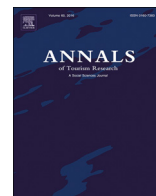


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## Research article

## Facilitating sustainable tourism by endogenization: China as exemplar

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## ABSTRACT

To make contemporary Anglo-Western sustainable tourism discourse more responsive to non-Western contexts, we augment the generic content of the enlightened mass tourism model with crucial endogenous injections, using China as exemplar. Han Chinese cultural values as input are summarized as harmony in all things toward creative transformation through parameters of collectivism, face, guanxi, self-cultivation, and embrace of opposites. Endogenous output considers the policy and power structure for achieving sustainability-related outcomes, in this instance for the better life of people, poverty alleviation and ecological civilization as embodied in the authoritative Report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The outcome is “endogenized” enlightened mass tourism as a framework more widely conducive to sustainability engagement in non-Western destinations.

## Introduction

Sustainability has pervaded tourism studies since the late-1980s popularization of the parent construct, sustainable development (Bramwell, 2015). While robust debate continues around semantics (sustainability or development) and scale (alternative or mass tourism), support for foundational aspirations of inter- and intra-generational equity remains widespread (Saarinen, 2006). Similarly well-subscribed are contentions that sustainability must concurrently address Elkington's (1999) environmental, economic, and sociocultural “triple bottom line” (TBL) and thus accommodate imperatives to empower people and valorize their culture. This privileging of the endogenous, however, is selective, as epistemologies of contemporary sustainability discourse purporting to achieve these outcomes are Anglo-Western centric and hence not necessarily optimal for that purpose (Tribe, 2007; Winter, 2009). Limited endogenous inputs, beyond the edification of Anglo-Western *presumptions* as to what culture and empowerment entail, therefore pose structural and practical challenges to engaging sustainability in non-Western contexts (Amoamo, 2011).

Accordingly, the authors propose an “endogenized” sustainable tourism model that augments Weaver's (2014) enlightened mass tourism framework with expanded parameters of the culturally contextual. This expansion, heeding Bramwell's (2015) call for enhanced theoretical engagement with sustainable tourism, assumes that destination-specific culture should be integral as inputs into relevant implementation frameworks. Selecting China as exemplar or illustrative model recognizes that country's unparalleled tourism transformation, but also concurrently the largely Anglo-Western trajectory of the attendant literature (Bao, Chen, & Ma, 2014; Leung, Li, Fong, Law, & Lo, 2014). This bias pertains also to the China-focused sustainable tourism literature, which reflects

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growing concerns about the TBL implications of an industry, and its domestic component especially, expanding with unprecedented rapidity, magnitude and reach (Li, Ryan, & Cave, 2016; Ryan, 2017). Following a review of relevant knowledge and a statement of objectives, research methods are described, an augmented model constructed, an implementation example presented, and implications considered along with associated research limitations.

## Literature review

### *Sustainable tourism and culture*

Early ecology and economy-focused conceptualizations of sustainable tourism have been superseded by perspectives conferring equal weight to the sociocultural. This more explicit incorporation of people is reflected in diverse attempts to demarcate indicators and definitions. For the World Travel and Tourism Council, “Social and cultural sustainability ensures that development increases people’s control over their lives, *is compatible with the culture and values of people affected by it*, and maintains and strengthens community identity” [italics added] (WTTC et al., 1995, cited in Timur & Getz, 2008, p. 222). Culture, which to Soini and Birkeland (2014) constitutes a fourth sustainability pillar, and to Saarinen (2006) is integral to sustainable tourism’s community-based tradition, is variably represented as respecting endogenous traditions (Twining-Ward & Butler, 2002), dissuading foreign culture impositions (Blancas, Lozano-Oyola, & González, 2015) and creating “authentic” tourist experiences through local products (Sims, 2009). Agyeiwaah, Mc Kercher, and Suntikul (2017) additionally include custom and language retention, maintaining representative cultural sites, promoting culture of indigenous people, and resident satisfaction with their cultural integrity.

Emphasis here on respecting endogenous culture reflects the influence of cultural relativism, which posits that every culture has its own inherent logic through which members’ beliefs and actions should be understood and judged. Cultural relativism emerged in early 20th century anthropological research in response to prevalent Anglo-Western centrism in that discipline, the assumed authority of which was seen to impede genuine understanding of non-Western cultures. Subsequent engagement has mostly rejected it as an absolute, not only because of the inherent contradiction this embodies, but also because of epistemological problems posed by cultures that include beliefs in absolute truths, and realities of acculturation (Brown, 2008). Also problematic are constraints on research into general human nature, and cultural incompatibilities with “universal human rights” (Fluehr-Lobban, 1998). More prevalent therefore, and adopted here, is “non-doctrinal” cultural relativism framed as “rule of thumb” respecting and accommodating cultural differences, but opposing beliefs and actions that entail “harm” as understood in evolving universal human rights discourse (Brown, 2008). Thus qualified, non-doctrinal cultural relativism is a desirable *perspective* for facilitating meaningful development and knowledge creation, and endogenization is the process through which it is operationalized by integrating relevant culturally specific content into policy, planning and management.

Neglected even with this qualification, however, is usage of endogenous values and epistemologies to more broadly inform sustainable tourism development, in tandem with aforementioned WTTC ideals of culturally compatible development. This more superficial engagement with culture is a critical limitation, since “A wide understanding of culture makes culture a condition and premise for action, meaning, and communication” (Soini & Birkeland, 2014, p. 214). These authors continue that “Although governmental policies and NGOs increasingly recognize the importance of culture as an aspect of sustainable development, it can be argued that culture is not yet institutionalized as an aspect of sustainability because it has not been systematically included in sustainable development policies, practices, or assessments” (p. 214). Values, including cultural values, are framed by Horlings (2015) as the inner sustainability dimension influencing all engagement, which can never be value-free. For Schwartz (1999), cultural “values (e.g. success, justice, freedom, social order, tradition) are the vocabulary of socially approved goals used to motivate action, and to express and justify the solutions chosen” (p. 26) and can be used instrumentally as trans-situational mediators or guiding principles to establish priorities and subsequent standards for action.

