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Making ethnic tourism good for the poor

Abstract

What political and social factors shape the ability of rural-based tourism in areas with large proportions of ethnic minorities to reduce rural poverty? This study focuses on four comparable cases in a province in Southwestern China to understand the conditions under which high revenue, pro-poor tourist sites can be developed. Because most tourist areas have difficulty simultaneously expanding tourism while promoting pro-poor tourism, most sites traverse two developmental sequences: a) expanding revenue before subsequently ensuring the poor benefit or b) ensuring a pro-poor structure and then expanding revenue. These case studies show the challenges of traversing either pathway. Because expanding tourism further empowers already privileged actors, these actors are able to block a subsequent shift to a pro-poor structure. Moreover, such sites are often perceived as being successful, reducing the justification to make structural changes. For these reasons, while the second pathway is fraught with difficulty, the first pathway presents nearly insurmountable barriers.

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The Miao village of Shang Langde, in Leishan ("Thunder Mountain") county of China's Guizhou province, has been open to tourism since the late 1980s, when it nearly immediately developed low cost tourist facilities for backpackers and tour groups arranged by the local government. A simple clean dormitory-style guest house and public toilets were enough to encourage some tourists to stay at least a few days to enjoy the local hospitality and culture. In the early days, the village did not even boast a restaurant – villagers would invite tourists to their homes to partake in local cuisine and potent wine for what was then a relatively modest sum (Oakes, 1998). All this was supported by local and central policy makers who understood the virtues of small scale, bottom-up development. And when that policy subsequently changed in the late 2000s, the local rebuffed government attempts to commercialize and rapidly scale-up tourism. Indeed, not only did they refuse offers to build fancier star-rated hotels and set up restaurants and shops that feature items other than local handicrafts, they actually knocked down the guest house in favor of expanding the housing of locals who could then host tourists.

Nearby, the once sleepy Miao village of Xijiang ("West River") developed rapidly. While this town was in some tourist guides, in 2001 it sported nearly no tourist resources, and had only a handful of places to stay. The pretty town featured no tourist activities of any kind. However, starting in 2007, the town's tourism activities expanded rapidly, featuring star-rated hotels, restaurants, hipster bars selling Budweiser, and shops with items sourced from all over China and beyond. The town was now entrenched on the itinerary of most tour guides. A guard post collected a high payment

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as fees. Interviews with those involved in tourism found that few were actually from that village. Moreover, many of the residents there received few benefits and felt disconnected from the burgeoning tourist industry.

Under what circumstances does rural-based tourism in areas with large proportions of ethnic minorities reduce poverty? What are the political and policy factors that affect decisions regarding the way tourism is developed? If tourism occurs in poor rural areas, and is centered on ethnic areas and cultures, it could potentially make a significant difference. This is especially true when members of the minority themselves can participate – thus reducing poverty while simultaneously commodifying the cultural resources over which the poor have some degree of control. However, in doing so, villagers often forgo ‘development’ that would expand the scale and scope of tourism and promote their local economy’s gross domestic product (GDP). In many areas, such rapid development has brought fortunes to many, but these benefits have often bypassed the pockets of local ethnic minorities.

Because of the potential of the tourism industry to revitalize the countryside by providing employment to young adults and boosting economic growth, many experts promote tourism as a pathway to reduce poverty (e.g., Chio, 2014; Li et al, 2016; Chio, 2011; Panyik et al, 2011; Ying and Zhou, 2007). This is particularly true in Guizhou province, which despite recent rapid economic growth and investment, still ranks near the bottom in terms of GDP per capita. Indeed, the province in 1992 became China’s first to link ethnic tourism specifically to poverty reduction, particularly among the numerous ethnic minority villages situated amidst the mountain valleys [source withheld]. As part of the Open Up the West campaign in the year 2000, many ethnic

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minority villages in Guizhou have been undergoing extensive makeovers to make the village more attractive to both domestic and international tourists (Chio, 2014), so as to promote urbanization and tourism development (Ministry of Environmental Protection, 2000).

