Tourism Mobilities Through Time: A Developmental and Holistic Lens

Abstract

Under the mobility paradigm, a lens of tourism mobility extends the scope of tourism studies in ontology and phenomenology. The observation of some limitations in the extant tourism mobility literature leads to the design of a study to investigate the changing nature of tourism mobilities in a society from all three aspects of the phenomenon (i.e., movement, representation, and practice). Based on the principles of weak constructionism, this study adopted means of biographical grid in-depth interviews—a retrospective longitudinal mode of data collection—and biographic analytical framework to analyze and identify chronicled mobilities in China. The findings offer a longitudinal (1950-present) and context-specific account of the evolving nature of tourism mobilities and their inter-relationship with the macro-environment. This study enriches the conceptualization of tourism mobility by providing empirical evidence for the developmental and holistic nature of tourism mobilities in China.

Keywords

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Introduction

In their seminal paper on the new mobilities paradigm, Sheller and Urry (2006) declared, "All the world seems to be on the move" (207). Their research focused on the "diverse mobilities of peoples, objects, images, information, and wastes," and it initiated a "novel agenda for sociology" (Urry 2000, 186). Since then, the mobility paradigm has transformed the social sciences and inspired a series of studies to challenge the concepts and theories in many disciplines and fields including tourism studies (Cohen and Cohen 2015). Under the umbrella of the mobility paradigm, some orthodox concepts and relationships in tourism have been found problematic (Cohen and Cohen 2012; Gale 2009). For instance, basic binary concepts such as home/away, work/leisure, host/guest, ordinary daily life/extraordinariness, which serve as fundamentals in modernist tourism studies with a Eurocentric approach, have been criticized as "unreflectively grounded" (Cohen and Cohen 2012, 2015). From lens of mobilities research, the range of tourism mobilities is expanded from exotic encounters contrasting with everyday life to a multiplicity of discretionary mobilities, which has a variety of origins in everyday life and societies (Cohen and Cohen 2015; Hannam et al. 2014). Specifically, tourism mobility refers to a strain in a cluster of discretionary travel practices, which mingled with other types of mobility such as pilgrimages, excursions, shopping trips, etc. (Cohen and Cohen 2015). Tourism mobilities are distinguished from other mobilities such as migration by its discretionary (i.e., voluntary and temporary) features (Hall, 2005).

With a mobility approach, the study of tourism has been re-positioned from the periphery of the social sciences to the core of social and cultural life (Hannam, Butler, and Paris 2014). The extant studies have contributed to tourism mobilities research in the following aspects. First, tourism studies have focused on the movement of travelers with the intent to understand a

multiplicity of origins in different global regional societies, as well as the mutual penetration of different forms of mobilities (Cohen and Cohen 2015; den Hoed and Russo 2017). Second, in recent years, studies of tourism mobilities focusing on materialities, automobilities, and new technologies (Hannam et al. 2014) have been fruitful in understanding the nexus of travelers, changing time, and moving spaces, as well as the interactions between travelers and the objects and people framed in different temporal and spatial frames. For example, time-space geographers also show that international migration and temporary mobilities (e.g. studying abroad) are the formative forces affecting subsequent patterns of mobilities (Frändberg 2008). The studies on the affordances of transportation tools such as heritage railways (e.g., Bissell, 2009; Lofgren, 2008; Roy & Hannam, 2012), coaches (e.g., Edensor & Holloway, 2008), and campervan (Wilson & Hannam, 2017) for touristic experience illustrated that different travel mode enabled distinct embodiment of experiences. The studies on new technologies and tourism mobilities developed several discussion threads on topics such as the impact of new technologies on blurring line between travel and daily life (e.g. MacKay & Vogt, 2012), new virtual moorings (e.g. Paris, 2011), augmentation and hybridization of space (e.g. Linaza et al., 2012), etc. A recent trend is to uncover the multisensory phenomenology of mobility experience on the road (Jensen, Scarles, & Cohen, 2015; Jensen, 2016a, 2016b).

