ELSEVIER

ANNALS
of Tourism Research

The symbolism of international tourism in national identity

I-Chieh Michelle Yang[a,*], Juliana Angeline French[a,1], Christina Lee[b,2], Motoki Watabe[a,1]

[a] *Monash University*
[b] *Federation University of Australia, Australia*

ABSTRACT

Drawing on symbolic interactionism, this paper explores the nexus between tourism and national identity in China. Unlike current research's focus on the role of inbound heritage tourism sites in fostering national identity, this study uses symbolic interactionism to frame an analysis of how Chinese national identity is expressed and affirmed as a phenomenon of experiential consumption through the act of international outbound tourism. A multi-method approach guided the data collection from 28 Chinese tourists in two groups. Data analysis follows a constructivist grounded theory approach that is expressly suited to symbolic interactionism. The findings revealed that international tourism offers a platform on which to affirm and express Chinese national identity through the symbolic interaction between Chinese tourists and the world outside of China.

Introduction

Two decades ago, Palmer (1998) wrote her seminal piece linking tourism and national identity. We define *national identity* broadly as a collective form of identity which provides a basic understanding and compass for individuals of a country to define and locate themselves in the world (McCrone & Bechhoefr, 2015). More importantly, it allows citizens to collectively define the meaning and nature of their nation, as well as their aspirations of what that nation could become. Traditionally, national identity has been fostered through a common language or print media (Anderson, 1983); the postmodern national identity is more multifaceted and can be constructed in various ways, such as religion (Bandyopadhyay, Morais, & Chicj, 2008), political ideology (Chaney, 2015) and consumption, for example, of food (Cozzi, 2013). Using the lens of heritage tourism in England, Palmer (1998) highlighted the importance of tourism in cultivating national identity because tourism showcases a nation's past and history. Since Palmer's work appeared, a wealth of scholarly research has explored how tourism facilitates the construction and projection of national identity (e.g., Packer, Ballantyne, & Uzzell, 2019). Nevertheless, these studies focus on domestic tourism (citizens touring their own country), and the way in which the development of historical sites, such as Australia's battlefields Australia (Packer et al., 2019) help to build a strong national identity.

However, as Lanfant (1995) suggested only 25 years ago, international tourism enables and is enabled by globalization, seeping through and widening the holes in porous national boundaries. The very act of visiting another country plausibly embodies a certain

symbolism that is pivotal to identity work. Notably, when tourists travel internationally, they may function partly as agents who use their travel experience for the construction of both personal and national identity. Further, it may alter the ways in which these travelers identify with their national communities by challenging the distinctions between the "inside" and the "outside" (Lanfant, 1995, p. 8). Therefore, outbound tourism may provide a useful and important empirical and analytical basis upon which to advance the understanding of national identity and tourism.

In the context of Chinese national identity, this research uses symbolic interactionism to frame an analysis of the ways in which outbound tourism as a form of experiential consumption affects the negotiation of national identity. It explores the symbolism of international tourism in both the affirmation and the expression of national identity, where *affirmation* refers to how tourists validate their ideal perception of their nation and their membership to the country, and *expression* is the exhibition of one's national consciousness to foreigners. As Chinese tourism has risen meteorically since 2000 (Arlt, 2006), becoming the largest outbound tourist segment in the world, Chinese tourists have immense spending power. Nevertheless, research on Chinese tourism tends to focus on the more conventional paradigms such as motivation and behavior (Tse, 2015). According to Tse, another motivational or behavioral study of Chinese tourists is unlikely to contribute much. This study argues that there is a need to shift the research focus towards a more sociological dimension of the phenomenon with a more theoretical premise.

While some studies have explored the nexus between tourism and national identity in Greater China, particularly the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) (e.g., Zhang, Decosta, & McKercher, 2015; Zhang, Fong, Li, & Ly, 2019), like Palmer (1998) and Henderson (2001), they have focused on the development of domestic heritage sites or myths in fostering a national identity. This study postulates that in addition to the development of heritage sites, international outbound tourism and the consumption of travel experiences may offer important symbolic contexts for the construction of national identity. By going overseas, touring and then recollecting the experience, tourists both affirm and express a sense of national identity. More importantly, China's national identity transformations of the last two centuries, from wars and foreign invasions to revolution and constitutional reinvention and the newfound economic and political freedom to travel may symbolize a rejuvenation of national identity. Furthermore, while tourism may facilitate national identity construction by building a sense of the nation from the bottom up, the symbolic meaning may be drawn from or reflect discourses that governments have predefined. This study hypothesizes that in the course of outbound tourism, Chinese citizens interact with people from other countries and come to understand how China is perceived elsewhere. As Gries (2004) argues, national identities evolve through international interaction, and in the case of China, Chinese national identity is negotiated through its interaction, facilitated by international tourism, with the rest of the world. Based upon these arguments, this study explores how international tourism facilitates Chinese tourists' identity affirmation and expression.

Literature review

National identity

The two principal theories of national identity were formulated by Smith (1991) and Anderson (1983). Smith (1991) states that a strong sense of national identity offers "a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture" (p. 7). This conceptualization highlights the instrumental and sentimental value of national identity to any individual, as it informs how people define themselves as individual persons, and as members of a nation. Fundamentally, national identity provides a basic understanding and compass for individuals to define and situate themselves in the world (McCrone & Bechhoefr, 2015). Smith (1991) views national identity as the outcome of a historical process, one in which histories and cultures are the pre-modern antecedents of a modern nation.

Anderson (1983), in contrast, views a nation as an imagined community, one in which national identity hinges on the shared symbols and rituals of a country. The crux of the theory is that national identity is an "imagined" construct, as "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them… it is imagined as a community because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (pp. 6–7). Anderson further argued that the state would use "print capitalism" — the production of books and newspapers — to disseminate a vernacular language that would unify all diverse groups in a country and instill a strong sense of comradeship and national identity. Nevertheless, Anderson's theory of the imagined community is said to have become obsolete, as the advent of new media, such as the internet, and a new consumer culture have greatly altered that ways in which national consciousness is created and maintained (Barker, 2008).

It is vital to note that these accounts of national identity, such as the key theories presented by Anderson (1983) and Smith (1991) have focused on macro processes, such as history and state print media, and there is a conspicuous neglect of the ways in which national identity is constructed on the individual level, or how it is embodied in our material lives (Edensor, 2002). Billig (1995) proposed a different approach to understanding national identity: banal nationalism. According to this perspective, nationalism and national identity are embedded in everyday routines and lives, such as flying the national flag, singing the national anthem, or supporting national sports teams. Billig's theory represented a shift from macro processes to microprocesses and emphasized the importance of individuals in constructing national identity. Palmer (1998) concurs that national identity is experienced on the personal level. It cannot be simply decreed if not accepted or negotiated from the bottom up. A nation, and more importantly its identity, cannot be constructed or sustained over time without its people.