That the cultural values and epistemologies informing engagement with sustainability remain Anglo-Western despite widespread acceptance of cultural relativism, however, is a fundamental and disconcerting tourism “truth” (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Tribe, 2007). Tribe (2018) acknowledges this in his recent reflections as long-time editor of a major tourism journal, but otherwise proffers classic affiliated advice to the academy. For Winter (2009), Anglo-Western centrism renders contemporary sustainable tourism itself unsustainable given tourism’s growth in non-Western contexts and the concomitant intellectual or institutional unsuitability of the field to properly understand and facilitate sustainable tourism therein. “Triple bottom line” assumptions, for example, may not resonate in cultures lacking clear distinction between humans and nature. Ascribed factors include the Western character of post-World War II tourist movements (with tourism still widely seen as “Western”), dominance of Anglo-Western research and teaching institutions, and consequent influences on non-Western scholars and practitioners. Also relevant are confluences of globalization with Westernization and privileging of Western epistemologies accordingly (Winter, 2007).

Challenges to this epistemological dilemma, however, are emerging. Chambers and Buzinde (2015), echoing broader critiques of Anglo-Western knowledge hegemony and heeding calls for greater articulation of “epistemologies of the South” (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007), advocate, like others (Boluk & Carnicelli, 2019), for “decolonization” of the tourism academy by activating voices of women, racial minorities and other “marginalized” groups. Such efforts thus far mainly implicate indigenous tourism. Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012), for example, use an “Indigenist paradigm”, as part of a broader post-modernist research trend or “critical turn” emphasizing co-created and co-transformational learning through “hopeful tourism” (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011), to explore emic tourist experiences of Indigenous Australians. Amoamo (2011) positions selected Māori tourism providers as proactive and resilient agents of self-determination who create hybrid or “third space” cultural identities selectively synthesizing past and present. Such insights, however, do not translate into broader tourism planning, management or policy.

Also concerning is that similar investigations in non-indigenous non-Western and peripheral Western contexts, a much larger population arena, are extremely scarce (Winter, 2009). A notable exception is Buckley, Cater, Zhong, and Chen (2008), who explore *shengtai luyou* as Han Chinese analog to ecotourism emphasizing human health, culture-nature integration, and unlimited scale. Promising too are engagements with hopeful tourism that aspire to knowledge co-creation and hybridization. Here, Novelli, Morgan, and Nibigira (2012) purport to combine insider and outsider perspectives to assess sustainable tourism prospects in post-conflict Burundi. Khirfan (2014), in the context of three Middle Eastern historical districts, examines attempts to compromise in urban heritage planning between “place-making” based on the lived culture of residents and “place experience” based on satisfying tourist demands and Anglo-Western assumptions and expectations of international heritage experts. However, there is no clear articulation of any relevant endogenous epistemology to reflect a more fundamental level of such attempted co-creations. Taking these interrogations forward, perhaps, will challenge and recalibrate Anglo-Western concepts such as ecotourism, community-based tourism, mass tourism – and sustainable tourism.

### Realities of large-scale tourism

Sustainable tourism itself has evolved conceptually from positions of polarity to convergence. Sceptics of mass tourism initially proposed “alternative tourism” as true sustainable tourism edifying the small, local and autonomous. However, while constituting fertile *terroir* for cultivating non-Western epistemologies, alternative tourism has never gained real world traction, and neither have similarly amenable successor concepts as “just tourism” (Hultsman, 1995), “justice tourism” (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008), and “hopeful tourism” (Pritchard et al., 2011), their own Anglo-Western conceptual constraints being perhaps an inhibiting factor. Rather, a sense emerged that both alternative and mass tourism could be sustainable or unsustainable depending on destination circumstances and applied planning and management, and hence could not be logically positioned as ethically-denominated polarities (Weaver, 2000). Contemporary realities of ten billion annual tourist trips, moreover, position mass tourism as global norm, and evolutionary neo-liberal “paradigm nudge” as the probable trajectory of change, rather than the revolutionary paradigm shift desired by “alternative tourism” champions (Weaver, 2007).

The logic of *amalgamation* as proposed by Weaver (2014) culminates the convergence position by contending that alternative tourism in *practice* is illusory given its dependence on mass pan-global financial, transit and information systems; however, in *principle* it retains utility through characteristic values around ethics, community, cooperation, sense of place and customization that can help make mass tourism more sustainable. “Enlightened mass tourism”, accordingly, distils and combines, through resolution-based dialectics, the mentioned “alternative tourism” virtues with mass tourism virtues that in other ways also facilitate sustainability. These include economies of scale, competition and innovation proclivities, replication (for example, of best practice) and capacity to satisfy salient demand. The two sets of virtues, subsequently, inform policy outputs focused on the triple bottom line (Fig. 1). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) provides a similar framework and agenda (de Grosbois, 2012), though without explicit dialectical intent or tourism specificity. While it is contended through such amalgamation that TBL outcomes in diverse destination contexts are more likely, this model too is constrained by Anglo-Western bias. Our intent therefore is to inject a deeper endogenous cultural component to render enlightened mass tourism more relevant to non-Western tourism contexts.

### China as exemplar

Several factors underpin the selection of China. First, 92% of the population consists of Han Chinese who exhibit some regional cultural differentiations (e.g., between north and south) but otherwise share an internally consistent value system and overwhelmingly dominate the contemporary Chinese polity through the Communist Party of China (CPC). This system, affiliated with a broader East Asian cultural realm, has persisted in its basic contours over centuries and differs substantively from Anglo-Western norms (Yau, 1988). Diverse “minority” cultures who account for the remaining 8% of the population generally retain distinct value systems but are variably influenced by the dominant culture. Another consideration is unprecedented tourism growth and scale, with

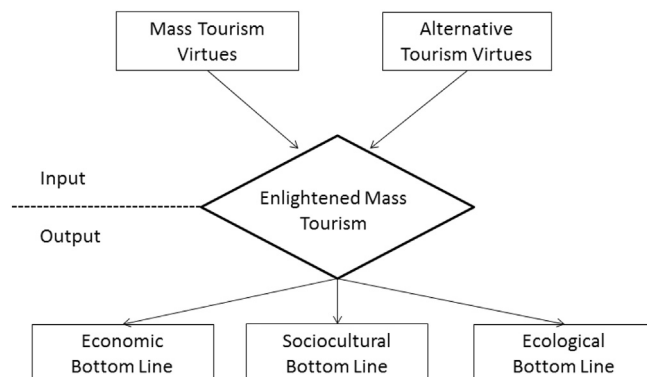


Fig. 1. The input/output framework of enlightened mass tourism.

inbound arrivals increasing from negligible in 1980 to 133 million in 2015. More impressively, domestic trips increased from 524 million in 1994 (Ryan, 2017) to over five billion in 2018. As Chinese tourism is mainly domestic, considerations of endogenous cultural values are especially relevant on the demand side. Moreover, domestic dominance translates into widely diffused tourism, both urban and rural, based mainly on VFR and recreational travel. China's dispersed National Forest Parks alone, for example, hosted 917 million visitors in 2016 (Xiang, 2017). This diffusion indicates domestic tourism's potential to redress uneven development in peripheral areas where such protected areas are typically located.