Under the mobility paradigm, the scope of tourism mobilities research should cover not only the movement of travelers but also the shared meanings of travel activities in the society (Creswell, 2010). On a micro-spatial level, Cresswell (2010) conceptualizes mobilities as the constellation of movement, representation, and practice. The baseline aspect of mobility entails the act of physical movement from one place to another and is an etic perspective on mobilities; representation attests to the emic perception and signifies shared meanings assigned to the act of

movement; and practice refers to the experience and embodied practice of movement, carrying

both etic and emic qualities (Cohen and Cohen 2015; Cresswell 2010). Studies have usually

focused on one dimension of mobilities, such as movement (e.g. Cohen and Cohen 2015; den

Hoed and Russo 2017) or representation (e.g. Edensor and Holloway 2008; Wilson and Hannam

2017; Willis et al. 2017), in the specified mobility context. However, in practice, the three

components of mobility are hard to untangle (Cresswell 2010). Thus, it would be meaningful to

develop a study with a holistic view to examine all three aspects of mobilities in one context so

as to reveal their intertwinement. Moreover, tourism as one facet of human mobilities is

produced, driven, and constrained by interdependent macro forces (e.g. economy, politics,

culture) (Cohen and Cohen 2012, 2015). Thus, it is important to investigate the relations between

people's tourism mobilities and ideologies, policies, rules, economy, and culture. Much of the

analysis of tourism mobilities has been detached from the macro-environment (i.e. the social,

cultural, economic, political, and technological contexts) that produces travel activities of the

traveler origins and the macro-environment that carry these activities in tourism destinations

(Frändberg 2008). Kirillova, Wang, and Lehto (2018) demonstrated that the larger societal forces

are important in shaping individuals' travel preference and behavior. The new mobility paradigm

is known for its creativity in examining the connections between macro- and micro-forces. Thus,

tourism mobilities research could be positioned in a more specific socio-culture-political context.

In a society labeled as "liquid modernity" (Bauman 2000), people's understandings of the world,

values and beliefs, as well as their interpretation of their travels, are developing and being

reshaped as mobility shifts. Therefore, it is important to examine the evolution of tourism

mobilities, including both etic and emic aspects, along with the evolving economic,

technological, social, and political environments. Cresswell (2010) stated that "We cannot understand new mobilities, then, without understanding old mobilities." (29).

This study adopts a developmental and holistic lens to investigate the changing nature of tourism mobilities in a society, from all three aspects of the phenomenon i.e., movement, representation, and practice. The overarching goal of this research is to offer a longitudinal (1950-present) and context-specific account of the evolving nature of tourism mobilities and their inter-relationship with the macro-environment. It is undertaken in the context of China, and focuses on the cohort born between 1950 and 1969, who lived through the macro-environmental changes in the past decades. China provides an appropriate study context since its continuously intense economical, technological and societal changes have enabled people's mobility shifts, including travel and tourism-related movements (Xu and Wu 2016). China has witnessed transformative changes over a span of 50–60 years, which coincide with the generational cohort of interest for this research. These 50–60 years, therefore, provide a great longitudinal lens for us to understand tourism mobility over time. China's social, cultural, political and economic transformations over these years present an ideal illustrative context in which the various components of tourism mobilities and their shifting patterns can be understood.

Theoretical background

Mobility Paradigm

Mobility is a contemporary paradigm in the social sciences that aims to break away from many foundational assumptions of 20th-century social science, such as the emphasis on structure, sedimented social patterns, and stability (Cohen and Cohen 2012). Unlike sedentarist social science that treats distance, movement, and change as abnormal, the new mobilities paradigm

looks at permanent and non-permanent movement as essential in the contemporary, increasingly globalized world (Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2002, 2007). Thus, mobility stands out as a unique domain for research. The concept of mobility was re-theorized in that mobility refers not only to the fact of physical movement but also to the representations of movement and practice of movement (Cresswell 2010).

First, physical movement refers to the movement of the human body in the material world. It is the "raw material" (Cresswell, 2010, 19) that produces mobility because non-human inanimate objects and ideas move with people, and infrastructures are developed to support people's movement. Although physical movement is fundamental for mobility, one cannot represent the phenomenology of mobility by simply measuring the changes of real bodies and modeling the patterns (Cresswell 2010; Sheller 2014). Second, representations of mobility refer to the shared meanings we use to label physical movement such as adventure, education, freedom, or threat response etc. (Cresswell, 2010). Physical movements are driven by conscious motivations and represented as outcomes of entangled macro-level forces including politics, economics, society, culture, and technology. For instance, an increasing number of outbound tourists in a country can represent political opening as well as the economic development of that country. Third, the practice of movement refers to the embodied and material practices of movement that are enacted and experienced through the body in the everyday sense or on a regular basis (Cresswell 2010). The practice of movement is more about the pattern of mobility and embodied repetition of an integrated physical movement, as well as its represented and shared meaning. For example, one might consider what the practice of walking or driving means for the everyday home-work commute. Such a practice carries both etic and emic qualities (Cohen and Cohen 2015; Cresswell 2010).