Further, scholarship has also overlooked the increasingly fragmented and complex nature of the social world (Hall, 1992). In the modern world where cultures are more interconnected than ever, the need for a strong national identity is said to be even more pronounced (Hall, 1992), as it integrates people into a community while allowing them to understand who they are, where they

belong and confers a sense of life purpose. There is a notable lack of understanding of how national identity may be constructed in a globalized and complex context. As an experiential consumption, tourism may offer similar grounds for symbolic meanings and allow Chinese tourists to construct their identity narratives as they experience themselves not directly but indirectly, from the standpoint of other Chinese who are like themselves (Mead, 1934).

Lanfant (1995) stipulated that international tourism has allowed people who had previously remained within their national borders to join multicultural and multinational units, sometimes with former enemies of their nation. It is worth noting that while tourism is accompanied by consumption outside of one's regular social environment, the opportunity that tourism offers for identity expression and symbolic representations is often more conspicuous and preferred (Colton, 1987). The following section reviews the empirical literature on tourism and identity construction to expand our understanding of how tourism facilitates the construction of national identity.

Tourism and identity construction

Tourism is a significant space for the consumption of experiences and symbols (Colton, 1987). While there are many forms of tourism, such as health tourism (that may not be hedonistic), much tourism — and the part of this empirical work examines — is dedicated to leisure. Leisure activities themselves as an important consumption activity enable the symbolic expression and affirmation of an individual's true or desired identity (Dimanche & Samdahl, 1994). Munt's (1994) study of postmodern Western tourists constructing new middle-class identities by traveling to developing countries was the first to explore the ways in which tourism consumption is used for identity construction. Subsequent studies of personal identity include research on Western tourists solving existential conundrums by volunteering in Thailand (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017) and Zhang, Tucker, Morrison, and Wu's (2017) work on backpacker identities in China. While not directly concerned with national identity issues, these papers show an importance and meaning to tourists' life narratives beyond mere hedonism.

Lanfant (1995) explained the ways in which international tourists have joined multicultural and multinational units, sometimes with units that had previously been part of hostile nations. For some of these tourists, the distinction between what was inside and what was outside of the nation blurred.

This study argues that an obvious place to look for the reciprocal impact of tourism on national identity is the literature on heritage tourism. This body of literature bears interesting similarities to the selective memory of modern identity of the People's Republic of China: to historic sites having national significance for the host country. Palmer (2005) describes tourism as "one of the defining activities of the modern world, shaping the ways in which one relates to and understands self and other, nation and nationness" (2005, p.8). Using a family tree connecting England's Battle Abbey, Chartwell and Hever Castle, Palmer analyzed the mechanisms for eliciting felt kinship of Englishness among English visitors. Accordingly, these sites "operate in the manner described by Billig (1995) as flags of identity reminding 'us' that 'we' are 'us' and not; 'them.'" Similar studies have considered traditional Mayan villages for tourism in Belize (Medina, 2003), the manipulation of history and history in Croatia (Goulding & Domic, 2009), Australia's military heritage (Packer et al., 2019) and French heritage sites in India (Jørgensen, 2019). All of these works contribute to a curated construction of national identity by officialdom and the private organizations exploiting it, albeit still dependent on tourists' interpretations.

Some authors have also focused on the role of tourism in negotiating national identity in the Chinese context. To illustrate, Henderson (2001) explored how the development of heritage sites for inbound tourism in Hong Kong facilitates identity negotiation for Hong Kong residents. From a British colony to the reunification with Mainland China, Hong Kong appears to be caught in an identity crisis (Lau, 1997). As a result, residents of Hong Kong are said to be interested in asserting a distinctive identity that combines Chineseness, the island's colonial history, present cultures and future aspirations – one that is different from the one envisioned by the Chinese Communist Party government.

Henderson's (2001) work has been extended by Zhang et al.'s (2015) research on the making of cultural identity through national myth in Hong Kong. In this work, Zhang and colleagues explored how the "myth" of difference between Hong Kong and China has helped construct a uniquely Hong Kong "national identity." This national identity associates the branding of Hong Kong as a tourism destination with a national identity that is different from that of Mainland China. Zhang, et al.'s (2019) more recent work on an annual cultural festival in Macao found that the organization of festival, was not only an acknowledgment of its colonial history under Portugal, but also reinforces Macao residents' hybrid identity. These studies illustrate how heritage experiences can cultivate a national identity (Timothy, 2018).

Nevertheless, while these studies have demonstrated a compelling relationship between tourism and national identity construction, the focus was on inbound or domestic tourism, or host community perceptions, and how curated heritage sites can instill a stronger sense of belonging and national identity. To our best knowledge, there is a gap in our understanding of the ways in which tourists use their outbound travel experiences to negotiate their national identity.

Outbound tourism entails tourists interacting with members of the host nation. This interaction subsequently generates symbolic meanings of how tourists see themselves and their nation and alters the negotiation and definition of national identity. The study uses symbolic interactionism to frame an analysis of how outbound tourism as a form of experiential consumption affects the negotiation of national identity. Travel experiences becomes social tools to communicate something about travelers to significant others, fostered through evolving interactions.

Our choice of premise is apt for several reasons. The literature on national identity showed that symbols make an abstract concept of the nation tangible. In addition, national identity is co-constructed and negotiated from the bottom up. Finally, tourism is fertile ground for symbolic meaning such as absorbing sights and sounds; the very act of outbound tourism symbolizes meanings, for

example, wealth or leisure. This study is framed from the perspective of Chinese tourists, who behave differently from other tourists, for instance by expecting host nations to provide Chinese mobile payment platforms, presumably due to a protracted period of isolation and lack of experience with tourism (Yang et al., forthcoming). Chinese tourists construct their personal and national identity narratives through cross-border interactions and with their fellow Chinese tourists (Mead, 1934). They learn how others respond to cues from themselves and from each other because the need for identification in a social setting strongly influences the total experience (Mahardika, French, & Sembada, 2018) upon which identity narratives are constructed.

Research context: Chinese national identity and outbound tourism

Chinese national identity and China's outbound tourism (specifically to Malaysia, but with occasional references by informants to Taiwan, Japan, and other countries) is the research context of this study. Its goal is to advance the theoretical understanding of the symbolism of tourism's effect on national identity, affirming and expressing a positive sense of the PRC and its people. As the world's largest source of outbound tourists, China is an interesting case study because national identity is such a live, acutely felt, and riven issue in the world's most populous country. National identity could be especially important to a historically collectivist society that spent many centuries in isolation. Importantly, China has undergone a profound national identity crisis since the mid-19th century (Gries, 2004). The Opium Wars, the Sino-Japanese War, and a series of foreign invasions from France and the United States damaged China's internal stability, self-image, and international image. China's imperial history and five thousand years of civilization are much vaunted. Perhaps less known is that from 1500 until as late as 1890, China arguably had the world's highest gross domestic product (Cox, 2015).