Over the past decade, the province has enjoyed significant central-level support for its tourism initiatives. Since 2006, the year in which the 11th Five Year Plan to build a New Socialist Countryside was introduced, there have been extensive government plans to use rural tourism as a means to bring about rural development and thereby reduce rural poverty, especially in poor provinces such as Guizhou (Chio, 2014). In the Strategic Environmental Assessment Study conducted by the World Bank, the tourism sector was forecast to make an "increasingly large contribution" to Guizhou's economy between 2006 and 2020 (Strategic Environmental Assessment Study, 2007). In 2007, the China National Tourism Administration lauded it as "an ideally balanced socioeconomic formula that could increase rural incomes while simultaneously boosting urban leisure" (Chio, 2014) and the Central Party in China has in recent years emphasized using cultural tourism to close the rural-urban developmental gap (China Briefing, 2014; Yang, 2012; Su, 2011; Feng, 2008).

However, despite its potential, the impact of ethnic minority tourism has been puzzlingly inconsistent – this even among sites that are geographically proximate and culturally similar (Ying and Zhou, 2007). This manuscript compares four villages that are similar in many ways. As indicated in Figure 1, all but Pingzheng are located in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Prefecture, an autonomous prefecture due to its majority of Miao and Dong ethnicities, with more than 40 percent Miao population and 30

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percent Dong population (Guizhou Provincial Information Office, n.d.). Pingzheng is one of the last remaining sites of a tiny ethnic minority known as the Gelao, a people of dwindling ranks that have received no small amount of attention from scholars and others committed to preserving their culture and language. All four areas have rich cultural features that could potentially attract tourism.

- Place Figure 1 somewhere here -

Thus, all four villages have been developing ethnic minority tourism based upon the cultural capital of their heritage. Yet, despite their similarities, these four areas experienced a surprisingly different degree of success. Some places, such as the Gelao area of Pingzheng, have failed to attract significant tourism – and even those with successful tourism projects may not necessarily have significantly reduced poverty for local rural residents. In other areas, such as the Miao area of Xijiang, tourism has increased rapidly and even become a central tourist draw, on the tourist route for tour groups. Yet despite such development, the locals have not benefitted, and poverty has not moved appreciably. In a third type of area, represented by Huanggang, locals have structured the tourism industries in ways that they directly benefit – yet few come, and then only during certain seasons. In a fourth area, as seen in Shang Langde, tourism has grown, and the locals have captured most of these benefits.

What can explain these peculiar patterns of development and poverty reduction in these similar areas? The present study seeks to unravel this puzzling pattern of development and poverty reduction in these four areas. We collected information about this via secondary research and several rounds of fieldwork. Three of the four areas were visited in 2004, and Shang Langde and Huanggang were revisited in the early

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2010s. All four sites were also visited in 2017. During each visit, we talked to as many locals as we could, including those who participated in various aspects of the tourism industry. In addition, we interviewed local government officials, tour guides, tourists, as well as outside participants and investors in the local tourism industry.

Understanding pro-poor development

Existing literature covers extensively two theories on how tourism development can lead to poverty reduction. First, profit theory argues that a growing and profitable tourism industry in the village generates numerous employment opportunities for local villagers and its corresponding income diversification (Li et al, 2016; Chio, 2011; Panyik et al, 2011; Ying and Zhou, 2007), lessening the need for urban migration (Chio, 2011; Chio, 2014). The investment for tourism infrastructure allows for better connectivity that aid the development of aspects of the village economy, such as agriculture, as villagers can more easily transport their goods to other areas and sell to increase their profits (Schilcher, 2007; Oraboune, 2008; Cho, 2011; Li et al, 2016). According to this theory, the profits from tourism reduce poverty via trickle-down effects that come with higher economic growth. Thus, expanding the tourism industry and increasing tourism profit are thought to bring in earnings which help to boost economic growth in the rural area, and translates to increases in tax revenues that are returned to villagers and the local community through welfare provision or the development of societal projects (Jamieson et al, 2004; Zeng et al, 2005; Schilcher, 2007; Snyman, 2012).