With the change in the ontological understanding of mobility, the scope of mobility studies over the past decade has been expanded to include the combined movements of people, objects, and information and their complex relational dynamics (Sheller 2014). There is a multiplicity of research foci including corporeal mobility, digital and communicative mobilities; the infrastructure and institution supporting mobilities; and the ideology and meanings attached to mobilities as well as immobilities (Sheller 2016). Mobility research has been creative in tending to apply innovative methodological approaches when examining various phenomena, such as using intersectional lenses combining social, spatial, and critical theories (Spinney 2015). The mobility paradigm illuminates the inequalities in resources access and the control in the society through the uneven mobilities at the individual level. Although "mobility may be considered a universal human right" (Sheller 2016, 15), it needs the support from socio-technical systems, infrastructures, governing policies, and surveillance system (Sheller 2016). Thus, the differential mobility at the individual level reflects the differentials of the supporting systems behind, with power and politics as the origins of these mobility-constraining systems.

Sociological Perspective on Chinese Tourists

Chinese tourists have changed the landscape of global tourism over the past fifteen years. The exponential growth of Chinese tourists in both domestic and international travel has been a remarkable phenomenon- one that extensively impacts economics, business, culture, and the environment (Huang and Chen 2016). Thus, industry practitioners as well as the research community have targeted the Chinese consumers. A considerable number of studies have been published in attempts to understand Chinese tourists' preferences and choices, travel behaviors, satisfaction, and factors associated with these psychological and physical outcomes (Jin and Wang 2016).

Among the Chinese tourist-related studies, one main stream has focused on the factors shaping observed tourist behavior and reported experiences (including perceptions, emotions, and satisfaction). In studies from a micro- and individual perspective, which dominate the literature, scholars have mainly adopted motivation theories with an origin in individual psychology to examine and explain the behavior and preferences of Chinese tourists (e.g. Hsu, Cai, and Li 2010; Zhang and Lam 1999; Wu and Pearce 2014). In studies from a macro- and societal perspective, scholars adopted econometric analysis to identify the economic and policy factors leading Chinese tourists to travel (e.g., Lin, Liu, and Song 2015; Liu and McKercher 2016; Pham, Nghiem, Dwyer 2017; Yang, Liu, and Qi 2014). Moreover, from the lens of human geography and economics, a series of studies focused on the movement patterns of Chinese tourists (e.g., Jin, Cheng, and Xu 2018; Yang, Li, and Li 2019) and the relationship between economic growth and tourism development (e.g., Liu and Song 2018; Zuo and Huang 2018).

The sociological perspective helps understand tourism phenomena because it can provide complimentary insights on subjects and their relationships with the broader social context (Cohen and Cohen 2015). However, examining the extant literature regarding Chinese tourists, only a few studies (Hsu and Huang 2016; Yan and McKercher 2013; Yu and Xu 2016) adopted a sociological lens—specifically, a cultural perspective—to investigate the reasons behind Chinese tourists' behavior, expectations, and interpretation of their touristic experiences. These studies shared the assumption that Chinese tourists' interests are socially constructed and learned, rather than a matter of individual psychology (Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972). Indeed, tourists' decisions on what to gaze upon, which are embodied as destination choice and activities, as well as the consequences of their gaze and visitation, which are embodied as tourist satisfaction and behaviors, are both socio-culturally framed (Urry and Larsen 2011). Therefore, investigation of

Chinese tourists requires more studies with a sociological lens in order to understand how the invisible forces at a societal level shape the motivations, preferences, and interpretations of the individuals within that society.

This study goes beyond a cultural perspective to investigate the forces at a societal level that shape Chinese tourist gaze- the "socially patterned and learned 'ways of seeing' (Urry and Larsen 2011, 5). In developmental psychology, Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist and the founder of cultural-historical psychology, claimed that humans' higher psychological processes (e.g. thinking) have a social origin (Vygotsky 1978). That is, human psychological development emerges through interpersonal connections and actions with the social environment. Therefore, the investigation of the social origins of Chinese tourist gaze can help understand their motivations and preferences. Furthermore, figurational sociology contends that social reality is jointly formed by sociogenesis (i.e., the evolution of communities and social units) and psychogenesis (i.e., the transformations in individuals' psyche, social behavior, and attitudes) (Elias 1978; Kirillova et al. 2018). Thus, this study adopts a developmental view to understand changes in Chinese tourist gaze along with the evolutionary forces of the Chinese society.