There is also ample evidence of cost. Protected area tourism associates with littering, excessive noise, water pollution (Han & Ren, 2001), vegetation trampling, tree scarring, soil compaction, moisture reduction (Deng, Qiang, Walker, & Zhang, 2003) and inadequate waste disposal (Zhong, Buckley, Wardle, & Wang, 2015). Only 20–50% of China's flagship Nature Reserves are effectively managed (Miller-Rushing, Primack, Ma, & Zhou, 2017), and resultant internal stress is exacerbated by air and water pollution from tourism-induced urbanization in gateway towns (Chen & Nakama, 2013). Rural tourism can induce inflation as farm output declines and land use, like employment, becomes more tourism-oriented (Gu & Ryan, 2010; Ryan, Zhang, & Deng, 2011). Other issues include excessive sand removal from beaches (Gu & Wong, 2006), coastal resort sprawl (Wang & Liu, 2013) and community displacement (Wang & Wall, 2007). The latter also has an urban dimension in contexts of mega-events or heritage tourism precincts (Martínez, 2016; Xue, Kerstetter, & Buzinde, 2015). Major urban hinterland attractions such as the Badaling Great Wall attract excursionist-related sprawl and visitation pressures that threaten attraction integrity and experience quality (Su & Wall, 2012). In ethnic minority regions, tourism can erode cultural autonomy and stimulate commodification (Yang & Wall, 2009). A shared amplifying factor is hyper-concentration of domestic travel during two national holiday or Golden Weeks.

A final consideration is widespread public and government support for tourism. Affected residents recognize associated costs but acknowledge substantial economic benefits, and favor appropriately conceived and executed tourism development accordingly (Cui & Ryan, 2011; Gu & Ryan, 2010; Xiao & Li, 2004; Xu & Wall, 2007; Yang & Wall, 2009). Post-1978 tourism policy reflects diverse motivations and sustainability outcomes. Thus, the Golden Weeks, introduced in 1999 to stimulate the economy through consumption and promote long-distance domestic tourism, also spawned infrastructure overload, economic disruption, and overcrowding (Wu, Xue, Morrison, & Leung, 2012). In 2009, the State Council advocated green tourism as part of China's "new normal" economy and subsequently enshrined it in the National 13th five-year tourism development plan (Tang et al., 2017). Recent indications, however, are that government-supported rapid tourism growth, focused on domestic travel, will continue (ChinaDaily.com, 2017).

Government support reflects broader directives. Tourism policies and related outcomes in China as elsewhere are ultimately consequences of broader ideology and policy. Ideology, according to Tribe (2008), is firstly "an overarching network of guiding ideas that frame, direct, and inform thinking... [and secondly an expression of] discrete, coherent belief systems (p. 248)" that explain reality; as such ideology is influenced by cultural values. Policies, subsequently, are courses or principles of action pursued within appropriate power frameworks to achieve aspirations arising from its parent ideology (Hall, 1994). Promulgation of ideology is an exclusive prerogative of the CPC, which thereby projects enormously influential hegemonic social representations for this purpose (Moscovici, 2001). Post-1949 China's essential ideological trajectory has been rhetorical fealty to Marxism-Leninism. However, while retaining top-down decision-making (Qin, Wall, & Liu, 2011), China's unique historical and cultural context has warranted non-Western interpretations often styled as adaptive Socialism "with Chinese characteristics" (Vickers, 2009). Distinctive is the prioritization of pragmatism and flexibility over dogmatism (to facilitate modernization), and accommodation of compatible Confucian precepts.

Modern tourism was inaugurated by the "open door" reforms of 1978 (Leung et al., 2014). Especially important for the present research is policy arising from the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017, which articulated the leadership's assessments of socio-economic progress and associated challenges, established long-term national development goals, set policy agendas and directives for achieving these goals, and refined Party ideology accordingly. Keynote congress reports delivered by serving CPC general secretaries are "one of the most authoritative documents in the Chinese political system" (Lawrence & Martin, 2013, p. 12), and encapsulate this reassessment of national ideology and its expression through appropriate policy. The essence of the 2017 Report was subsequently incorporated as new doctrine into the CPC Constitution, and described therein as a "guide to action for the entire Party and all the Chinese people to strive for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" by the mid-21st century (Xinhuanet, 2017, p.3). The Report projects comparable authority to guiding CPC doctrines of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory, and while making no mention of tourism itself provides the basis for our endogenous output analysis – that is, outputs from the endogenized enlightened mass tourism model should complement and, ideally, facilitate relevant policy. This recognizes that while actions which ignore or contradict such policy may attract substantial penalties, the above-mentioned problems associated with Chinese tourism indicate the existence of gaps between what is exhorted and what is actually done.

## Objectives

Assuming that dominance of Anglo-Western epistemologies and concepts is an impediment to the attainment of sustainable tourism development in non-Western contexts, the first objective of this research is to "endogenize" Weaver's (2014) generic enlightened mass tourism model by injecting culturally-specific values as endogenous input, and culturally-specific policy as endogenous output, using China as exemplar. The affiliated objective is to illustrate how this reconceptualized model can be used to facilitate the implementation of culturally responsive sustainable tourism in such contexts.

## Method

Conceptual research, in affiliation with interpretivist and critical paradigms that embrace qualified cultural relativity, is appropriate for addressing questions about broad issues and ideas not yet sufficiently articulated to warrant systematic empirical analysis, and indeed can serve as a precursor to such analysis by deconstructing, reinterpreting and reconstructing problematic concepts through systematic discourse analysis. As such it “can add new insights to traditional problems, reveal new research tracks, or make conceptual bridges to neighbouring disciplines” (Xin, Tribe, & Chambers, 2013, p. 74). In relation to the stated objectives, our study sequentially incorporated six themes characteristic of conceptual research (Xin et al., 2013). First, *historical analysis of concepts*, presented in the Literature Review, summarized the proposition that sustainable tourism has evolved from alternative/mass tourism polarity to amalgamation as embodied in enlightened mass tourism. Second, *concept deconstruction* identified the Anglo-Western origins of the latter as a significant limitation to its efficacy for facilitating sustainable tourism in non-Western settings so that, third, *translating concepts to new contexts* involves the application of enlightened mass tourism to China.