By contrast, structure theory focuses on two different factors that influence the extent to which locals are able to benefit from tourism. First, geographic structure has both macro and micro influences. On the macro-level, whether tourism is developed

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specifically in poor regions affects the country's poverty alleviation efficiency; on a micro-level, whether enhancing the poor's access to tourist sites would affect the pro-poor nature of a community's poverty alleviation (e.g., Ashley et al, 2000; [source withheld]). A second strain of structure theory focuses on sociopolitical structure, which draws attention to the distribution of power within stakeholders and its resultant outcomes, which in turn would determine how the various stakeholders would resolve disputes that arise from the commodification of culture (Kneafsey, 2001) as well as the extent to which each actor has a voice in development of the tourist site that would in turn determine the likelihood of the adoption of pro-poor schemes such as the conferment of management rights for tourism development to local villagers rather than external developers (Ying and Zhou, 2007; Feng, 2008; Nyaupane et al, 2006), "compulsory local sourcing" (Schilcher, 2007), protecting the poor's legal rights (Ashley et al, 2000), engaging the poor with employment or small businesses (Fleischer and Felsenstein, 2000; Zhao and Ritchie, 2007), and equipping the poor with necessary skills and knowledge (Ashley et al, 2001; Johnson and Bartlett, 2013; Ke et al, 2011; Snyman, 2012).

This paper probes these two broad approaches by asking two main questions "Is profit from tourism sufficient for a basic standard of living?" and "Is the structure of the tourism industry pro-poor?" Based on our research, neither of these two theories is sufficient on its own. The profit theory is largely based on the flawed assumption that the structure of the tourism industry is conducive for the poor in the community to participate. Should the benefits of the tourism industry be concentrated in the hands of the village elites or external parties, the reduction in poverty would be a lot less effective

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as these tourism profits and other benefits would not be channeled to the poor. The structure theory is, in turn, largely premised on having sufficient levels of profit in the first place to be distributed to these employees. Should the tourist volumes be limited and thus the levels of profit low, it is unlikely that the tourism industry in the village will have sufficient opportunities for the poor to be employed or participate, and it might still be more attractive to work outside the village. Thus, in order to reduce poverty effectively, profit must be sufficient enough to cover a basic standard of living, and structure must be inclusive to the poor in the community. This is reflected in Figure 2, which combines both profit (vertical axis) and structure (horizontal axis) respectively to understand the developmental process of tourism in ethnic minority villages.

- Place Figure 2 somewhere here -

This framework is intended to be dynamic. To develop pro-poor tourism, local areas must shift to the ideal top-right quadrant where tourism is not only making sufficient profit, but also allows for distribution of this profit to the low-income ethnic minority households in the village. Villages with potential tourism resources starting from the nascent stage of tourism development (bottom-left quadrant) can traverse via intermediate stages of development (top-left or bottom-right). Possible paths are indicated by the arrows:

Pathway 1: Rightward then Upward – Because the village first develops a pro-poor but small-scale tourism in its rightward shift, there is a risk of having a lack of tourism volume. As such, its upward shift is dependent on the ability of the village to increase the scale of its development.

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Pathway 2: Upward then Rightward – The village first develops large-scale development, but the profits are largely in the hands of the village elites or external corporations, rather than the poor in the rural village. As such, the rightward shift is thus dependent on political will of the elites to protect the local villagers by sharing the tourism profits with the poor.

Surprisingly, researchers have yet to emphasize systematically either the importance of combining profits with a pro-poor structure or how to overcome the dilemmas encountered in accomplishing both. One model that comes closest to combining profit and structure was presented in a tourism development manual published jointly by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) (UNWTO and SNV, 2010). As seen in Figure 3, their pro-poor growth model combines two factors "Volume of spending" and "Proportion of spending reaching the poor" - similar to the 'Profit' and 'Structure' theory respectively - in order to identify and prioritize the interventions to develop tourism in a poverty-alleviating manner. However, while the manual presents an agenda of what one would have to do to make tourism better for the poor, it provides no concrete analysis on how to do this. To be sure, the manual does suggest ways to increase the volume of spending for projects that have low spending (rightward shift) and increase proportion of benefit to poor for those current low in that aspect (upward shift). However, the advice is in turn vague (such as their advice to "increase the proportion of spending that reaches the poor," through "increasing participation levels by the poor"), tautological (increase pro-poor tourism by establishing "a community-based tourism initiative") or likely to prove counterproductive (such as the suggestion of

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promoting resorts, which have long proved to exclude the poor) (UNWTO AND SNV, 2010: 36). This paper thus fills the gaps in this and other existing literature.

- Place Figure 3 somewhere here -

Case Studies

To reconcile this dilemma, this paper compares the development paths of four areas in a single province that represent each quadrant of the model. We contrast Huanggang and Xijiang with that of Shang Langde so as to analyze their differences and the role of different stakeholders in shaping this development path, which led to differing effectiveness in poverty reduction. In doing so, implications for new or less developed tourism projects like Pingzheng will be addressed in the last section.

