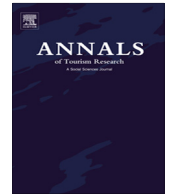




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Residents' support for red tourism in China: The moderating effect of central government

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes and tests a model that incorporates two competing theories of political trust, institutional trust and cultural trust, to examine community support for “red tourism” development. Using data gathered from residents living in close proximity to Jिंगgangshan Scenic Area in China, this study examines the influence of authoritarian values, particularly as they relate to level of residents' power, their level of trust in government, and their effects on support for “red tourism.” Findings suggest that trust in central government moderates the relationship between trust in local government and support. Future studies should utilize the institutional trust framework to assess residents' trust in the local government and the cultural trust framework to assess trust in the central government.

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Introduction

Most studies on residents' support for the development of tourism, explicitly or implicitly, have been based on Social Exchange Theory (SET). SET is rooted in the rational man assumption (Sztompka, 1999) where it is assumed that people first calculate benefits and costs and then use this information to make an exchange decision (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964). From this perspective, residents' support for or resistance to tourism is seen as being the outcome of rational, calculated and self-interested actions. However, this assumption is problematic because definition of rationality may vary from culture to culture (Boley, McGehee, Perdue, & Long, 2014). For example, drawing upon Weberian notions of rationality (Weber, 1978), two types of rationality can be identified: formal and substantive. According to Kalberg (1980), the former is comprised of a rational action that reflects a direct relationship between means and ends which, for example, may be reflected in many predominantly economic decisions. The latter is guided by a “values-postulate” (Kalberg, 1980) that emphasizes the importance of value-laden dimensions in shaping one's behaviors. In hierarchical societies where substantive rationality is common, social and cultural structures lead to greater acceptance of authoritarian decision making whereby residents' supportive behavior is not solely based on the calculation of material interests but may depend more on faith in and affection for

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the government, or a combination of the two. This perspective is beginning to enter tourism research (e.g. Webster, Ivanov, & Illium, 2011; Boley et al., 2014). However, studies suggest that more research on this topic is needed (Nunkoo & Smith, 2013).

The concepts of power and trust have been receiving an increasing attention from tourism researchers in recent years and the interrelationships among the perceptions of power, trust and support have been documented in many studies. (Gursoy, Yolal, Ribeiro, & Panisso Netto, 2016; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). These studies suggest that locals' trust level in the government may have significant impact on their support/opposition for tourism development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, 2012; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkissoon, 2013; Nunkoo, 2015). However, government is also complex in that it is comprised of multiple levels and numerous departments. Studies show that trust varies across levels of government (Levi & Stoker, 2000). In western liberal countries, citizens usually have a higher level of trust in local institutions than in national governments (Xue, 2014; Ma, 2007). In contrast, in China, there is commonly more trust in central government than in local governments (Li, 2004; Xu, 2011; Huang, 2014; Gao & Zhai, 2013). This difference suggests that there may be differences in relationships between citizens' level of trust in government and attitudes towards tourism in different political systems but this has been overlooked in previous studies.

This study focuses on the influence of authoritarian values, particularly as they relate to residents' level of power, their level of trust in government, and their effects on support for "red tourism" development in China. "Red tourism" is a nationwide political socialization campaign (Zuo, Huang, & Liu, 2016), which was launched in 2004 by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and officially defined as a political project to consolidate and justify the legitimacy of the CCP in a rapidly changing China by promoting patriotism and through identification with the party-state (China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), 2011). Red attractions refer to state-sponsored nationalistic tourism sites, such as war ruins of the Chinese revolutionary era, historical monuments of the CCP, residences of former communist leaders and other patriotic figures, and other remnants of communist heritage (Li & Hu, 2008; Li, Hu, & Zhang, 2010). While economic benefits are regarded as the most important factor that induce positive perceptions in most studies of residents' support, especially in developing countries (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012), economic benefits are not the primary goal of "red tourism" since it was introduced as an official state policy by the central government primarily to meet political rather than economic objectives. Every province, autonomous region and municipality was required to propose "red tourism" sites. As a result, twelve significant red tourism regions, thirty classic red tourism itineraries and approximately 100 classic red tourism sites were identified for development in 2005 (Li & Hu, 2008).

This study incorporates two competing theories of political trust, institutional trust and cultural trust, to identify the influence of authoritarian values on the perceptions of residents living adjacent to those "red tourism" sites and their support for those sites. Furthermore, the impacts of local residents' perceptions of their level of power in the decision-making process and their trust in local and central government on their support for state sponsored nationalistic "red tourism" site development are explored in a situation where national political goals override financial goals. This study of 'red tourism' in Confucian China extends the factors previously incorporated into tourism development and support studies, and in particular, contributes to the future researches by expanding the scope in the measurement of different level of government trust and power, which is critical in theory and practice of community support.

Literature review and hypotheses

Social Exchange Theory and community support for tourism

SET theory was introduced into the tourism field by Skidmore (1975) who suggested that residents who view tourism as being potentially beneficial have stronger willingness to enter into exchanges with tourists (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004). Since then, most research on community support for tourism has followed SET, either explicitly or implicitly (Ap, 1992; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Lee, 2013; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, 2012). Studies have shown that residents' support for tourism development is affected by their perceptions of likely benefits and costs (Látková & Vogt, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Ward & Berno, 2011) and, not surprisingly, those who view tourism as generating benefits generally express higher levels of support for it (Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, & Carter, 2007). Benefits have usually been categorized as economic, socio-cultural and environmental (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Lee, 2013; Simpson, 2008).

While economic outcomes have received the most attention, interest in other positive outcomes have been receiving an increasing attention from scholars (Holladay & Ormsby, 2011; Lepp, 2007; Smith & Krannich, 1998). Studies have also suggest that perceived costs of tourism are usually negatively related to residents' support for its development (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Látková & Vogt, 2012; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011, 2012). Such costs might include increased living costs, environmental destruction, crowding, changing family values, sexual permissiveness, the commercialization of cultural practices and other potential threats (Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Dyer et al., 2007; Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011).

Residents who perceive the trade-off between benefits and costs as deleterious or negative have been found to have low willingness to support development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Boley et al., 2014). However, residents may still support tourism development even if they do not receive direct economic benefits or perceive negative impacts (Nunkoo & So, 2015; Lepp, 2007; Ven, 2016). In some tourism-hungry communities (Smith & Krannich, 1998), support relies heavily on the perception that future benefits will exceed costs (Ven, 2016), suggesting complex relationships among perceived benefits/costs

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