Methodology and Method

Methodologically, this study is based on the principles of weak constructivism, by which the facts of the physical world are acknowledged as objective while the facts of social reality are deemed to be subjectively constructed (Pernecky 2012). Hollinshead (2006) laments that positivist (and post-positivist) tourism research "seeks to explain away the social and contextual understanding of everyday life and squeezes it into…context-free categories" (44). Constructivist

methodology seeks to overcome this by considering both context-specific facts of reality (movement) and subjective constructions of meaning (representations and practices).

First, an analysis of historiographic literature was undertaken, for which government statistical reports (e.g. the yearbook of China tourism statics 1993 onwards), newspaper archives (e.g. Articles in Renmin Ribao from 1978 to 2000s regarding Chinese tourism mobilities), and historical accounts (e.g. Nyíri 2011; Guo 2010) (published in both English and Chinese) were consulted. These documents were reviewed and summarized in terms of general longitudinal trends (e.g. increase in domestic mobilities) and significance in the context of the overall period under study. The purpose of this phase was to identify the historical macro-environment that enabled tourism mobility shifts in China, which is presented as a timeline in Figure 1.

Second, the empirical data was gathered during the July–November period of 2016. Twenty-five participants residing in three Chinese cities were recruited by means of researchers' personal contacts and subsequent referrals. The criteria of participant inclusion in this purposive sample were 1) born in 1950-1969, and 2) raised and currently residing in China. We chose to focus on this age cohort because of the longitudinal nature of the study. Such participants are likely to have witnessed a number of significant events that transformed mobilities in China, yet these individuals are still young enough to be able to travel in the present. Table 1 provides details of the interviewees.

Insert Table 1 Here

The participants were selected from three cities: Shanghai, Kunming, and Zhuhai. The selection of these cities considered the impact of economic development and other aspects of life

mobility (e.g., domestic immigration) on tourism mobilities. Shanghai, where 10 interviews were conducted, is a first-tier city in China with disposable income of local residents consistently ranked in the top three. Kunming (10 interviews) is a second-tier city in China with its residents' disposable income ranked 18th among 35 major Chinese cities in 2016 ("2017 China Cities Rank", 2017). Zhuhai (five interviews) is designated as one of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in China, and most of its residents who are currently above 50 years old are domestic immigrants. Having benefited from many policies as an SEZ, Zhuhai has been regarded as a relatively wealthy coastal city since 1990. Data collection ended when additional data were deemed unlikely to change the interpretations resulting from data analysis. The final sample consisted of 10 men and 15 women, 20 of whom were married at the time of the interview, and all raised at least one child.

Data were collected by means of biographical grid in-depth interviews—a retrospective longitudinal mode of data collection (Wilson et al. 2007). Participants were first presented with the timeline of national events (Figure 1), identified during the document analysis phase as affecting citizens' mobilities. To facilitate recall, participants were asked to place personally important life events (e.g. school graduation, marriage, birth of child) on the parallel line right below. Then, interviewees were instructed to draw the "travel line" on which all leisure trips taken throughout respondents' lives were to be arranged in a chronological order. In this process, particulars for each were asked. Questions such as "What did that travel mean to you at that time?" and "Why?" were used as prompts to discuss participants' travel histories. Interviews were conducted face to face in Chinese and lasted 45–80 minutes. The data set consisted of 329 pages of transcribed text in Chinese, which were analyzed inductively through the biographic analytical framework (Huber, Milne, and Hyde 2017) with elements of constructivist-grounded

theory (Charmaz 2014), which is an inductive analytical procedure. We began with a descriptive within-case analysis of each participant's life and travel history and applied paragraph-by-paragraph open coding to each narrative to gain initial insight into the meaning of travel in that person's life.