Shang Langde: The Balanced Path

Shang Langde Miao village (上郎德苗寨; Upper Langde) has been open to tourism since being selected as one of Qiandongnan's first seven ethnic tourist villages in 1987 (Oakes, 1998). Located in Leishan county, the village was listed as a "world-class rural tourism village" by the UNWTO. It is promoted as a successful case study of ethnic minority tourism to the world (Chen et al, 2017) and is widely visited by Chinese government agencies studying how to develop tourism in ethnic minority villages (interview SL12). Despite being one of the first few villages in Southwest China to open its doors to tourists in the 1980s (interview SL04), it is still popular among tourists and has provided an alternate source of income for its villagers. Because of its sufficient profit margin and successful poverty reduction, Shang Langde illustrates one pathway through which ethnic minority villages can reach the model's ideal top-right quadrant.

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Although at first the area saw a relatively modest number of visitors, the elected village committee pressed on and encouraged participation. As the village gradually became better known, the increasing number of visitors and the incentive of higher incomes drew more villagers to participate, creating a virtuous cycle. This can be seen in the exponential increase in tourism earnings from 5,676 RMB in 1986 to 526,500 RMB in 2009, as well as tourist arrival numbers from 947 tourists in 1986 to a peak of 238,100 tourists in 2008 (He and Yang, 2012).

Both tourism volume and overall profits have not only increased significantly, but has also been distributed in a pro-poor manner. Villagers can participate in the tourism industry in several ways, such as opening their own nongjiale¹ with government subsidies (interview SL11), through performing in the Miao dances or by making their own handicraft for sale (Chen et al, 2017). While many rural areas in China are experiencing brain drain, the situation in Shang Langde has reversed. Many young adults, who attended high schools and universities in the cities, have returned to the village to contribute to the further development of tourism, such as managing nongjiale room booking websites (interviews SL10, SL11, SL14). Shang Langde's tourism development can thus be positioned in the ideal quadrant with sufficient profits and pro-poor structure, enabling the increasing profits of tourism to be distributed fairly.

Shang Langde's success is largely due to its pro-poor structure (rightward shift) first developed in the nascent stages of tourism development that then allowed for further scale development (upward shift). Because it was the village committee that

¹ Nongjiale 农家乐 (literally "peasant family happiness") typically includes guesthouses and small-scale restaurants within the villagers' existing homes (Chio, 2011)

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drove the development of tourism from the beginning, the decision-making power gave local villagers the opportunity to take ownership and say in how best to development tourism in their village. During the early years, it was the locals who carried the rocks from the riverside to build stone paths and the performance square, rather than external developers (Oakes, 1997). Even when the village became more popular with tourists, because the decision-making power was still in the hands of local villagers, they were able to “unanimously” reject the offer of external developers for further large-scale but extractive development, choosing instead to take ownership via ‘Langde Miao Village Pacts’ that protect traditional cultural objects and enforce measures to maintain the traditional look of the village with wooden houses on stilts (Chen et al, 2017).

Thus, the initial rightward shift through its pro-poor structure provided the vital foundation upon which the villagers could hold on to the decision-making powers to have a say in how best to scale up the development of the village in the upward shift illustrated in this model. As a result, Shang Langde was able to reach the ideal quadrant of having sufficient profit, while sharing these profits in a pro-poor manner.

Xijiang: Issue of Political Will

Also located in Leishan county in Qiandongnan Autonomous Prefecture, Xijiang Thousand Household Miao Village (西江千户苗寨) is a key location for tourists to visit to explore ethnic minority culture, with daily Miao dance and *lusheng* (芦笙, a traditional Miao instrument) performances, shops selling Miao ‘traditional’ handicrafts and terraced wooden houses built in the ‘traditional’ Miao style. Young Chinese tourists are also drawn to the numerous cafes and hostels available, and its convenient location makes it an ideal short holiday away from the city. Xijiang comprises six natural

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villages, with more than 1000 households (Li et al, 2016), and is thus a grand-looking village nestled in the mountains with many well-built roads and beautiful wooden houses, largely in traditional Miao style. It was listed as a national-level historic cultural town in 2007, and selected as an AAAA-level tourist destination in 2011. While Xijiang is often touted as a village successful in developing tourism profit (China National Tourism Association, 2016), it has not been as successful in sharing tourism profits with the poor.