The fourth theme of *synthesizing concepts*, presented in the following section, entails the augmentation of enlightened mass tourism with contextually specific inputs and outputs toward, fifth, *proposing a new concept (reconceptualization)*, i.e., “endogenized enlightened mass tourism”. Tentatively *applying* [recalibrated] *concepts to practice*, as pursued in the Discussion in relation to a specific problem of unsustainable tourism – habitat degradation induced by direct tourist actions, is the sixth and final theme. The overall pattern is a description (themes 1–2) to prescription (themes 3–6) trajectory which eschews explanation and prediction due to insufficient empirical rigor, but represents possibilities for the further theoretical development of sustainable tourism and provides practical input into sustainable tourism planning and management in non-Anglo-Western destination contexts.

Lacking the rigor and pedigree of its more established empirical counterpart, quality control in conceptual research is maximized through in-depth author knowledge about the subject (scholarship), continual evaluation of counter-evidence (soft falsification) as well as structure, logic and plausibility (rhetoric), cross-comparison with relevant concepts (triangulation), consistency of results with research aims (validity), rigorous research process documentation (transparency), and results that contribute to human understanding (usefulness) and illuminate that which was not apparent before (additionality). A final criterion is self-reflection on author positioning (reflexivity) (Tribe & Liburd, 2016). The first author is a Westerner embedded in tourism research for over 30 years, including deep recent involvement in numerous China-related projects and 19 country visits. His co-authors were born and raised in China but completed their post-graduate education in the West, travel there frequently, and are fluent in English. All three authors are constantly aware of the need to negotiate between both sets of values in constructing and evaluating our model.

Content analysis of the Report and applicable publications on dominant Han Chinese values employed relevant “thinking devices” which situate text as compilations of saying (providing “factual” information), doing (stating actual or intended actions), and being (expressing values, positions, identities, aspirations, etc.) (Gee, 2011). A device for understanding the saying-doing-being is context delineation; the Report is the keynote speech from the peak CPC event, delivered by China’s highest official. Relevant “social language” designates this speech as having utmost importance and authority, a status reinforced by carefully crafted and formal but transparent prose that minimizes possibilities for misinterpretation by government and Party officials who are expected to understand the content and act accordingly. In an implicit “situated meaning”, associated calls for new thinking cannot contradict or otherwise undermine prevailing ideology or its parent authority. Other devices include text structure analysis (e.g., 13 Basic Policy points), identification of key terms (poverty alleviation, ecological civilization) and their frequency, positioning (front of text, within titles), and qualifiers (“persistent” and “pervasive” poverty). “Intertextuality”, finally, expands boundaries by referencing relevant precursor text (e.g. Mao Zedong Thought).

Our analysis is concurrently “content-based” in seeking to accurately convey text content and organization, but also “critical” in then in the Discussion associating this content with sustainable tourism, a latent theme potentially impacted by and impacting the intent of the value texts and Report. An inherent problem throughout is the inevitable loss of accuracy when translating Mandarin-language texts to English. However, for the Report, we recognize that the official translation used in our analysis has been undertaken and vetted by experts at the highest government level who were cognizant of the need to convey content to international audiences with maximum clarity. The two Chinese co-authors, in addition, read the both versions of the Report to ascertain concordance between the translation and the original.

### *Endogenized enlightened mass tourism*

The augmented enlightened mass tourism framework, with endogenous inputs and outputs highlighted in gray, is presented in Fig. 2.

### *Endogenous inputs*

Endogenous value-related input represents the localized component of the non-doctrinal approach to enlightened mass tourism. By way of necessary qualification, the following content reflects only the majority Han culture and not necessarily the culture or values of China’s many minority ethnic groups. Nor is it intended to be inclusive of all Han Chinese cultural values, but just those we deem as dominant and persistent ones distilled from the literature that constitute a reality having implications both positive and negative for sustainable tourism through the endogenized enlightened mass tourism framework. Word limitations, moreover, do not permit the level of engagement required to more fully interrogate this very complex topic, born out of long concurrent engagement with Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian influences (Faure & Fang, 2008). This complexity warrants that the indicated values are closely