Consistent with the study's goal, initially, we aimed to discuss tourism mobilities in the three cities as proxies for the urban China in general. However, during the analysis, the differences among participants residing in the three cities were striking and we then continued with cross-case analysis to understand within-group (i.e. same city) similarities and inter-group (i.e. different cities) differences in the aforementioned aspects. By means of focused coding, we grouped open codes into meaningful and salient categories. In the final analysis, the categories were juxtaposed with the results of the document analysis that chronicled mobilities in China.

The research team consists of three researchers, two of whom are born and raised in China but belong to different generations: one from the same cohort as under study and currently residing outside China, whereas the other born in the 1980s and currently residing in the Greater China. These researchers were the primary analysts for the Chinese language dataset, engaging in several rounds of coding, as well inter-researcher comparisons and discussions to avoid partiality in which the researcher's own value system may interfere with data interpretation. The third member of the research team, who is not of Chinese descend and born in 1980s, was instrumental in triangulating between data sources (two analysts and historiographical results), theorizing and developing conceptualization. The final results were sent to interviewees to ask for comments and check if the aggregated results deviate from the opinions of interviewees.

Insert Figure 1 here

Results: A Chronicle of Tourism Mobilities in China From the 1950s to 2010s

Patterns of tourism mobilities in three aspects (movement, representations, and practice) emerged from the data, and distinctive patterns were noted for three periods: the 1950s to 1970s, 1980s to 1990s, and 2000 onward. This section presents findings as organized by these three periods. The background of each period—in terms of macro-economy, political orientation, and social customs—is presented together with interviewee interpretations to provide a historical context in constructing the meaning of their statements. The subsections describe thematic topics regarding each period's representations and the practice dimensions of tourism mobilities that emerged from respondents' illustration of their tourism movements. The physical travel movements of the informants were observed by mapping visited places and marking them with different icons to show different visiting purposes. Due to the similar physical movement patterns of the informants from the three cities, only the movement patterns of the informants from Shanghai were presented in this research (Figure 2 a-c).

Insert Figure 2 a-c Here

1950s to 1970s: Tourism mobilities as occasional activities for family reunions, as byproducts of political movements, and as privileged business travel.

The first 20-30 years after the establishment of the People's Republic of China saw both international and domestic mobilities under extreme restrictions (Nyíri 2011; Xu and Wu 2016). Internationally, the Central Government restricted travel abroad to only high-level government delegations, sports teams, and art troupes (Nyíri 2011). Foreign connections by ordinary citizens without the permit of government were labeled as "reactionary political connections" (Renmin

Ribao 1978). Domestically, the Central Government introduced the household registration system (*Hukou system*)—a system that kept the population immobile by tying access to resources such as food, education, health care, and old-age pensions (Nyíri 2011) to specific localities. The *Hukou system* effectively controlled rural-to-urban migration (Guo 2010) and therefore locked in rural-urban inequalities and discrepancies in public welfare (Afridi, Li, and Ren 2015). At the time, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, tourism was seen as a part of bourgeois lifestyle and therefore was forbidden (Zhang 2003). Tourism-related activities were only for overseas Chinese or foreigners with special permission to visit China (Xiao 2006). During this period, Chinese mobility was boosted only once by the "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement" (*Shangshan Xiaxiang Yundong*), a state policy initiated in 1967 by Mao Zedong. Mao at the time perceived that pro-bourgeois thinking was prevalent among privileged urban youth and declared that they should be sent to mountainous areas or farming villages to "join the team, and live the life" (*Chadui Luohu*). As a result, approximately 17 million youths were shipped to rural areas from the late 1960s to early 1970s. Many of them married with locals and resettled in the countryside (Buckley Ebrey 2005).

The movement pattern of the informants shows that most of the trips made during this period were short-haul and for the purpose of visiting family. The relatively long-haul trips were made for political or business purposes. The informants' interpretations of their trips give life to physical movements and afford a contextual depiction of tourism mobility representation during this period. Some informants mentioned there were no such concepts as tourism and leisure in the mindsets of the general public back then.

"*Tourism: it was an alien term that no one heard of. On the one hand, no one could afford the transportation cost between cities. There were no hotels to stay at. On the other hand, the*

prevailing value in the society prevented you from thinking of leisure and enjoyment. I guess no one knew about the meaning of real tourism, as we do today." (Informant_SH10).

