standards, tearing down old buildings and building modern ones only for economic benefit may not be reasonable and acceptable. The large scale of the construction of “alien” (Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008, p. 762) buildings is contrary to the public interest. If this situation continues without effective management, it will cause the “tragedy of the commons” in tourism and cultural heritage, which is inconsistent with the principle of sustainable tourism development and cultural conservation. In fact, this tragedy has already happened in other tourist villages. Some ethnic minority villages in

Table 4
Relative deprivation suffered by local peasants.

Conflict issue	Relative deprivation	Reference groups	Category
House building	Under the current regulation, local peasants cannot build new houses due to heritage preservation. But, some did it successfully (Hongkeng, Likeng, Hongcun, and Zhaoxing).	A, C, Y, and Z	Egoistic and/or Fraternal
Ticket revenue distribution	Many people in Hongkeng mentioned Mount Wuyi and compared it to Hongkeng. Both Mount Wuyi and Hongkeng are located in Fujian, and both of them enjoy the titles of world heritage and National 5A-rated Tourist Attraction. Local peasants were discontented with the big difference on distribution percentage between them.	Z	
Entry restrictions	According to relevant rules, people cannot drive their cars to enter Hongkeng in the daytime. But some are allowed to.	C	

Note: A = Local Government, C=Peasants perceived to have enjoyed privilege, Y = Tourism Company, Z = Others.

Xishuangbanna for example, which were popular tourist attractions in the past, are not visited by tourists anymore due to the number of modern buildings (Yang & Wall, 2014).

But, refusing or restraining local people's economic motivations results in the loss of opportunities for earning more money. Somewhat different from the comparisons discussed above, this is a self-based activity in which people compare their outcomes in the current situation to expected outcomes in the ideal situation (B to B in Fig. 3: intra-relative deprivation). In this case, villagers think they could get more economic benefit if they were able to build bigger, more modern buildings. Any success in building modern houses encourages more villagers to join them. Due to this house building situation a severe conflict between villagers and local government occurred in Zhaoxing in 2015. Zhaoxing villagers realized that local government would not dare to tear down their houses in the short time after the conflict, many villagers hurried to build new houses in this period and ignored the importance of maintaining the purity of traditional culture (Wang & Yotsumoto, 2018). A Zhaoxing villager even rented his own house out at a high price and rented a cheaper one for his family (Interviewee 72). Then he built another one (unapproved by local government) and planned to rent it out again. On the profit obtained from this real estate activity, this villager went on a trip in Hainan in 2015, a southern province of China, and it was his first time to take a plane in his life. It could be seen from his expression that he was very happy with this experience when he talked with me, and he has planned another trip.

6. Conclusions

Conflict in rural China is a sensitive topic, and access to relevant data is not easy. There have been media reports on the conflict between local people and other stakeholders in tourism development in rural China. However, there are few academic studies focusing on this topic. A major contribution of this study is to fill this gap. This study aimed to explore the causes of conflict in rural tourism from the perspective of peasants.

In the process of abstracting reasons for conflict, an important concept of sociology, relative deprivation, was introduced. Though relative deprivation is widely regarded as a useful and important concept in explaining social conflict (Abeles, 1976) and understanding the reactions to their disadvantage by disadvantaged groups (Walker & Smith, 2002), this study shows that it is hard to give a clear and

complete explanation of the conflict phenomenon in the field of rural tourism by this concept alone. This combination of contractual deprivation and relative deprivation can be described as undifferentiated deprivation accompanied by differentiated deprivation. Contractual thinking causes contractual deprivation, and comparative thinking results in relative deprivation. Contractual deprivation is an issue of contract, and relative deprivation is mainly an issue of fairness. Compared to general conflict theories, the proposed model in this study is mainly targeting conflict in the field of rural tourism. This model identified major conflicting parties, clarified conflicting relationships among these parties, and illustrated specific conflict categories. Meanwhile, for the category of relative deprivation in the model, the sources of comparison include not only others (other individuals/groups) and but also self, and both of them were explored in this study. Thus, it has better pertinence and stronger explanatory power. In a nutshell, this model provides valuable insights for a better understanding of conflict in rural tourism.

From a practical point of view, this study may give guidance on the settlement of the conflict issues confronting tourist villages. The central government has been giving much attention to poverty alleviation and expects tourism to play an important role in rural areas with abundant tourism resources. However, persistent conflict has blocked the creation of harmonious tourism environments and affected the achievement of sustainable tourism development. Some peasants even said with sadness that their life would be better without tourism (Chen, 2011). The exploration of causes of conflict may be helpful to resolve current problems. To reduce conflict in tourism in rural China, the key is to reduce contractual and relative deprivation and let local peasants benefit more from tourism development. Therefore, empowering peasants and restraining local government should be the right direction. Meanwhile, creating more jobs for local people by local government and tourism companies can help to resolve the deprivation relative to self-comparison.

The causal analysis in this study was conducted from the perspective of peasants. In the future, this topic can be extended to other conflicting parties, such as the government, tourism companies, and villagers' committees. This paper reports on part of a larger study in which Hongkeng village is a main case study site. Therefore, the distribution of interviewees in the four cases are not equal, which may be a limitation of this research. The conclusion of this study is based on four case studies, and the model may be further improved with more studies in the future. Meanwhile, whether these findings can be applied to other areas of China and other countries requires more research.

Contractual deprivation, egoistic deprivation, fraternal deprivation, and intra-relative deprivation were found in the case studies. However, this study did not test the relationship between the different types of deprivation and people's behavior. Thus, we still need to ask under what conditions which of these deprivations dominates behavior? House demolition in Zhaoxing induced severe collective resistance, but it seems that it only caused individual resistance in Likeng. Why? We hope these unanswered questions can attract more scholars to explore this situation.

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