However, in the 19th century, the West characterized China as the "sick man of East Asia," a region defenceless and susceptible to invasion. This image of a "sick man" was unsurprisingly internalized and Scott (2008) notes that China's contemporary nationalism and national identity still position the country as victim of a hostile West. Nevertheless, after "opening its doors" in 1978 under Deng Xiaoping, China was voluntarily reintroduced to outside cultures and products. With the blessing of state-approved capitalism, consumer culture was permitted to flourish (Dong & Tian, 2009). Consistent with symbolic interactionism and symbolic consumption, consumerism is an easy avenue for identity expression (Gerth, 2003), and is essential in the self-identification of Mainland Chinese as citizens of a powerful and modern nation (Dong & Tian, 2009). This is somewhat ironic, since China had long been critical of decadent Westernism. Chinese consumerism is largely a copy or adaptation of Western goods and services. This offers instrumental and sentimental benefits for Mainland Chinese and symbolizes a restoration of national dignity. Since 2014, China has had the world's largest GDP and it holds much of the government debt of the second-place United States. It has also won back major recognition as the only China, pursues a Greater China and can claim rival superpower status to the United States.

Outbound tourism from the PRC is allowed only to state-sanctioned destinations (a designation that is sensitive to outside influences on national identity), but the number of these destinations is growing (Tse, 2015). Arlt (2006) stated that Chinese outbound tourism sets "the tone for the whole society." This outbound – and in this study, leisure – tourism is doubly apt as a research context, both symbolizing luxury consumption and juxtaposing the growing class of Chinese who are wealthy enough to travel abroad (Shambaugh, 2013) with an outside world that had been depicted as hostile or at best condescending, but that was now able to be confidently and symbolically "interacted with." Outbound tourists in tour groups, including those in this study, also interact with each other. While Chinese do come into contact with foreigners when traveling domestically, there is much less opportunity for first-hand comparison of foreign nations with China compared to when Chinese tourists go abroad. As Gries (2004) has explained, national identities evolve through international relations, and Chinese national identity is negotiated through its interaction with the world (Gries, 2004). Nevertheless, researchers have paid very little attention to the nexus between international tourism and the construction of a national identity. To close this theoretical gap, Chinese national identity and Chinese outbound tourism is an appropriate vantage point from which to study the nexus between outbound tourism and national identity.

Study methodology

This study explores the symbolism of tourism as an experiential consumption in the construction of Chinese national identity in a way congruent with our theoretical premise of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism, according to Charmaz (2006) is a theoretical perspective derived from pragmatism which assumes that people construct selves, society and reality through interaction. However, although interaction shapes the self, it is the social structure that constrains, limits and shapes interaction (Stryker, 1988). Meanings are therefore not randomly evoked but a consequence, embedded in and reflective of the larger social and cultural systems (Snow, 2001; Stryker, 1988).The perspectives of Chinese tourists therefore are fundamental to the development of a theory of national identity and international tourism. This research adopts constructivist grounded theory developed by Charmaz (2006) as a methodological guide because it is embedded in symbolic interactionism and seeks to understand how the experiences of Chinese outbound tourists contribute to their reality (Goulding, 2005). Glaser (1992) suggests that grounded theory acknowledges the importance of individuals involved in the phenomenon as they "shape the world they live in through the process of symbolic interaction" (p. 16).

Further, this study follows a multimethod research design, using ethnographic methods that include on-site interviews, informal conversations, and participant observations. Adopting a multimethod approach by iterating and interrelating a variety of data sources therefore allows for greater trustworthiness (Knalf & Breitmayer, 1989). The data sources of this study include in-depth interviews, field notes and participant observations. Two phases of data collection took place between January 2018 and August 2019. During the first phase, the primary researcher participated in three bus tours with Chinese tourists who were visiting Malaysia. A total of 18

Table 1
Informant description.

No.	Name	Gender	Age	Occupation
1	Liu	Female	60	Retiree
2	Feng	Female	48	Officer Clerk
3	Che	Female	57	Retiree
4	Pan	Male	65	Retiree
5	Li	Male	50	Retiree
6	Wang	Male	72	Retiree
7	Hao	Male	64	Retiree
8	Zhao	Female	68	Retiree
9	Lin	Male	50	Retiree
10	Lu	Male	60	Retiree
11	Cai	Female	55	Masseur
12	Jiang	Female	40	Masseur
13	Yi	Male	21	University Student
14	Tang	Female	28	Chinese Teacher
15	Jia	Female	29	Kindergarten Teacher
16	Huang	Female	21	University Student
17	Wu	Male	22	University Student
18	Wen	Female	35	Therapist
19	Ye	Male	28	Postgraduate Student
20	Hong	Female	51	Researcher
21	Xu	Male	30	Post-Doctoral Candidate
22	Chen	Female	26	Ph.D. Candidate
23	Dai	Male	30	Researcher
24	Xi	Male	26	Ph.D. Candidate
25	Tian	Male	34	Post-Doctoral Candidate
26	Yuan	Male	27	Research Engineer
27	Zhang	Male	34	Researcher
28	Gu	Female	29	Accountant

interviews were collected in situ, along with field notes and participant observations. The second phase was conducted through individual face-to-face interviews with 10 Chinese citizens who had traveled to Malaysia. The rationale for two phases is due to the difficulty faced by the research team in obtaining access to Chinese tour groups, and therefore, while waiting for access to the next round of field work, the research team interviewed Chinese citizens who were not on group tours but had traveled previously to Malaysia.

All interviews were conducted with informants aged between 21 and 72, in Mandarin (Table 1). All 28 interviews were audio-taped with permission and transcribed verbatim in the original Mandarin. The interviews were transcribed on the day that they were conducted. Subsequently, the primary researcher translated all transcripts into English. As Douglas and Craig (2008) noted, subtle linguistic nuances such as the use of proverbs need to be considered. In the Chinese language, the use of idioms or proverbs is common. Therefore, to ensure greater accuracy in translation, a non-author researcher who is a native Mandarin speaker with high competency in English checked both sets of transcripts (Chinese and English) to ensure that the meanings are equivalent. The findings are based on approximately 14 h of interviews that resulted in 514 pages of transcripts, fieldnotes and memos.

Data analysis

This study follows the coding strategies adopted in most grounded theory studies (Charmaz, 2006), focusing on how national identity is symbolically revealed in the course of outbound tourism. While we acknowledge the popularity of analysis software such as NVivo (e.g., Zhang et al., 2017), our study eschews popular analysis software in favor of manual analysis. Manual analysis allows researchers to revisit and immerse themselves in the data and capture the emergent theories (Stevenson, Airey, & Miller, 2008). It also enables researchers to become familiar with the codes and concepts generated rather than relying on computer logics. The coding process is fundamental to theory generation and therefore should be described in greater detail. This study undertakes three coding cycles as suggested by Charmaz (2006). The first coding cycle consists of open coding, which involves an open exploration of the data. In Vivo coding is adopted for initial coding. This form of code is based on the actual language extracted from the transcripts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). As underscored by Charmaz (2006), in vivo coding allows the researcher to preserve informants' cultural meanings and views.

In the second coding cycle, axial coding, codes generated in the first cycle are categorized by their patterns or similarities. This follows the pattern coding strategy (Saldaña, 2009). In this cycle, the initial codes are condensed into smaller analytic units (Miles et al., 2014). The final cycle is theoretical coding. According to Glaser (1978), theoretical coding enables the researcher to understand how the axial codes relate to each other to integrate them. The theoretical codes were collated into four core categories vis-à-vis the social, historical and economic conditions that are central to the Chinese national identity (Creswell, 2007). This phase was done in conjunction with an extensive review of the literature. The four core categories were further organized into two main themes based on to their similarities. Importantly, theoretical coding allows the researcher to link the data to the broader perspective and creates a

Table 2
Table of codes.