Despite opening to tourism as early as 1994, a visit to Xijiang in as late as 2004 revealed nearly no tourist traffic according to local interviews and only one small guest house to receive visitors. This changed dramatically in 2006 when the county government earmarked the village for rapid tourism development, enabling Xijiang to obtain its tourism accolades within a short span of a few years. Because of the county government's push for tourism development, profits increased exponentially. Although profits in 2006 were merely 332,400 RMB, this grew to 140,000,000 RMB in just three years (He and Yang, 2012). This was largely accredited to the 100 RMB entrance ticket introduced in 2009. The highway connecting the prefecture capital Kaili and Leishan county that passes by Xijiang also contributed to increasing tourist arrivals – 8.51 million tourists visited, generating an income of 4.3 billion RMB in 2014 (Li et al, 2016).

However, both the secondary literature and evidence from fieldwork made clear that because tourism developed so rapidly, the low-income villagers in Xijiang were given little opportunity to benefit from tourism development. First, local residents argue that the revenue from the sale of entrance tickets was not distributed as promised, with only 10.5 percent of receipts being shared, compared to the promised 15% (Li et al, 2016).

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This sparked a 2014 protest that destroyed the ticketing barriers, allowing tourists to enter the village for free. In response, the local government started distributing more to villagers participating in tourism and as prizes during Miao New Year celebrations (XJ05, XJ09, XJ13), in exchange for ending – and hushing up – the protest (XJ13). Second, land compensation for farm land – considered an entitlement of the rural villager since the early 1980s – was similarly perceived as unfair. Li et al (2016) illustrates the conversion of almost 12 hectares of agricultural lands to commercial and residential lands. One interviewee's family-owned agricultural land was partially acquired by the government but received less than one-tenth of the promised compensation (20,000 RMB per mu instead of the supposed 210,000 RMB per mu). The government then sold the land at 20 million RMB per mu to outside businessmen to build summer villas (XJ02). Third, the crowding out of opportunities for locals to set-up nongjiale happened due to rich businessmen's large-scale hotels attracting more tourists. As a result, while a few locals were able to benefit by renting their land to rich businessmen for said developments (interviews XJ03, XJ05, XJ07, XJ09, XJ12), the benefits of tourism went disproportionately to external developers. Informal opportunities, such as a food tent along the main road, were considered unsightly by the village committee, and removed whenever important government officials visited (interview XJ07).

Although the minimal land compensation, limited employment opportunities, and low wages have combined to increase local incomes, the lion's share of tourism profits in Xijiang went to external developers and other entrepreneurs. As one research underscored, tourism development in Xijiang has "an imbalance ... in the villagers' participation rates in tourism development and the distribution of tourism revenues"

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(Chen et al, 2017). Xijiang's tourism developed in a top-down manner with the government and external corporations as the main drivers, rather than a bottom-up manner as in Shang Langde. As such, unlike Shang Langde's pro-poor structure, Xijiang had a structure that was not pro-poor – thus not making the initial rightward shift like Shang Langde.

Because the external corporations had pumped significant capital into Xijiang, the scale of tourism increased rapidly. Unfortunately for Xijiang, the Guizhou Provincial Government's strategy had changed in the mid-2000s to focus on tourism development as part of the Open Up the West strategy [Source withheld]. As a result, the county government had more pressure to push for rapid tourism development, leading to the control of decision-making in the hands of the county government and external corporations, rather than local villagers as in Shang Langde, which had the privilege of opening to tourism much earlier pre-2000s. The push by county government authorities thus led to the upward shift with sufficient profit that is unfortunately not shared with the locals in a structure that is not pro-poor. Xijiang is thus located in the model's top-left quadrant.

Xijiang's example underscores that while with government support and top-down initiative, shifting up to the 'high profit' quadrant was relatively straightforward, the effort to make a subsequent rightward shift to the ideal quadrant is more difficult. Making such a shift requires opening up the tourism sector to locals, which requires the cooperation of both the government and external corporations. However, the overall structure of tourism has been set in place – the scale of tourism development is large, and smaller, local operators have been crowded out. Moreover, the level of political will

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needed to restructure the tourist site does not currently exist. After all, the site is seen as highly successful, and the high levels of revenue currently generated do not encourage profit sharing. This has created a vicious cycle, and the disempowered locals lose even more powerful relative to those who have benefitted directly from tourism. Both the village committee and the county government have directly opposed attempts of local residents to participate directly in the tourism industry. A shift to the upper-right hand quadrant lacks a credible champion.