However, the non-existence of travel and tourism concepts does not mean the non-existence of travel activities. Sporadic travel activities were reported by the informants, and the patterns of these activities emerge from two different age groups: informants born between 1950 and 1959, and those born between 1960 and 1969. For the informants born before 1960, travel was labeled as annual relative visits (SH04; SH05), a response to political movement, and detours on business trips. As informant SH04 reflected:

"What I remembered is visiting my relatives in Ningbo and Nanjing…..nothing special, we went there once a year…the memory is all about the ferry experience…the crowdedness on the ferry and the smell."

At the age of 16 or 17, some informants had their first-ever long-haul trip. Informants KM01, KM02, KM03, and KM06, for instance, talked about their travel experience during "*Da Chuan Lian*" or "mass exchange." (Li 1995, 35). This is when they traveled as urban high schoolers (dubbed "red guards") to China's capital, Beijing, and to Shanghai, the primary economic center in the 1960s and 1970s. During this nationwide campaign, the youths (age 16 and above) were encouraged to visit other cities, and especially Beijing, to see Chairman Mao Zedong in person. The Central Government provided free train transportation for everyone. The local governments along the journey provided accommodation and food for all "red guards." Informant KM06 reported that he joined his brother for *Da Chuan Lian* in 1966. They went to Shanghai, and that was his first trip to another province, thousands of miles away from his hometown.

"We took the train from Kunming. Then we stopped over in several cities on the way, such as Guiyang, Guiling, Wuhan. It took us seven days to reach Shanghai due to bad traffic congestion and crowdedness…I don't know that it can be called tourism, we left home for fun…I remembered that was an extremely cold winter in Shanghai…I was immensely impressed by the bustling streets in Shanghai."

The narratives of KM01, KM02, and KM03 also included their trips made for *Da Chuan Lian*. In general, they shared quite similar experiences with KM06, in remembering the contrasts between the metropolitan cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and their hometown Kunming—a much smaller city then in southwest China. The informants who participated in *Da Chuan Lian* regarded travel as a "political campaign" conceptually, but they also considered it a chance to learn about other places and make new friends. As KM03 described:

"I was 16 that year (1966). I thought it was a great honor to meet Chairman Mao in Beijing. I took the train with my classmates from Kunming to Beijing, and it was all free…It was not tourism at all. We tried to visit heritage sites in Beijing such as Forbidden City, but they were all closed. All we did in Beijing was to make big-character posters (Dazibao) on university campuses…The food was provided for by the government but very simple. I missed home a lot, and it was a political task for me…One good thing was that I made lots of friends from everywhere in the country…we maintained correspondence for years".

For the informants who were born before 1955 (SH04, SH05, SH06, KM01, KM02, KM03, KM05, KM06, and KM09), they were involved in 1969 in the "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement" (*Shangshan Xiaxiang Yundong*) and were dispatched to mountainous areas or farming villages to "join the team, and live the life" (*Chadui luohu*). The informants reported some travel activities during their years living on farms or in villages.

"We called it "Xiao Chuan Lian" (mini exchange). We visited other urban youth who were sent to the nearby village in the name of exchanging ideas about the learning of Chairman Mao's theory…Actually, as young people, we did that for fun since village life was pretty boring. We stayed together and cooked together."

There was some recognition of tourism in its pure sense. For instance, informant KM01 noted that:

"I had some business trips after I took a job in 1975…… we dropped by Guilin on our way from Kunming to Henan…For me, business trips were a benefit rewarded to me to do some sightseeing and try different foods."

For the informants who were born after 1960, they were in their pre-teen years in the 1970s. In their memory, the only chance to stay overnight in places other than home was to visit

relatives in other places. The informants described visiting relatives as the only excuse to "*spend money on transportation*" (SH09). Travel for them was not remembered as attractions and sightseeing but as families, transportation modes, and food. For this cohort, the most memorable aspect of tourism mobility is transportation (SH01, SH08, ZH01, and ZH02). Elements in the transportation system such as ferries, cars and trains were front-and-center in the recollection of trips and interpretation of tourism meaning. The journey to their relatives' homes was usually long and strenuous but they enjoyed it. The chance to take different transportation for long-haul trips was perceived as a privilege, since only people from a relatively rich family or a family with privileges in society could afford long-haul trips in the 1970s. SH08 came from a family in which her grandfather and father were high-ranking military commanding officers. She described her experience visiting her grandfather in a military base in Fuzhou, Fujian Province:

"I remember we took the train, which I think is a unique experience for ordinary people…We ate lunch box in the train;, that's counted as a kind of luxury experience…We were picked up by a Red Flag sedan…Fuzhou is more advanced than Shanghai in terms of goods in the market. I remember that I bought a fashionable silk jacket and fur vest there."