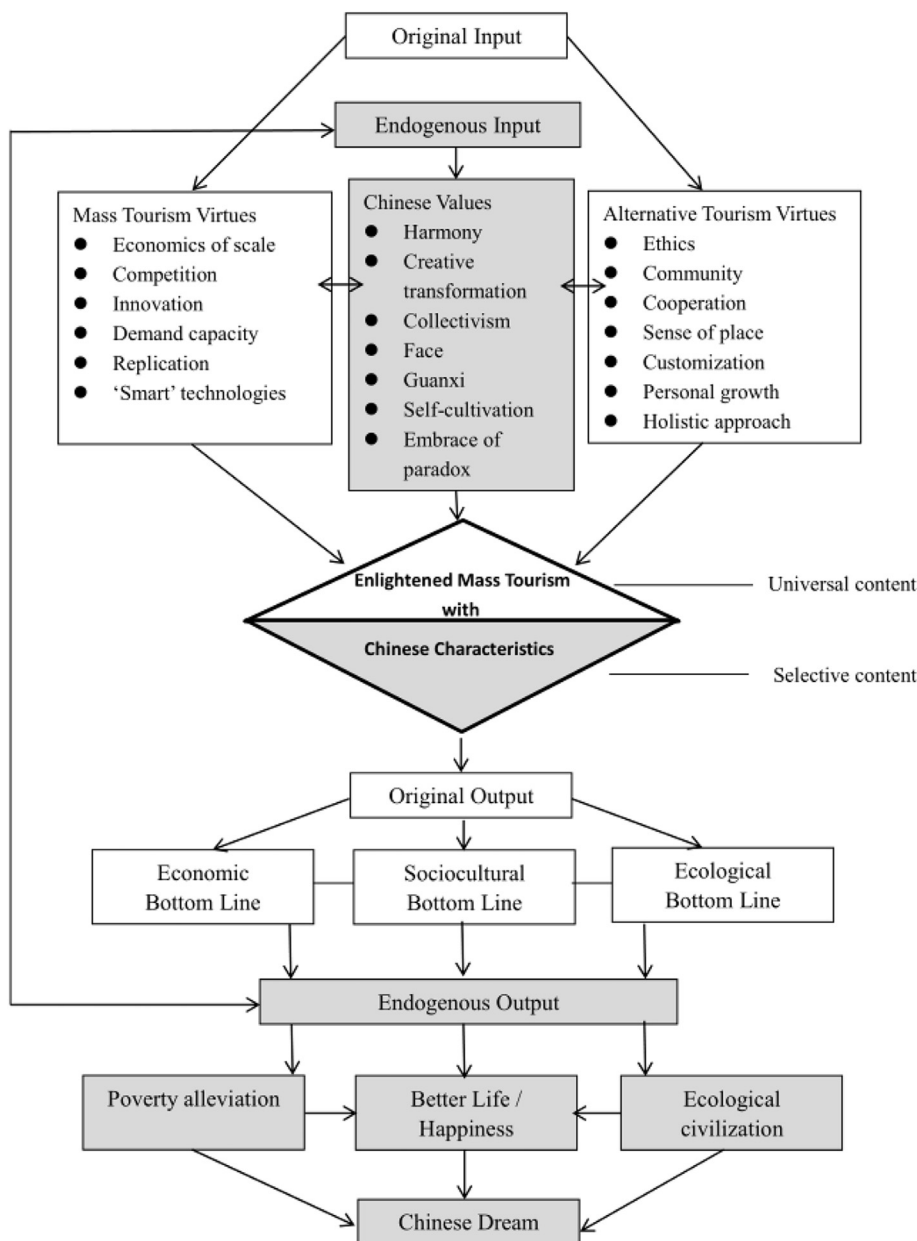


Fig. 2. The augmented input/output framework of enlightened mass tourism with Chinese characteristics.

interrelated, overlapping, and subject to acculturation. The text tries to reflect this integration by, for example, avoiding subheadings and employing value cross-references.

Zhang, He, and Cheng (2011) frame *harmony* in everything as the core overarching Han Chinese value, its attainment requiring consideration as to the most appropriate relationships in all matters. Harmony assumes unity of all elements of the universe, and resultant interrelatedness and interdependency of all things, including the tiniest and greatest of things. Thus, nature shapes humans while humans shape nature, and nature will help humans if humans reciprocate by helping nature (Yau, 1988). That human well-being therefore depends on the healthy condition of nature has traditionally engendered strong respect for the latter (James, 2003). This interrelatedness of all things also means that nature acquires more meaning and value when it is defined or characterized in relation to human experience; hence, an ancient tree is all the more admired through knowledge that it was alive during a time of remote dynastic antiquity and visited by a revered philosopher. Often appearing odd to the Western aesthetic is a parallel embrace of human agency, so that a cliff-face in a Chinese protected area is “enhanced” by adding bold red calligraphy, and a mountain by constructing a temple on its peak.

Such *creative transformation*, or change that facilitates harmony, is similar to sustainable development and conservation (Lee,

Lawton, & Weaver, 2013). Divergent, however, are greater thresholds of acceptable landscape change and higher tolerance for crowds and high density. This tolerance in turn invokes *collectivism* as the best social arrangement for achieving harmony by privileging society over the individual (Chen & Miller, 2010; Hofstede, 1980). Happiness, therefore, is gained by caring for others and striving to please (Zhang et al., 2011). Two relevant values are face and guanxi. *Face* is self-reflection through the gaze of others, manifested differentially through moral character (“lian”) and social standing (“mianzi”); to lose face either way is to experience shame and humiliation (Qi, 2011). Allowing face to be maintained or gained is associated with ethical and civilized behavior, or personal dignity, as dictated by one’s place in the social hierarchy, although social achievement and advancement can also be relevant (Pan, Gao, Zhang, & Wan, 2014). Oblique rather than direct criticism, and suggestions rather than demands, are means through which the face of others is saved, and social harmony maintained.

Facework, or implementation of face-related social strategies, pervades Han Chinese tourism contexts (Kwek & Lee, 2015; Kwek, Wang, & Weaver, 2019). Less is known, however, about the role of *guanxi*, or the also pervasive informal social sub-networks within the collectivity that parallel (and sometimes subvert) formal counterpart systems and facilitate desired actions through reciprocal exchanges of goods and services (Faure & Fang, 2008; Luo, 2000; Zhao & Timothy, 2015). For Schwartz (1999), its ubiquity adheres Han China to the conservative-hierarchical dimensions of his proposed value-type structure, in affiliation with face, self-cultivation, humility, pragmatism, and respect for authority, elders, tradition, and prevailing social order. *Self-cultivation* refers to the need for individuals to be fully aware of and act accordant to their social roles and responsibilities. Modesty and self-effacement are important outcomes (Yau, 1988) as is the mastering of rituals and proper etiquette (Faure & Fang, 2008). However, education more broadly is valued on a “knowledge is power” premise wherein strategic information from a greatly respected teacher can help the social advancement of the individual and by extension, reinforce their *guanxi* network (Yau, 1988).

A less salient but crucial Han Chinese cultural value is *embrace of paradox*. Harmony, essentially, requires the existence and balancing of opposites as per the Yin Yang principle of dual cosmic energies. Thus, classically, implicit in love is hate, growth in decay, and light in darkness. Faure and Fang (2008) regard this accommodation of opposites as a constant in Han Chinese culture, arising from efforts to resolve contradictions among the three foundational philosophies. Responding to post-reform Western influences, Han Chinese culture flexibly embraces face *and* self-expression, *guanxi and* professionalism, thrift *and* materialism, superstition *and* irreligiosity, and respect for authority *and* habitual circumvention of laws through littering and jaywalking. Traditional Han Chinese culture is resultantly “both-and” rather than Western “either-or”, emphasizing flexibility and pragmatism as individual circumstances dictate the balance required (Yau, 1988). Notably, this does not mean the absence of tension or conflict between opposites, but rather that such tension is normal to creative transformation and is an indicator of imbalance that signals the need and provides a focal point for seeking resolution.

### Outputs

Endogenous policy-related output also represents the localized component of the non-doctrinal approach to enlightened mass tourism. As follows, our analysis of the Report yields three analog construct-sets that accord respectively with the three legs of the Anglo-Western concept of the triple bottom line. Whereas the inputs focus on Han Chinese values, the outputs refer to the “Chinese people” more generally without distinction between ethnic groups.