Huanggang: Issue of Capability

Huanggang (黄岗侗寨) is a Dong minority village located deep in the mountains of Liping county, Qiandongnan Autonomous Prefecture. Like most Dong and Miao villages, the terraced wood houses and paddy fields flanked by the mountains combine to paint a picturesque landscape. Together with its neighboring village Xiaohuang (小黄侗寨), six kilometers away, Huanggang is renowned for its Dong folk music and international class singers. Huanggang is also the Dong village with the most number of drum towers (鼓楼) used for large group gatherings, especially with a bonfire in the middle on cold winter nights. Huanggang is fairly small, comprising two natural villages and about 350 households (Li et al, 2016).

Huanggang has been open to tourism since the early year 2000s (interviews HG2004-01, HG2004-06, 2004), yet tourism arrival numbers have been consistently low. For three annual Miao festival dates - the Taiguan festival (抬官节) on the 7th and 8th of the 1st month and the Hantian festival (喊天节) on the 15th day of the 6th month in the Lunar New Year - Huanggang receives large groups of tourists, so much so that all the rooms in the hotels and nongjiale are filled and tourists sleep in tents on the main road.

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However, for the rest of the year, Huanggang remains a quiet town. While there is a steady stream of visitors arriving at this village, many of these visitors spend just a few hours roaming around the village, and rarely stay for even a night. Actual infrastructural and amenities development remain limited (the main dirt road had been replaced by a tar road, and some dirt paths are now stone paths), leaving the village in its original and natural state. The scale of tourism development in Huanggang thus seems limited, and profits seem insufficient to be financially sustainable.

Although Huanggang had previously experienced rapid development like that in Xijiang in the early 2000s, this was slowed down as locals became jaded as funds from this top-down development were not noticeably shared with the locals, who responded by refusing to sing for tourists (interviews HG2004-04, HG2004-05, 2004). To ensure that current development of tourism takes place in a pro-poor manner, a local villager Teacher Wu played a key role. As the village's first university graduate, he had a dream to develop tourism to improve the lives of his fellow villagers. To achieve this, he built his own nongjiale to attract larger groups of tourists, made connections with tour guides in the cities thereby increasing awareness of his village on tour itineraries, secured the help of fellow Mandarin-speaking return migrants, and provided informal opportunities for locals to participate in tourism by selling vegetable and meat produce, as well as their rice wine (HG03, HG05, HG07, HG08, RA02). Locals could participate easily by setting up their own small nongjiale with just one or two rooms (HG03, HG08) and selling rice wine, duck eggs or handwoven cloth (HG02, HG03). Since these utilize readily available resources, locals can participate in the informal economy through widely available opportunities and at low investment risk.

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This recent attempt to stimulate tourism can thus be viewed as a reset button to scale tourism back up – but this time ensuring that locals have decision-making power with the support of the government. As such, Huanggang has developed a pro-poor tourism structure (rightward shift) but has not yet made sufficient profits (no upward shift).

Increasing the scale of development (upward shift), would require more resources and support. Despite their efforts, the locals remain incapable of reaching out to further flung markets and attracting additional demand. Governments have the capabilities of filling this function – they did so for Shang Langde in the village's early stages of development. However, as noted earlier, when the Huanggang government arranged tour groups in early 2000, the villagers felt cheated, resulting in a deep-seated sense of mistrust. In 2013, the local government did support the development of tourism by investing in Huanggang's main road and drum towers (Li et al, 2016). However, more needs to be done to enable tourism to scale-up, while ensuring the development of tourism remains largely driven by locals. Two key impeding factors are the need for a unique brand name for Huanggang, and more Mandarin-speaking locals. Due to its proximity to the more famous Zhaoxing (HG04) and Xiaohuang Dong villages propped by their "advertising campaigns and numerous performances" (Li et al, 2016), Huanggang seems quieter and less entertaining for tourists. As experts have noted, Huanggang must differentiate itself from its competitors (Chio, 2014).