Substantive code	Theoretical code	Core category	Theme
Traveling abroad allows Chinese citizens to see the difference in economy between China and foreign countries	China's economic growth	Comparing China with other countries	**National Identity Affirmation**
Chinese people being able to afford luxury consumption			
Chinese people are wealthier than others			
Advancement in Chinese technologies	China's technological modernization		
Better rail system as than others			
Chinese businesses expanding outside of China	Global spread of Chinese investments	Witnessing China's global influence	
Acquisition of foreign companies			
Establishment of Chinatowns	Global spread of Chinese culture		
Global demands for Chinese products			
THAAD incident	Boycotting rival countries	Protecting China's dignity	**National Identity Expression**
South-China Sea dispute			
Historical dispute with Japan	Historical animosity		
Surprising revelation of China's international image	Understanding how China is perceived by foreigners	Preserving collective face	
Establishing a positive image of China and Chinese people	Being a representative of China		
Refrain from embarrassing China			

To emphasize on the two forms of identity work in international tourism, namely, affirmation and expression.

more accurate picture of the phenomenon. A sample of the codes is detailed in Table 2.

Findings

Data analysis uncovers two themes to the findings about national identity construction of Chinese tourists: (1) tourism as a context for national identity affirmation; and (2) tourism as a context for national identity expression. Essentially, in this study, *affirmation* is a validation of an individual's preconceived or ideal national identity; *expression* is an outward exhibition of one's national identity to people from other countries. This section discusses the themes' subsets – two core categories each.

Tourism as a context for national identity affirmation

Comparing China with other nations

In this category, the informants discussed their observations of foreign countries visited (not only Malaysia) and compared them to China, symbolically benchmarking China's economic development in relation to other countries (Arlt, 2006). Li (male, 55), for instance, revealed that for him, the paramount benefit and indeed considered intention of international tourism is to compare his country with another, especially in economic terms.

The biggest benefit of traveling abroad is to understand different cultures, different people. More importantly, to observe the economic progress of other countries and to compare it with ours. We would pay attention to how civilized a society is, its infrastructural development and the issues related to China.

Li's statement reveals a considered intention to compare China with other countries. A possible inference from his statement would be a sense of uncertainty about China's actual development and a belief that visiting other countries would give him a more realistic understanding of the extent of China's rejuvenation. Broadly speaking, it can be construed that prior to traveling outside of China, Chinese citizens may have a less resolute sense of national identity as they are unable to confirm the actual extent of China's progress. International tourism therefore serves as an important symbolic consumption space for identity affirmation.

Chinese international tourists also pay attention to the technological development of their host destinations — as symbolized by its most obvious aspect: transport. Numerous informants described having noticed the level of China's technological modernization by comparing China's advances to those of the countries that they visited. According to Yuan (male, 27):

Whenever I am in other countries where basic infrastructures or transport systems are less developed than China's, I would feel that we have better transport systems back home, even in rural cities in China, they have new transport systems in recent years, it is developing really well.

The Chinese rail system, and especially its system of high-speed trains, has advanced tremendously. Since 2009, the Chinese government has invested heavily in the development of its rail technologies. Its One Belt, One Road Initiative, underway since 2013, will produce an extensive high-speed rail network. Although the Japanese have long been recognized as a technologically advanced nation, particularly with its Bullet Train, the Chinese effort, too, has been recognized worldwide (Wang, 2019).

China's high-speed train is good, it is comfortable and fast. I visited Taiwan and took the Tze-Chiang Limited Express; it is much more backwards than ours (Xi, male, 25).

Xi had just returned from a trip to Taiwan. During the Mainland's international isolation from the 1950s to the 1980s, Taiwan was

internationally recognized as the Republic of China and enjoyed remarkable economic and technological growth. Taiwan's development, among the most advanced in Asia, had been a thorn in the side to Mainland China. The Tze-Chiang Limited Express was introduced in the 1970s under Chiang Ching-Kuo, the son of Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-Shek. While Xi did not outwardly express any political sentiments, the deliberate comparison between the two train systems can be interpreted as a symbolic comparison of the Kuomintang's national achievement and that of the Chinese Communist Party, and an ideological contest between capitalism and communism. Characterizing the Taiwanese railway as "backwards" allows Xi to symbolically affirm his national identity and validate the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party.

This core category illustrates how outbound tourists could symbolically compare China to other nations, especially in relation to economics and technology. Favorably interpreted observations of selected symbols like railways give Chinese citizens a sense of pride. More importantly, they match and affirm the propagandized ideal identity-image of China as a powerful nation.

Witnessing China's global influence

In this emergent category, the informants noted that international tourism allows Chinese citizens to observe the extent of China's international influence. It illuminates how Chinese citizens observed China's international prowess in the course of their travels; their experience allowed them to affirm their national identity. According to the analysis, traveling abroad also allows Chinese citizens to see the global spread of China's economic growth. On their trip to Malaysia, some informants noticed the large-scale Chinese investments in the country. One of the younger informants, Wu (male, 22), expressed his pride upon learning that one of the Malaysian national car companies has been acquired by a Chinese company.

> I saw China Construction Bank, many aunties would tell me that oh, this place is a Chinese investment, that road is built by some Chinese businessman. These made me realize that Chinese people are not just developing and investing domestically, they have also ventured out of the country. Also, I think one of the Malaysian national cars is sold to Chinese… I was just joking about it a few days ago when I saw one. I said that it is actually a Chinese car now.

While in Malaysia, Wu was able to see the different types of Chinese investment in Malaysia. His statement can be interpreted in several ways. Firstly, the presence of a large Chinese bank – Chinese Construction Bank operating in Malaysia symbolically represents the internationalization of a large Chinese financial institution. The global flow of Chinese money shows that under the Communist Party rule, Chinese companies have expanded, succeeding not only at home under the Party's protection, but also in international markets.

When Wu found out that the Chinese-owned Geely Holdings acquired 49.9% of the stake from DRB-Hicom, the parent company of Proton, he was elated. The move, which is seen by the Malaysians as a loss of their national symbol and a bow to their national identity (Sukumaran, 2017), is seen by the Chinese as the global expansion of Chinese companies. The ability of Chinese companies to acquire another country's company signifies China's global rejuvenation and helps Chinese citizens to symbolically affirm their national identity.

At the same time, international tourism allows Chinese tourists to witness the global spread of Chinese culture. The establishment of Chinatowns, for instance, has been mentioned by the informants in this study as a sign of China's global cultural influence. Wu (male, 22) stated:

> I believe in most big cities, you can find Chinese products, there is always Chinese presence there, some places have Chinatown, some places have markets selling Chinese products. For example, in New Zealand, many stores are selling Chinese sauce and some Chinese beverages. Whenever I see it, I am amazed to find them there, amazed to know that it is integrating into the lives of the locals; I think Chinese culture is omnipresent in foreign countries.