"I also remember that we visited my grandpa in Zhoushan. From Shanghai to Zhoushan, we took a ferry. There was a movie on the ferry and lots of snacks."

Informant ZH02 got chances to travel around because his father was a purchaser in the people's commune:

"My father had the privilege to drive the truck and visit other nearby cities to purchase stuff for the people's commune. Because of that, I visited lots of places, and I liked Nanjing…I think the travel experiences in my childhood unconsciously influenced my career choice. I guess I was one of a few kids in the countryside of China who got chances to know a world outside of my village. I got to ride on trucks and trains!"

In the 1950s to 1970s, tourism mobility was a practice of occasional activities for family reunion, requirements of political movements, and business trips. Tourism mobility during that period seems to have a multiplicity of origins with the exclusion of relaxation, fun, and horizon expansion. Travel was perceived as task-bearing and enforced. Tourism mobilities represented

families, a mission for Communism, experience of novel transportation, and privilege (particularly in the cases of long-haul travel).

1980s to 1990s: Tourism mobilities as rewarding business trips, a benefit from state-owned employers, part of university experience, and occasional self-financed leisure travel

With the implementation of a series of reform and openness policies since 1978 (Xiao 2006), mass mobility in China was gradually formed (Xu and Wu 2016). The evolvement of tourism mobilities is deeply rooted in the implementation of the "open door policy" since 1978. After the Cultural Revolution (1968-1977), the domestic and international political environment and the necessity for economy recovery urged the Chinese government to adopt this "open door policy". This policy has changed the national development strategy from self-sufficiency oriented one to active participation in the world market (Nyíri 2011). The six major aspects of the open door policy transformed the international relations, economic development, and communication with other countries, and thus, nurtured tourism mobilities in China (Huan 1986). Several policies shaped this mass mobility. First, the establishment of special economy zones (SEZs) and the opening of coastal cities to overseas investments significantly influenced rural-urban migration dynamics in China (Chan and Zhang 1999; Liang 2001). The development of SEZs and coastal cities and the accompanying construction boom offered job opportunities for well-educated professionals, skilled workers, as well as construction workers and nannies (Nyíri 2011). Attracted by these opportunities for economic returns and better quality of life, people in Chinese inland cities and rural areas strove to move to SEZs and coastal cities (Liang 2001). Moreover, the implementation of a new agriculture policy, the household responsibility system, prepare for the labor migration from rural areas to big cities. The household responsibility system emerged in 1979 to restore individual households as the basic unit of farm operation. By the end of 1983,

the new system had been implemented in 97% of rural areas in China. In the household responsibility system, a household was to lease a plot of land from the collective. After the submission of a state assigned procurement quota obligation, the household could retain the rest of its production (Lin 1988). The Government granted a high level of autonomy to each household in crop selection and the trading of self-hold production. Under this new system, the farmers had more incentives to improve the production. The household responsibility system brought unprecedented success in agricultural production, and thus decreased the need for rural labors (Chai and Chai 1997). More directly relevant, however, was the fact that by then the *Hukou* system had been relaxed to accommodate migration aimed at economic development and capital flow (Xu and Wu 2016). Thus, the barriers of rural-urban movement were lifted (Chan and Zhang 1999). Third, China's emigration policy during this period encouraged the international mobility of the Chinese. In particular, 1986 was a landmark year for major policy changes in granting more emigration freedom for individuals. These policy changes included the implementation of contractual employment (as a replacement for life-tenure jobs), the introduction of a national ID card for each individual, and the availability of a "private" passport application for each citizen (Xiang 2016). Furthermore, in the 1990s, student and unskilled labor migration were two major forces of international emigration for the Chinese.