Unlike the lack of political will impeding Xijiang's rightward shift to a pro-poor structure, the issue of resource ability impeding Huanggang's upward shift to sufficient profit is arguably easier to achieve. Already, most villagers are cooperative and

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supportive of rules such as having to build wooden, or at least what looks like wooden, houses for the sake of making the place look authentic, and other rules like ensuring farm animal feces does not remain long on the village's pathways (HG07). Huanggang's challenge now is channeling government support, while retaining the industry's bottom-up villager-led development.

Pingzheng: Implications for the Beginning Quadrant

Pingzheng (平正乡) is a Gelao minority village located in the rich Zunyi county, famous for its Maotai wine and rich Long March history. Pingzheng's tourism development has barely begun and offers limited job opportunities for the locals. Instead, many working adults have chosen to migrate in search of better jobs, leaving their elderly parents to care for their young children. County government support for Pingzheng has led to numerous development, including the resettlement of residences from faraway mountain lodges to houses by the river, as well as various tourism attractions, such as the Gelao-themed museum and resorts, to revitalize the village's economy. These were undertaken largely by an inspiring town leader, a local Gelao committed to promoting and protecting Gelao culture.

Despite efforts to develop tourism, Pingzheng's far distance from major cities such as Guiyang means that few tourists and tour guides know about the village. For six months in a year from late spring to early autumn, tourism volume increases slightly from Chongqing residents escaping the summer heat in their homes. Tourism volume for the rest of the year, however, is dismal (interview PZ07). The limited tourism volume can be seen in the low room prices in the resort from 40 to 50 RMB per night because "[their] conditions are not good" (interview PZ03).

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In addition, the push for tourism development has led to locals being excluded from employment and decision-making opportunities in tourism. While most of the employees of the museum and the resort are local Gelao people, they often take in people from outside Pingzheng, some of whom are not Gelao, for their dance and acting performance (interview PZ03), when it may have been possible to employ local villagers. The informal economy, which usually encourages participation of the poor due to its lower barriers to entry, is also lacking as seen in how a female villager who tried to peddle her crafts in front of Shangurenjia was chased away because she was Han, not Gelao (interview PZ01). The Gelao-themed museum also has a prohibitive price of 98 RMB per entrance ticket.

The insufficient profit and limited pro-poor opportunities in Pingzheng is due to the lack of two factors. First, the lack of cultural capital stems from a deeper problem – the Gelao tradition that Pingzheng’s tourism is based upon was actually Sinicized as early as Song dynasty (960 A.D. to 1279 A.D.), so unique Gelao traditions have all but disappeared. As a result, there is little natural cultural capital left for Pingzheng to build its differentiating factor upon. Cultural capital can be ‘created’ via marketing campaigns that unfortunately require significant amounts of capital. Second, the county and town governments remain the main drivers behind tourism development. Local villagers are rarely involved in decision-making. The relationship between government and villagers is more like that of Xijiang rather than Shang Langde. Given the lack of local involvement, the area is more likely to continue on its current path, which is more consistent with a focus on profits than distribution.

Conclusion

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The four case studies presented in this paper show four different models of ethnic minority tourism development in rural villages. Despite many similarities among the four villages – same province, similar strategy of using their ethnic minority cultural capital for tourism - the way tourism has developed in each of the villages has been radically different, with different resulting poverty reduction outcomes. Xijiang has been extremely successful in increasing profit but excludes the locals that tourism was meant to benefit; Huanggang's tourism profit is shared fairly with the locals but it is not really poverty-reducing as the amount is too low. As such, both high profit and pro-poor structure are necessary, but either aspect is insufficient to achieve poverty reduction on its own. Shang Langde is exemplar of the ideal situation – high profit that is distributed fairly to locals – and its continued success despite being one of the first villages in China to develop tourism shows the possible sustainability of tourism.

Understanding these cases helps us answer the question: do local communities best increase the volume of tourism while maximizing local participation and ensuring the industry is pro-poor? Most scholars and development agencies would focus on "development" – the expansion of scale. Despite the best efforts of the local government and local residents of Pingzheng and Huanggang, respectively, this is not easily accomplished. However, if a well-developed pro-poor tourism industry is sought, efforts that combine the political will to remain pro-poor with resources and capabilities to expand are both necessary.