The presence of Chinatowns where Chinese cuisines and cultures can be found outside of China, confers a sense of familiarity and friendliness when a Chinese citizen travels abroad. It is, however, interesting to note that, while Chinese communities have existed outside of China for centuries, the Chinese informants in this study seemed not to have known this. A plausible explanation could be that China's protracted isolation has deprived citizens of firsthand knowledge of how they are perceived outside of China. One might speculate that they have been deprived of a sense of this history incidental to the "state-sponsored forgetting" (Jensen, 1997, p. 35) of internal political catastrophes, or are over-inclined to attribute all Chinese successes to the current incarnation of the state. More importantly, the availability of Chinese products in foreign countries also denotes the growing demand for, and extended range and reach of Chinese exports in the world – further illustrating the pervasiveness of China's economic influence. In witnessing the global spread of Chinese influence from the economic, political and cultural viewpoints, Chinese tourists are able to obtain a staunch symbolic understanding of China's strength as a nation. It therefore affirms their national identity.

Further, Nye's (1990) concept of soft power describes how a country achieves international legitimacy by persuading other countries to obtain the outcomes it wants "through attraction rather than coercion or payment" (p. 94). In traveling to other countries, Chinese citizens could see China's growing soft power.

The second round of ethnographic fieldwork was conducted shortly after the Lunar New Year. The hotel in Malaysia that the tourists were staying at was decorated with Chinese calligraphy. Before the bus tour, the primary researcher gathered in the hotel lobby with the second tour group. Many of the tourists were excited to see Chinese characters, believing that it symbolically demonstrated the importance of Chinese tourists, and the global adoption of the Chinese language system. They invited the primary researcher to join the discussion. "Come! Look at this. Can you recognize this character?" Their faces beamed with pride. Some of the tourists took pictures of the calligraphy to forward to their family and friends in China via WeChat, China's largest social networking site.

Tourism as a context for national identity expression

Protecting China's dignity

Under this emergent category, the informants see outbound tourism as a form of power which allows Chinese citizens to protect their country's dignity and to express their patriotism. Recent political disputes prompted informants to abort their travel plans to safeguard China's dignity. Wu discussed about the recent territorial dispute in the South China Sea between China and the Philippines. He opined that he had negative impression of the country and refused to travel there so as not to "contribute to their economy":

> I saw in the news that some countries, such as the Philippines had some territorial dispute in the South China Sea with us. During that period, I did not want to visit that country. Why should I visit that country to contribute to its economy?
>
> (Wu, 22, male)

From this, it can be inferred that Chinese people believe that their tourism brings substantial economic benefits to another country. Denying their tourism to these rival countries is a way to demonstrate their resolution and support for the Chinese government. It can also be construed as a way to symbolically "punish" these countries for fighting against China. When these countries are involved in disputes with China, they do not hesitate to cancel their travel plans to demonstrate their patriotism. Of course, the host countries feel this only if the individual actions snowball into collective actions or if the government removes the country from the approved list. Che (57, female) asserted:

> We thought of visiting Korea previously, but because of the THADD incident, we no longer want to. Taiwan too, we wanted to visit initially, but because of the new president, Tsai, we no longer want to visit.
>
> (Che, 57, female)

In 2016, the South Korean and United States armed forces announced the plan to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD). The defense system was an important military weapon to counter escalating threats from North Korea. However, the proposed deployment site of THAAD was geographically proximal to China and Russia, prompting violent opposition from the two superpowers. Despite protests from China, the South Korean government proceeded with the deployment, fortifying anti-Korea sentiment within China, and resulting in a travel restriction to Korea (Swaine, 2017). This political dispute, although resolved, was still brought up by the informants. To illustrate, 60-year-old Liu commented that she used to want to visit Korea, but the dispute with China over the deployment of THAAD has dissuaded her. "I want to protect my country's honor and dignity," she declared.

Many informants also cite China's contemporary history, particularly the atrocities committed by the Japanese during the Second World War, to showcase their refusal to visit these countries. Many insisted that they would never visit Japan due to the past and recent disputes. Lin expressed this sentiment:

> I would not go to Japan, I would not… I really dislike Japanese and their cultures. Especially with what they did to our motherland, during the Second World War, the brutality and massacre, the negative impression is entrenched. I would not go to this country.
>
> (Lin, 50, male)

The trip to Malaysia was Lin's first trip abroad. The choice of the travel destination signifies patriotism that symbolically expresses his sense of national identity. He chose Malaysia to be the first travel destination because of the country's good bilateral relationship with China. However, he emphasized that he would never visit Japan. He explained that he has a negative impression of the country for historical reasons. Specifically, he refers to China as the "motherland," which signifies his immense respect for his country. More importantly, even though the war ended almost 70 years ago, the historical pain attached with Japan is "entrenched."

> For Japan, it is a deep national estrangement and hatred between the Japanese and us. Even though ordinary Japanese citizens might not have such hatred towards us, and that Chinese people do not have such hatred towards Japanese people, but the two countries have experienced negative historical events that involved a deep harm inflicted on us, so the estrangement will always be there. I will never go to that country.
>
> (Tang, 28, female)

In a similar vein, Tang stated that although Chinese and Japanese citizens may not actually have hard feelings against each other, the history of relations between the two countries continues to influence future generations of Chinese citizens. Therefore, "the estrangement will always be there" and to protect China's dignity, she will not visit Japan.

Tang also illustrates the potent role of history in the making of Chinese national identity. Since the early 2000s, there have been several political disagreements between Japan and China, precipitating nationwide boycotts of Japanese products (Gerth, 2003; Klein, Ettenson & Morris, 1998). Several scholars have noted that along with China's phenomenal social and economic growth, there has been a simultaneous rise in consumer nationalism (Gerth, 2003; Gries, 2004). Zhao (2004) attributes this to an increasing knowledge about the outside world through international tourism and other forms of symbolic cultural exchange, the perception of Western hostility and animosity towards China and a growing national confidence and pride of China's newfound superpower. In the tourism context, Cheng, Wong and Prideaux (2017) focused on the protracted political dispute between China and Japan and found that disputes between the two countries reinforce popular nationalism and influence travel intention to Japan.

Preserving collective face

The final core category, preserving collective face, emerges as another prominent concept in Chinese outbound tourism. The concept of collective face is an ancient part of Chinese culture and central to an understanding of social interaction and behaviors in China. There are two forms of "face"– *lian* (脸) and *mianzi* (面子). Whereas *lian* is concerned with a person's integrity and moral character, *mianzi* is concerned with a person's external image, often achieved through success. To reveal one's weakness or failure is therefore negatively perceived as a loss of *mianzi* (Cheng, Lo & Chio, 2010). Parenthetically, *lian* is an internal self-concept whereas *mianzi* is an external one (Zhang, Pearce, & Chen, 2019). In this study, the informants in this study first shared that traveling abroad has allowed them to understand that people in other countries tend to have a negative impression of China. In Chinese culture, this impression can be construed as a loss of face.