#### *Sociocultural bottom line: Better life and human happiness*

The Report emphasizes a better life and happiness for the Chinese people as the ultimate goal of the CPC and implicitly, the basis for its legitimacy. This element of being/doing, a critically important addition to China’s ideological lexicon, is a dominant sentiment in the introduction – *The original aspiration and the mission of Chinese Communists is to seek happiness for the Chinese people...The aspirations of the people to live a better life must always be the focus of our efforts*, and conclusion – *we should...see that our people realize their aspirations for a better life*. Directly relevant is Basic Policy point #2, *Committing to a people-centered approach*, which reiterates that *we must regard as our goal the people’s aspirations to live a better life*. Altogether, the term *better life* is mentioned 13 times, followed by *wellbeing* (12), *happiness/happier* (5), *quality of life* (2) and *contentment* (1). This aspiration resonates inter-textually in the precedential personal-material dimension of the Chinese Dream (Mahoney, 2014), 2016 Healthy China initiative (Tan, Liu, & Shao, 2017), contemporary Fitness-for-All programs, and Jiang Zemin’s Three Represents of 2002, which positions the CPC as standing for the wellbeing of the broad masses (Lewis & Xue, 2003).

#### *Economic bottom line: Poverty alleviation*

Better quality-of-life is facilitated through poverty alleviation. This longstanding CPC policy reflects the post-1949 prevalence of an impoverished population and the desire that this should never be repeated. The Report recognizes that *poverty alleviation remains a formidable task* and that there is a persistent *contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people’s ever-growing needs for a better life*. Basic Policy point #8 thus seeks to *intensify poverty alleviation, see that all our people have a greater sense of fulfillment as they contribute to and gain from development, and continue to promote well-rounded human development and common prosperity for everyone*. Moreover, *seeing that poor people and poor areas will enter the moderately prosperous society together with the rest of the country is a solemn promise made by our Party*. *Poverty or poor* (in the allied context) are mentioned 25 times, and this too resonates in preceding ideology. Another notable ideological innovation, however, is the above reference to “well-rounded human development”, which extends the idea of better life beyond basic physiological and security needs, now largely satisfied, to more

sophisticated realms of esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

#### *Ecological bottom line: Ecological civilization*

Ecological issues, posited with poverty alleviation as a co-avenue for achieving a better life, also receive extensive attention based on frequency counts of *ecological* (22) and *environment/environmental* (27). This follows the insertion of ecological civilization into the CPC constitution at the 18th National Congress in 2012 and in the subsequent five-year plan and Beautiful China initiative (Wan, 2013). As with poverty alleviation, a more sophisticated positioning of nature is indicated, incorporating its circular utilitarian conservation but embracing also appreciation and valorization for its own sake, in the broader interests of harmony, balance, and better life. According to Basic Policy point #9 (Ensuring harmony between human and nature), *building an ecological civilization is vital to sustain the Chinese nation's development. We must realize that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets and act on this understanding, implement our fundamental national policy of conserving resources and protecting the environment, and cherish the environment as we cherish our own lives. We will...develop eco-friendly growth models and ways of life. Accordingly, we, as human beings, must respect nature, follow its ways, and protect it, and develop ways of work and life that conserve resources and protect the environment so that the modernization that we pursue is one characterized by harmonious coexistence between man and nature.*

## Discussion

Our research addresses calls by Bramwell (2015) for deeper theoretical engagement with sustainable tourism through appropriate systematized structures, in this case in tandem with strategies of “reframing an issue or concept so it is looked at differently... refining existing or developing new or reconceptualised theory, conceptual frameworks or concepts... and conceptualising political or ethical issues or processes, such as power, alienation or inequality (pp. 209–210)”. Specifically, we acknowledge the problematic hegemony of Anglo-Western epistemologies within contemporary tourism discourse and the concomitant marginalization of non-Western and peripheral Western voices beyond often tokenistic paeans to endogenous culture, and parallel admonitions to protect and respect it as per what we regard as a more superficial and somewhat patronizing manifestation of sustainable development's sociocultural bottom line. Such circumstances, we contend, inhibit sustainable tourism-type outcomes in non-Western contexts. Accordingly, relevant existing Anglo-Western frameworks for achieving these outcomes need to be reassessed and augmented with more transcendent and influential endogenous content, toward a co-created basis for culturally contextual planning and management.

The choice of Weaver's (2014) enlightened mass tourism model for such reassessment derives from its recognition of mass tourism as the ubiquitous contemporary reality, and its dialectical accommodation of distinctive mass and alternative tourism virtues that embody, through such amalgamation, the culminating logic of convergence between these two originally polarized models. This framework, moreover, aspires to TBL outcomes denominated pragmatically as tourism where attempts are made to minimize associated costs while maximizing associated benefits. Another factor is its Anglo-Western centrism, which invites reform. Selected Han Chinese cultural values, accordingly, are added to the alternative-mass tourism amalgam as input, providing a new dimension of culturally specific “enlightenment”, while parallel Chinese power and policy structures are appended to the TBL as contextually specific parameters of output. These injections are crucial facets of the endogenization required to achieve sustainability through deep integration of culturally specific values and structures. Accordance with the adopted non-doctrinal model of cultural relativity is manifest in the amalgamation of the culturally specific with the generic alternative and mass tourism virtues, toward a universally relevant model amenable to implementation.

Regarding those endogenous injections, we identify a constellation of seven closely interrelated Han Chinese cultural values that ultimately support the positioning of *creative transformation toward harmony among all things* as the culturally specific analog to Western ideas of sustainable development. Anchoring these values and key to understanding this Han Chinese “value-verse” is embrace of paradox. Where Western epistemologies, to reiterate, tend to be binary (core or periphery, modernization or dependency), Han Chinese cultural thinking is unitary (core and periphery, modernization and dependency) (Winter, 2007). Accordingly, longstanding debates in Western tourism circles about ambiguity and contradiction in sustainable development (Hall, 1998; McKercher, 1993) do not resonate in Han Chinese culture, which embraces both “stability and growth” (*wending fazhan*) as well as conservation and preservation in its own version of ecological civilization. From this perspective, a consensus of support in contemporary China for rapid economic development may be regarded not necessarily as neglect of the other two TBL pillars, but recognition that the resultant eradication of widespread poverty can facilitate the pursuit of a happy and beautiful China once stomachs are filled. More implicit, perhaps, is recognition over a much deeper timeframe that expansion periods such as the present one will sooner or later be followed by periods of contraction. Sustainability could thus be conceived as a long-term balance between these periods of growth and decline. The same principle of complementary dualities pertains to the logic, fundamental to enlightened mass tourism, of amalgamating mass and alternative tourism virtues.