However, since both expansion and fair distribution are difficult to accomplish simultaneously, most areas face the prospect of traversing one of two pathways: expanding tourism before ensuring pro-poor participation (Pathway 1), or ensuring

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participation via bottom-up initiatives that are of human scale before expanding in volume and scope (Pathway 2). As displayed in the case of Xijiang, the first path is unlikely to lead to a pro-poor result. Although the very initial efforts were bottom-up and even received recognition of the influential guidebooks such as the Lonely Planet, the local and provincial government chose to forgo supporting such efforts in favor of expanding the scope of tourism in a top-down manner. This succeeded in rapidly expanding tourism, such that the area is included on the 'must-see' lists of arranged tours. Like such efforts in Huanggang, these exclusive methods of development met with considerable local resistance – sometimes passive, sometimes violent – as the local residents perceived few benefits from the development of tourism while wealthier locals and outside investors captured most of the revenues. Shifting to the right – to the 'pro-poor' quadrant – requires a rapidly receding political will, as the increasingly powerful forces that benefit from the areas' rapid development also have to become increasingly committed to the model's perpetuation.

Also formidable, albeit far more likely, is traversing the second pathway – increasing the volume of revenues while maintaining a pro-poor development structure. The case of Huanggang emphasizes the challenges - attempting to compete with nearly similar venues, increase the locals' proficiency in Mandarin, and successfully market the village as a national or international tourist site. While challenging, because of the local political configuration and the capable hands of returned locals, overcoming these obstacles remains far less daunting.

This encouraging conclusion is underscored by the example of Shang Langde, which has resisted pressures to shift away from its participatory model over the years.

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Like Huanggang, the village started out as a model of small-scale, pro-poor development. Like their counterparts in Huanggang (successfully) and Xijiang (unsuccessfully), the local resisted attempts to scale-up in a top-down, non-pro-poor manner. Yet, Shang Langde was able to overcome substantial challenges to reach the upper right quadrant, and today enjoys a large-scale tourism industry, one in which the lion's share of the revenues accrues to the locals. The price for this – cultural erosion for instance (Oakes, 1998) – has been substantial. However, from the perspective of poverty reduction and human scale development, Shang Langde's development has been successful.

In addition to these four cases, secondary literature reveals that other tourist sites in Guizhou, as well as neighboring Yunnan and Hunan, have traversed – or been blocked from traversing – these two pathways. These additional cases underscore the point that Pathway 2, establishing pro-poor tourism and then increasing revenue is a challenging pathway, attempting to traverse Pathway 2, developing first and then shifting to pro-poor tourism, is even more so. As can be seen in Figure 4, none of the cases that joined Shang Langde in the upper right-hand quadrant followed the second pathway of upward-then-rightward shift. Like Xijiang, each of the cases in the upper left-hand quadrant were highly developed tourist sites, but managed only minimal local participation. Moreover, the forces that benefitted from tourism's development were able to block subsequent attempts to shift in a pro-poor direction. Even more sobering, a number of cases – the popular areas of Dali and Lijiang as well as a nature reserve known as Caohai – reverted from high revenue/high pro-poor stance to one that was less pro-poor. Dali and Lijiang had been popular backpacker havens in the 1980s, but

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with the development of four- and five-star hotels and larger-scales of tourism, most of the beneficiaries of these areas are no longer local developers, shop-owners and entrepreneurs. Similarly, Caohai was a nature reserve with an innovative pro-poor model, but this was abandoned in favor of top-down development, with most of the benefits now captured by the local and provincial governments.

- Place Figure 4 somewhere here -

Whether the pathway (Pathway 2) traversed by Shang Langde and others remains open in Guizhou, a province that desperately needs pro-poor tourism, is an open question. As noted above, Guizhou's model for decades – from at least the late 1980s to the late 2000s – focused on a 'micro-oriented' model of development. By 2010 – long after Shang Langde reached the upper-right quadrant – that model was abandoned in favor of one that emphasizes GDP growth above all else. While Shang Langde had the support of a provincial development strategy that supported its reaching the upper-right hand corner, the other three villages did not. The provincial government has shifted away from being a pioneer in pro-poor tourism to one that is more consistent with development that excludes local participation, along the lines of the approach seen in Xijiang. Adopting a successful policy of developing tourism in a way that increases the volume of tourism, while also ensuring it is pro-poor, is difficult enough. Doing so in the context of a skeptical, if not hostile, provincial and central leadership might prove impossible.

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