> When I first came to Singapore and rented a place, the landlord thought that because we came from China, we were poor. He did not understand and just assumed that we were really poor, that we could not afford food or clothes, and he wanted to help us. I think he is really kind, but he had some misconceptions about Chinese people. Subsequently, I had more interactions with him, and he realized that China is different from what he initially perceived it to be. I guess his understanding of China was limited. My interaction with him also helped me understand how Chinese people are perceived by foreigners.
>
> (Tang, 28, female)

Tang described this exchange as "humiliating." Before traveling outside of China, Tang had no knowledge about how Chinese people were perceived in other countries. To be seen as a person from a poor country must have come as a shock to a Chinese citizen who had constantly been told her government that China is rapidly developing and economically advanced. To be perceived as less fortunate is seen as a loss of face. Symbolically, our informants see traveling as a way to represent their country to the outside world and to correct misconceptions about it; in other words, to save the face of their country and comrades. Tang and other informants averred that:

> As a Chinese, traveling abroad means you are a representative of China. Whenever I travel, I pay attention to my own speech and behavior, I would like to establish the impression that China is a powerful country.
>
> (Tang, 28, female)

> As a Chinese citizen, traveling is good, as long as you don't do anything to embarrass the country. Otherwise, it is a good bonus and contributes to our country's global influence, especially in poor countries. When you go to developed countries, you are essentially promoting China.
>
> (Yi, 21, male)

Arlt (2006) maintains that Chinese outbound tourism sets "the tone for the whole society." Chinese tourists are representatives of their nation, its quality of life, economic affluence and social etiquette. These quotations from our interviews illustrate a collective emphasis on external validation, as the informants in this study reveal a strong concern about how the rest of the world sees China and its people — China's face. In this study, informants demonstrate caution and effort in regulating their behavior and to present a favorable image on their trips, which can be construed as an attempt to express Chinese national identity to international audiences so as to preserve the Chinese collective face. This corresponds with Meng and Li's (2008) study of how the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games influenced the construction of China's national identity. Meng and Li (2008) also found that residents in Beijing believe that one of the greatest benefits of hosting the Olympics is to achieve international recognition of China. By hosting the Games, Chinese citizens believe that China can better showcase Chinese culture and offer the world an opportunity to understand China. Meng and Li (2008) asserted that in a collectivist society such as China, there is a staunch sense of community spirit and collective aspiration for the country to be recognized by the international community. A positive face – an international image of China as a superpower – is therefore indispensable to the making of Chinese identity. According to Gries (2004), the social psychology of saving or maintaining face is driven by a sense of "collective self-esteem." In this instance, a person's identity or self-esteem is based on that of his or her nation.

Discussion

This study demonstrates how outbound tourism as a symbolic consumption practice by Chinese citizens to *affirm* and *express* their national identity. Outbound tourism provides a platform for symbolic interaction between Chinese citizens and the outside world – where Chinese citizens are able to obtain a clearer image of themselves and their country, as well as to express their national pride and dignity to others. Fundamentally, identity affirmation is the process of affirming or validating an identity-image that is consistent with the ideal identity (Haggard & Williams, 1992) – what the government has been propagating to the population; that China is rejuvenating. Generally, tourists travel mainly to experience a new or exotic scenery, however, our findings reveal evidence of the desire to feel better about China's international standing. Furthermore, for Chinese specifically, the act of tourism, especially leisure tourism, symbolizes leisure and wealth, the strength of the national infrastructure (especially to air travel) and the ability and freedom to travel. That the Chinese government once derided consumerism as Western frivolity is not mentioned by the informants, all of whom refrained from political commentary in a way that is to be expected of citizens in a one-party state.

The stated motivations and comments of many informants raise the intriguing possibility of a whole type of tourism, nationalistic or patriotic tourism as it were, based on affirming and expressing pride in the homeland. It adds a new, nationalistic dimension to the economic motive of Westerners studied by Munt (1994) who traveled to developing countries to bolster their newfound middle-class

status. Several informants have lived through, or at least, learned about China's years of deprivation and identity threats, such as the nationwide famine and the Cultural Revolution under Mao's regime. Decades of hardship created the perception of China as the "sick man of East Asia" (Gries, 2004, p. 71). Understandably, Chinese citizens have historically been denied access to the outside world and to information. Further, they have inherited a collective memory of the West as hostile, and of China as a victim of Western brutality, and it is plausible that Chinese citizens would be eager to see for themselves whether the top-down government assertion of Chinese rejuvenation and national identity is credible.

The emphasis on economic and technological development, and even military defense, in our informants' reports is reminiscent of government framing of identity. Absent are comparisons about, say, landscape or religious sites or customs, except insofar as customs and also commerce and consumption have absorbed Chinese spread: Chinatowns (incorrectly attributed to recent national rejuvenation) and Chinese products and banks and other enterprises. Admittedly, too, government-approved destinations such as Malaysia and Singapore may also contribute to an affirmation bias, confirming their views that were informed by CCP.

Whereas affirmation is done to oneself, expression is primarily done to others, although as an audience, destinations boycotted or favored by Chinese tourists may notice the result of the action only if done *en masse*. As China achieves global prominence, along with the growing soft power through tourism (Shambaugh, 2013), the Chinese have revived China's past glory and displayed their ideal identity as a resurgent superpower (Wang, 2014). In addition to displaying economic affluence, tourism as symbolic consumption allows Chinese citizens to show patriotic loyalty by withholding a share of that affluence: refusing to travel to countries China is in dispute with and taking their discretionary spending elsewhere. This exercising of consumer sovereignty is consistent with the rise of consumer nationalism noted by Gerth (2003) and Gries (2004). It confirms the conclusions of Cheng, Wong and Prideaux (2017), who found that disputes between China and Japan reinforce popular nationalism and reduce travel intentions to Japan. In this research, tourism symbolically proffers Chinese citizens a form of power to assert their dignity and more importantly, to express patriotism and pride in their country.

Anchoring on Jenkins' (2008) concept of an *internal-external dialectic process of identification*, international tourism facilitates the symbolic dialectic process. The internal dialectic process, or, group identification process entails the identification and a sense of belonging to a group. This corresponds to the affirmation of national identity among PRC tourists who can confirm what the Chinese government has been telling them: that China is recovering from its history of humiliation. A successful identity construction, however, focuses on more than internal identification, as people seek outside validation of their collective identity. This external dialectic process, or social categorization, highlights how consumption — fairly conspicuous consumption at that since tourism is a luxury and tourists from a supposedly backward nation stand out abroad — shapes tourists' social categorization.

The second theme, the expression of Chinese national identity through tourism, seems to demonstrate an external dialectic process. Informants appear motivated to have their national identity accepted by foreigners as successful, affluent and advanced enough to go on tours,. Thereby, they refute the "sick man of East Asia" image. Carter and Fuller summarize the latter from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1959), as "using the metaphor of a theatrical performance as a framework to describe how actors present themselves to others, and how they attempt to control others' impression to be seen positively" (Carter & Fuller, 2016, p. 6). It could be propelled by the desire to show that Mainland China has achieved the "Chinese Dream."

The term "Chinese Dream" was coined by President Xi Jinping in 2013. It means that "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream for the Chinese nation in modern history" (Wang, 2019, p. 1). Participants in this study appear to desire to be seen as members of a powerful nation who have risen from the ashes and humiliation of the past.