Liberal angst over the ubiquity of Eurocentric epistemologies in non-Western settings might therefore be perceived with bemusement in Han China, where the same pragmatic embrace of opposites (itself a manifestation of cultural relativism) has fostered longstanding openness to non-Chinese influences (e.g. Buddhism). Indeed, selective amalgamation of East and West is a key factor in China's contemporary economic success, entailing also strategic rejection of elements that, for example, triggered the 2008 global financial crisis (Chen & Miller, 2010). Concurrently, China's integration into the global tourism system warrants acceptance by China-based researchers of a mainly Anglo-Western vocabulary that provides common ground for understanding and managing this shared context. Such East meets West epistemological recalibrations invite further author reflection; where we frame this research as Han Chinese cultural *adaptation to* Anglo-Western sustainable tourism and enlightened mass tourism, it perhaps better suits our



Process		Input/output referent
		<i>culturally selective in italics, universal (original model) in regular font</i>
<b>1. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION:</b>	Habitat degradation caused by direct tourist actions	<i>disharmony through non-creative transformation; disunity</i> unsustainable environmental bottom line
<b>2. GOAL:</b>	Arrest and reverse direct tourist-related habitat degradation	<i>help achieve ecological civilization and harmony through creative transformation; ecological civilization; Beautiful China</i> sustainable environmental bottom line
<b>3. INDICATORS</b>	(a) % of visitors engaging in habitat degradation	(b) % of visitors participating in habitat restoration
		"
<b>4. OBJECTIVES</b>	=reduce % of visitors engaging in habitat degradation throughout the park (aspiration = 0%)	=increase % of visitors participating in habitat restoration (aspiration = 100%)
		"
<b>5. STRATEGY</b>	Use persuasive communication to show how the behavior	'Smart' technologies
	reflects bad moral character & low social status inhibits individual growth	reflects good moral character & high social status promotes individual growth & enhances knowledge
		<i>face</i> ethics <i>self-cultivation</i> personal growth
	encourages & reinforces bad in-group behavior	strengthens bonds within participant social group
		<i>guanxi</i> cooperation
	undermines the greater social good through selfishness	increases the greater social good through common actions
		<i>collectivism</i> community
	produces imbalance & disunity that diminishes individuals & society	produces balance & unity that enhances individuals & society
		<i>creative transformation and harmony</i> holistic approach
<b>6. TACTICS</b>		establish demonstration sites in high traffic areas
		<i>collectivism</i> economies of scale, innovation demand capacity, replication
		focus on attractions with compelling & special human associations
		<i>unity among all things</i> sense of place
	use well-known experts, role models and authority figures to convey message	<i>hierarchy, respect for authority</i>
		visible on-site commemoration of participation
		<i>guanxi, face, self-cultivation</i>
	policing, threats of shaming	<i>face</i>

Fig. 3. Illustrative implementation of endogenized enlightened mass tourism: Tourist actions and protected area habitat.

endogenization model to reframe it as potential Han Chinese cultural *adoption* of those concepts, thereby placing China in front. As creatively described by Faure and Fang (2008), this entails the reasoned “collection of new cultural elements, sedimentation of those elements within the Chinese system, then digestion and finally re-use within the Chinese metabolism (p. 206).”

*Enabling endogenized enlightened mass tourism in China*

Fig. 3 demonstrates the practical utility of the augmented model for achieving contextually sustainable outcomes within this “Chinese metabolism”. The process begins by identifying a relevant problem (habitat degradation in protected areas from direct tourist actions) and related goals. These are respectively associated with inhibiting and supporting particular overarching

endogenous (“selective”) and universal values and policies. Implementation requires formulation of relevant and feasible (simple, measurable and comparable) indicators and associated objectives, here involving both prevention and reversal of degradation. One strategy entails persuasive communication to alter tourist impacts by discouraging bad behavior while encouraging participation in restoration. Affiliate endogenous values are invoked in education and interpretation along with cognate universal values to convey potential negative personal and group outcomes for misbehavior and rewards for good behavior. Associated tactics can include demonstration sites at gateways where maximum exposure and participation can be realized, and involvement celebrated visibly and enduringly. Conveyance by respected role models and authority figures is recommended. Selective and universal value pairings (e.g. *self-cultivation* and personal growth) are overlapping, so that common ground is augmented by the distinct content of each.

An anecdote from a northern wetland protected area visit illustrates possibilities for implementation. The site, typical of eastern China as highly serviced, modified and visited, is a seasonal refuge for migrating red-crowned cranes, an endangered species. Beyond dry scientific information provided on weathered and largely ignored signage, there is no evidence of concerted visitor engagement with this species; emphasis instead is on photographing an iconic local plant which displays impressively in late summer as a vast blanket of crimson. Yet, as conveyed by Shi et al. (2019), there is a compelling story about these cranes exemplifying how unity of all things could contribute to sustainable outcomes. In brief, rangers discovered a wounded crane (shot by a careless or malicious hunter) and nursed it back to health, though it could never return to the wild. The crane's family, though fully mobile, chose to remain permanently close by. Embodied in this anecdote is the unity of man and crane but also the paradox of man as destroyer and restorer. Ranger compassion demonstrates admirable and civilized behavior emblematic of the moral dimension of face (*lian*), as does the loyalty of the crane's family members and their collectivist impulse. All aspects of the story entail a creative transformation for the participants. Although ecologically perverse, such stories are likely to attract positive emotional engagement and subsequent mobilization, especially if conveyed by respected scholars or rangers and directed toward group participation in high traffic areas.

Persuasive communication should use multi-media storytelling (e.g., signage as well as smart phone apps) to convey why bad actions are injurious and disruptive of harmony, and their perpetration shameful. Bad behavior, moving toward the stick approach, may attract shaming that results in perpetrator loss of face (*lian*) and, more severely, social censure and financial penalties. Prevalence of insouciant and anti-social behavior in such settings indicates that Han Chinese values, inevitably, have their negative as well as positive side. Guanxi, for example, is also associated with corruption, nepotism and incompetence, and has been shown to inhibit successful community-based tourism in China by restricting participation to favored in-groups (Li, Lai, & Feng, 2007). Harmony, in turn, can spawn a sense of fatalism and powerlessness that inhibits required proactive responses. The Report acknowledges the persistence and seriousness of diverse bad behaviors in Chinese society, emphasizes the need for reprimand, and exhorts Party members to be positive role models so that the *ideals* of ecological civilization and poverty alleviation, through hard work and deep focus, can be achieved. Another concern is whether younger Chinese are unduly influenced by Western values such as individualism and therefore less pervious to such inducements (Fuligni & Zhang, 2004), though centuries of selective acculturation without serious erosion of these traditional core values suggests that such influences may be exaggerated.