Further, to draw upon Hegel's theory of dialectics, which views the social world as relational (Ryan, 2005), this study reveals that
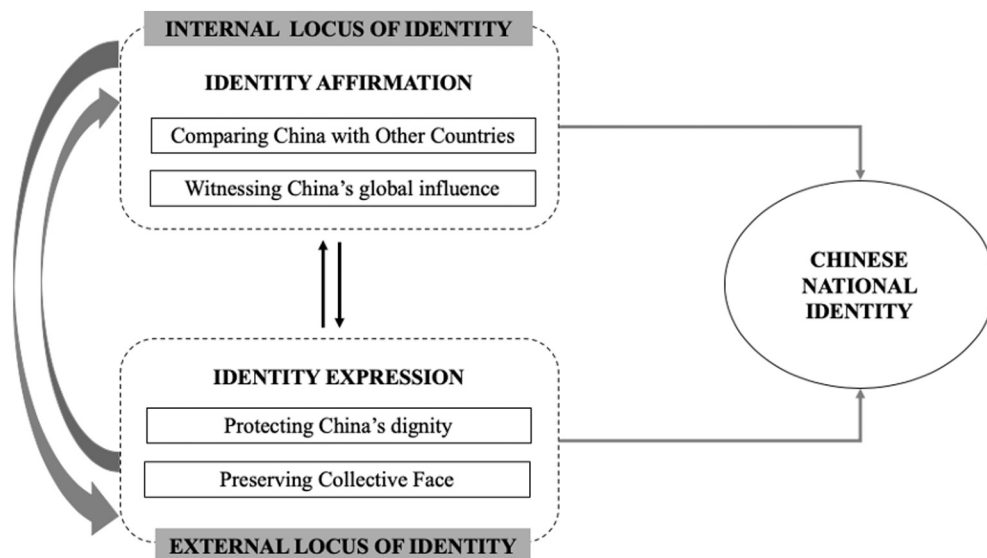

Fig. 1. Dialectic Process of National Identity.

construction of national identity in international tourism is a dialectic process (Fig. 1). While studies on national identity have often emphasized the internal locus of identification, the findings of this study suggest that the external locus of identification of one's nation that is rooted in the perception of China by others is equally important. Parenthetically speaking, the construction of national identity is facilitated by the dialectic between internal and external sources of identification (Jenkins, 2008). Jenkins (2008) asserted that these processes may occur simultaneously. More importantly, this process reflects a symbolic interaction between the internal construction of national identity and its external projection.

According to Mead's original contention of symbolic interactionism in *Mind, Self and Society*, the Mind refers to how an individual is able to draw on symbols such as language to form meanings and make sense of their social world; the Self refers to the projection of this ideal to others. International tourism, and the subsequent memories, offer Chinese citizens the symbols that they can use to make sense of and affirm a sense of their national identity from the micro-level to the pronouncements issued by the Chinese president and the Chinese Communist Party. It also opens up an international platform in countries such as Malaysia and Korea, remarked on here to project or express their national identity to an international audience and to assume the role of sophisticated, modern, but patriotic Chinese consumers. Finally, it is worth noting that as an experiential consumption, tourism has both instrumental and sentimental value. It allows Chinese citizens to engage in national identity construction, while deepening their attachment by witnessing their country's rejuvenation and use of soft power.

Conclusion

Evidently, the Chinese tourists in this study have made conspicuous efforts to negotiate their national identities while traveling, as exemplified in their proclivity to compare their own quality of life with that in their destination country, or to believe that those countries rely on Chinese tourists. More specifically, it has allowed them to reject the "Sick Man of East Asia" narrative by exhibiting their international economic influence as Chinese tourists. As highlighted earlier, this paper addresses a theoretical gap in the conceptualization and understanding of tourism and national identity. By exploring the symbolism of outbound tourism in national identity, this study demonstrates that international tourism allows tourists to affirm their national identity through their observation of foreign destinations, comparing it with their own country, and express their national identity by wielding tourism as an economic benefit to confer or withhold. It similarly provides an insight on how the dichotomy between "us" and "others" is interpreted and negotiated during tourism to influence the construction of national identity. We hope to inspire future research to investigate national identity negotiation in other contexts to advance our understanding on national identity during travel, particularly countries with inherent ambiguities in their national identity. For instance, the protracted political dispute between Mainland China and Taiwan over its sovereignty has engendered a conflicting national identity among most Taiwanese citizens. With the Chinese Communist Party's international effort to isolate Taiwan, it would be interesting to understand how Taiwanese citizens negotiate their national identity during their travels.

As the first scholarly attempt to examine how Chinese citizens negotiate their national identity in the tourism context, this study has uncovered important findings that are unique to China's consumer culture context. Moreover, it departs from the conventional Western-centric paradigm in tourism scholarship on national identity and demonstrates that the Chinese context may offer a new insight on how international tourism may facilitate identity work. Apart from the fact that Chinese are the world's largest tourist segment and the one with the greatest spending power, Chinese outbound tourism is a novel phenomenon; until recently, Chinese citizens have been unable to travel. It is anticipated that Chinese outbound tourism will continue to grow. As more Chinese citizens travel abroad, questions related to their identification as a Chinese citizen become more pertinent and deserves greater scholarly exploration.

References

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* New York: Verso.

Arlt, W. G. (2006). *China's Outbound Tourism.* New York: Routledge.

Bandyopadhyay, R., Morais, D. B., & Chicj, G. (2008). Religion and identity in India's heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 35*(3), 790–808.

Barker, C. (2008). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice (3* (rd Edition). London: Sage Publications.

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism.* London: Sage Publications.

Carter, M. J., & Fuller, C. (2016). Symbols, meanings and action: The past, present and future of symbolic interactionism. *Current Sociology, 64*(6), 931–961.

Chaney, P. (2015). Exploring political parties' manifesto discourse on tourism: Analysis of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish elections 1998–2011. *Annals of Tourism Research, 50,* 113–127.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* London: Sage Publications.

Cheng, C., Lo, B. C., & Chio, J. H. (2010). The Tao (Way) of Chinese Coping. In M. H. Bond (Ed.). *Oxford Handbook of Chinese Psychology* (pp. 399–419). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cheng, M. M., Wong, A. I., & Prideaux, B. (2017). Political Travel Constraint: The role of Chinese Popular Nationalism. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 34*(3), 383–397.

Colton, C. (1987). Leisure, recreation, tourism: A symbolic interactionist view. *Annals of Tourism Research, 14,* 345–360.

Cox. W. (2015, September 21). 500 Years of GDP: A Tale of Two Countries. Retrieved from https://www.newgeography.com/content/005050-500-years-gdp-a-tale-two-countries.

Cozzi, A. (2013). Composed consumption: Picturing nascent national identity in food paintings. *Food, Culture and Society, 16*(4), 569–588.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches (2 nd Eds.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dimanche, F., & Samdahl, D. (1994). Leisure as symbolic consumption: A conceptualization and prospectus for future research. *Leisure Sciences, 16*(2), 119–129.