#### Policy (output) implications

Fig. 2 depicts alignment of the Report's three policy pillars with the TBL, the sociocultural dimension dominating through overarching aspirations to happiness. That tourism is omitted despite its centrality to contemporary Chinese development (Sofield & Li, 2011) is not unusual. The seminal Brundtland Report also omits tourism, while the Chinese Dream was not linked to tourism until three years after its promulgation (Weaver, 2015). Yet, the Report has significant synergistic implications for tourism as both *beneficiary* and *facilitator* of its policies and objectives. For example, poverty alleviation in remote areas is more feasible when these peripheries are reframed as “experiential cores” well suited with clean air and quiet surrounds to foster peak tourist experiences and destination loyalty (Weaver, 2013). That those assets must be cherished to realize these effects, moreover, reinforces efforts to build an ecological civilization. It therefore behooves tourism stakeholders to demonstrate to authorities how sustainable tourism, recalibrated as tourism that facilitates *creative transformation toward harmony among all things* [traditional cultural input] and *happiness of the Chinese people* [contemporary policy output], promotes a more prosperous, beautiful and happy China. Fig. 3, because of word limitations, provides just one example of addressing a relevant problem through endogenous content, but a reconfigured framework based on distillation of diverse examples could serve as an endogenized tourism policy framework.

An important corollary of our exemplified endogenization, unconsidered thus far, is the need for synergy between input and output or, effectively, values and policy. As the values literature predates the Report, it is to the latter that content analysis must be applied to see how Han Chinese values are accommodated. Ten major mentions are made of such. For example, in the introduction, it is stated that *core socialist values and fine traditional Chinese culture are alive in the people's hearts... we, the Chinese people, have greater confidence in our own culture*, while subsequent calls for action declare in Basic Policy point #7 that *we should cherish our cultural roots... [and] do more to foster a Chinese spirit, Chinese values, and Chinese strength to provide a source of cultural and moral guidance for our people*. More explicitly, *Socialist culture with Chinese characteristics is derived from China's fine traditional culture, which was born of the Chinese civilization and nurtured over more than 5000 years*. Rhetorically specific are calls to *encourage creative transformation*, and the naming of Basic Policy point #9 as *Ensuring harmony between human and nature*.

Content associated with openness to non-Chinese influences is also relevant here in relation to the value of embracing opposites, and, by extension, comfort with integrating both influences into contemporary policy deliberations. Abundant in the Report are references to Anglo-Western foundations of current ideology, including *socialism, socialist modernization, scientific socialism, scientific truth of Marxism-Leninism, and spirit of science*. More general is promotion of *opening up, mutual learning, and, in handling relations among civilizations, [replacing] estrangement with exchange, clashes with mutual learning, and superiority with coexistence*. Chinese policy,

in all its hegemonic authority, therefore evinces harmony between selected Han Chinese values and complementary external epistemologies. An issue that remains problematic (and ironic given our accusations of Western hegemony vis-à-vis China), however, is the input-output discordance that applies to China's non-Han cultures. Aspirations of happiness and poverty alleviation have universal resonance, but associated policies and strategies in our proposed model are not informed by the distinct value systems of those minority groups. To devise such amended variants of the model would be to build a more comprehensively framed and engaged model of hopeful tourism development as advocated by Pritchard et al. (2011).

## Conclusion

Our present knowledge of tourism, including its sustainability aspirations, remains predominantly “colonial” in continuing to privilege Western epistemologies (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p. 3). Recognizing this as a serious limitation to achieving sustainable tourism in non-Western destinations, our research innovates by developing an “endogenized” enlightened mass tourism framework in which contextually relevant values and policies are injected as critically important inputs and outputs respectively, thereby rendering more robust the sociocultural pillar of the TBL. Combining this endogenous content with the original generic parameters of the model on an equal footing, our research embodies a non-doctrinal approach to cultural relativity that can facilitate the co-created implementation of sustainable tourism development in any cultural context. A problem related to unsustainable tourism provides a template as to how the framework can be operationalized. An important conclusion from investigating China is that implicated Anglo-Western content can and will be retained in some substantive degree, sometimes distinctively, and sometimes in fusion with endogenous culture. Such hybridization effects are normative and pertain as well to indigenous tourism situations as examined by Amoamo (2011) and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012).

Given Han China's and East Asia's particular focus on achieving harmony among all things and comfort with paradox – which Faure and Fang (2008) regard as China's most original contribution to the world, it may be that this region will take the lead from the West in devising the most innovative and effective means for achieving sustainable development in future. As for the extension of this research into other non-Western destination contexts, it is prudent to apprehend the uniqueness inherent to the constellation of identified Han Chinese values. However, it is equally important to appreciate that constituent constructs such as self-cultivation, face and guanxi have universal resonations which connect Han China to those contexts and critically inform such extended engagement. A related issue requiring further investigation is how largely individual values such as the aforementioned are manifested in group decision-making processes.

As emphasized by Gee (2011) and as characterizes conceptual research, we recognize our analysis of relevant secondary texts and policy documents as ultimately just one possible though informed interpretation of those discourses, conceptual research and qualitative content analysis being largely subjective endeavors reliant on common sense and logic more than rigorous scientific precepts. Another limitation is that enlightened mass tourism itself at the time of publication was still a relatively new model; future iterations may provide a more fruitful basis for injecting critical endogenous content. The prescriptive aspirations of the endogenized framework, moreover, are qualified by the reality of policy/action gaps, which may be only partially rectified by threats of official sanction and cultural reprimand. Finally, it can be regarded as meritorious given the topic and context that two of the authors of this paper and approximately one-half of authors cited therein have Han Chinese cultural backgrounds. However, reliance on English language sources and, indeed, presentation of this paper in that same language, must inevitably pose semantic barriers to deeper understandings given that cultural values are most authentically expressed and mirrored in relevant mother tongues. Further deep interrogation of these values as they apply to contemporary Chinese tourism settings is therefore warranted.

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