Dong, L., & Tian, K. (2009). The use of Western brands in asserting Chinese national identity. *Journal of Consumer Research, 36,* 504–523.

Douglas, S. P., & Craig, C. M. (2008). Collaborative and Iterative Translation: An Alternative Approach to Back Translation. *Journal of International Marketing, 15*(1), 30–43.

Edensor, T. (2002). *National identity, popular culture and everyday life.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Gerth, K. (2003). *China made: Consumer culture and the creation of the nation.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis.* California: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Goulding, C. (2005). Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology: A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research. *European Journal of Marketing, 39*(3/4), 294–309.

Goulding, C., & Domic, D. (2009). Heritage, identity and ideological manipulation: The case of Croatia. *Annals of Tourism Research, 36*(1), 85–102.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* New York: Doubleday Anchor.

Gries, P. H. (2004). *China's new nationalism: Pride, politics and diplomacy.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Haggard, L. M., & Williams, D. R. (1992). Identity affirmation through leisure activities: Leisure symbols of the self. *Journal of Leisure Research, 24*(1), 1–18.

Hall, S. (1992). The question of cultural identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & T. McGrew (Eds.). *Modernity and its futures.* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Henderson, J. (2001). Heritage, Identity and Tourism in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Heritage Studies, 7*(3), 219–235.

Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social identity* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Jensen, L. M. (1997). The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today. *China Review International, 4*(1), 33–50.

Jørgensen, H. (2019). Postcolonial perspectives on colonial heritage tourism: The domestic tourist consumption of French heritage in Puducherry, India. *Annals of Tourism Research, 77*, 117–127.

Klein, J. G., Ettenson, R., & Morris, M. D. (1998). The Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase: An Empirical Test in the People's Republic of China. *Journal of Marketing, 62*(1), 89–100.

Knalf, K., & Breitmayer, B. J. (1989). Triangulation in qualitative research: Issues of conceptual clarity and purpose. In J. Morse (Ed.). *Qualitative nursing research: A contemporary dialogue* (pp. 193–203). Rockville, MD: Aspen.

Kontogeorgopoulos, N. (2017). Finding oneself while discovering others: An existential perspective on volunteer tourism in Thailand. *Annals of Tourism Research, 65*, 1–12.

Lanfant, M. F. (1995). International tourism, internationalization and the challenge to identity. In M. F. Lanfant, J. B. Allcock, & E. M. Bruner (Eds.). *International tourism: Identity & change* (pp. 24–43). London: Sage Publications.

Lau, S. K. (1997). Hongkongese or Chinese: The Problem of Identity on the Eve of Resumption of Chinese Sovereignty over Hong Kong. In S. K. Lau (Ed.). *Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong* (pp. 255–283). Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Mahardika, H., French, J., & Sembada, A. (2018). Keep calm and eat satay: Indonesia's consumption-themed signals of defiance against terrorism. *Australasian Marketing Journal, 26*, 231–238.

McCrone, D., & Bechhoefr, F. (2015). *Understanding national identity.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self & society from the standpoint of a social behaviorist.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Medina, L. K. (2003). Commoditizing culture: Tourism and Maya identity. *Annals of Tourism Research, 30*(2), 353–368.

Meng, F., & Li, X. (2011). The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and China's National Identity Building. In E. Frew, & L. White (Eds.). *Tourism and National Identity: An International Perspective* (pp. 93–104). London: Routledge.

Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Munt, I. (1994). The "other" postmodern tourism: Culture, travel and the new middle classes. *Theory, Culture and Society, 11*, 101–123.

Nye, J. S. (1990). Soft power. *Foreign Policy,* (80), 153–171.

Packer, J., Ballantyne, R., & Uzzell, D. (2019). Interpreting war heritage: Impacts of Anzac Museum and battlefield visits on Australians' understanding of national identity. *Annals of Tourism Research, 76*, 105–116.

Palmer, C. (1998). Tourism and the symbols of identity. *Tourism Management, 20*, 313–321.

Palmer, C. (2005). An ethnography of Englishness: Experiencing identity through tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32*(1), 7–27.

Ryan, M. (2005). Dialectics. In G. Ritzer (Ed.). *Encyclopaedia of social theory volume 1* (pp. 199–200). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Scott, D. (2008). *China and the international system: 1840–1949.* New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

Shambaugh, D. (2013). *China goes global.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, A. D. (1991). *National identity.* London: Penguin Books.

Snow, D. A. (2001). Extending and broadening Blumer's conceptualization of symbolic interactionism. *Symbolic Interaction, 24*(3), 367–377.

Stevenson, N., Airey, D., & Miller, G. (2008). Tourism policy making: The policymakers' perspectives. *Annals of Tourism Research, 35*(3), 732–750.

Stryker, S. (1988). Substance and style: An appraisal of the sociological legacy of Herbert Blumer. *Symbolic Interaction, 11*(1), 33–42.

Sukumaran, T. (2017). Why Malaysia's National Car 49.9pc owned by the Chinese, is driving into an election storm. *South China Morning Post.* July 22. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/business/article/2103308/why-malaysias-national-car-499pc-owned-chinese-driving-election.

Swaine, M. D. (2017). Chinese Views on South Korea's Deployment of THAAD. *China Leadership Monitor, 52*(4), 1–15.

Timothy, D. J. (2018). Making sense of heritage tourism: Research trends in a maturing field of study. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 25*, 177–180.

Tse, T. S. (2015). A review of Chinese outbound tourism research and the way forward. *Journal of China Tourism, 11*(1), 1–18.

Wang, Z. (2014). The Chinese Dream: Concept and Context. *Journal of Chinese Political Science, 19*(1), 1–13.

Wang, Y. (2019). The belt and road initiative: Mutual connectivity of the world. In M. Z. Islam (Ed.). *Silk road to belt road: Reinventing the past and shaping the future* (pp. xiii–xxiii). Singapore: Springer.

Zhang, C. X., Decosta, P. L., & McKercher, B. (2015). Politics and tourism promotion: Hong Kong's myth making. *Annals of Tourism Research, 54*, 156–171.

Zhang, C. X., Fong, L. H. N., Li, S., & Ly, T. P. (2019). National identity and cultural festivals in postcolonial destinations. *Tourism Management, 73*, 94–104.

Zhang, C. X., Pearce, P., & Chen, G. (2019). Not losing our collective face: Social identity and Chinese tourists' reflection on uncivilized behaviour. *Tourism Management, 73*, 71–82.

Zhang, J., Tucker, H., Morrison, A. M., & Wu, B. (2017). Becoming a backpacker in China: A grounded theory approach to identity construction of backpackers. *Annals of Tourism Research, 64*, 114–125.

Zhao, S. S. (2004). *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Dr. I-Chieh Michelle Yang has completed her doctoral study in Marketing from Monash University. Her research interest lies in consumer culture and tourism.

Dr. Juliana French is a Lecturer of Marketing at Monash University Malaysia.

Professor **Christina Lee** is the Dean at Federation Business School at Federation University of Australia.

Professor **Motoki Watabe** is an Associate Professor of Management at Monash University Malaysia.