Changes in the ideological understanding of tourism as well as tourism development—from both the supply and demand side—further contributed to mobility in contemporary Chinese society (Xu and Wu 2016; Zhang 1989). In 1978, international tourism (i.e. inbound tourism) was recognized by the Central Government as an important strategy to achieve a "double harvest" in both the political and economic spheres (Han 1994). In the 1980s, domestic tourism was also recognized as a normal economic activity, rather than the lifestyle of the bourgeoisie

(Zhang 1989). Thus, demand for travel in China was unleashed. From 1980 to 1995, ninety-five state-level tourism policies were formulated with the goal of guiding tourism infrastructure development, regulating the market, and encouraging tourist activities (Tang 2017). Meanwhile, there were increases in disposable income and leisure time for citizens during the 1980s and 1990s. The gross national income per capita increased from USD $307 in 1980 to USD $935 in 2000 (World Data Atlas 2018). In 1995, starting from May 1, a five-day workweek was implemented in China (Ma and Liu 2017). As a result, travel has become an increasingly common part of life in Chinese society.

The patterns of informants' travel movements (in Figure 2a and 2b) echo the evolving state of the macro-environment signaled by China's economic development and implementation of open-door policies. Domestic travel for business as well as leisure sightseeing purposes became more frequent. Trips were further away from home compared to those in the 1960s and 1970s. International trips—both regional and intercontinental—started to emerge, although mainly for business purposes.

During the 1980s among our informants, the cohort born between 1950 and 1959 entered their late 20s and early 30s, and they were at a life stage of family establishment and career development. The cohort born between 1960 and 1969 reached the typical age for university education and entering the workforce in society. Moreover, travel patterns emerged from the two cohorts differently. For the 1950 to 1959 group, most informants (KM06, ZH05) reminisced about their experiences of business trips. In Chinese, a business trip is termed "Chu Chai". The general 1980s perception of "Chu Chai" was that it was synonymous with tourism and was a personal reward since business trip arrangements usually involved an itinerary with leisure elements. For example, there would usually be arrangements for local sightseeing and business

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partner visits, which usually involve sumptuous food and entertainment items (KM01). Two informants (KM06 and ZH05) recalled that they were so struck by the positive differentials of cities in the SEZs compared to most other inland cities. ZH05 said:

"*I had a feeling that my hometown is socialism, but Guangzhou is capitalism. This actually deeply influenced me. I started to pay attention to the news about the Pearl Delta area, about Shenzhen, and Zhuhai…What I saw and heard influenced my later decisions to migrate to Zhuhai.*"

For the 1960 to 1969 group, many of them had their first tourism experience when they left home for university in another city. One collective memory was created by the consumption rules of train tickets in China. At the time, "*the train ticket was usually valid for seven days. You can get off and on as many times as you would like within seven days and spend time to visit places as long as they are between the origin and the destination you bought your ticket for*" (KM10). The informants reported that they were not necessarily driven by tourism motivations and needs but just felt that they should take advantage of the train tickets. "*All the places I visited during my university years are along the railway route between my hometown and the city where my university was located.*" (ZH02).

An interesting pattern, concerning leisure trips organized by employers, emerged from the group born from 1960 to 1969 in Shanghai. Three informants (SH03, SH05, SH08) reported that they worked for government or state-owned organizations after graduation. In the late 1980s, their workers' unions started to organize leisure package tours annually as a benefit for staff. This form of travel was essentially an incentive, and informants thus associated tourism with having fun with colleagues.

In the 1990s, two patterns of tourism mobility emerged from the informants: domestic personal leisure travel and outbound business trips. With increasing disposable income and a

stable economic and political environment, the Chinese urban population was empowered and enabled to engage in tourism. As a result, the concept of leisure travel gradually formed in ordinary peoples' minds. Informants reported an increasing tendency toward personal leisure travel since the mid-1990s. Twelve informants recalled their personal leisure travel experiences in China (eight in the 1950 to 1959 group and four in the 1960 to 1969 group). Most of the trips were motivated by the intention to use leisure trips as a form of learning for children as attested by KM04:

"As my daughter grew, she became the primary reason for our decisions. I know that you learn when you travel. So I would like to take her to as many places as we can afford....but we did less tourism after she started middle school, when she got too busy with her coursework." (KM04).

Popular family travel destinations noted by the informants include coastal cities such as Sanya, Weihai, Dalian, and traditional cultural hubs such as Beijing, Xi'an, and Luoyang. The informants perceived travel as purposeful sightseeing, trying different cuisine, and learning about culture and customs. Interestingly, the informants from Shanghai (SH02, SH 04, SH05, and SH10) perceived domestic tourism as a means to gain an understanding about their hometown through comparison. They mentioned that they always compared tourism destinations with Shanghai in terms of lifestyle, environment, and mindset. They had a very strong sense of pride for Shanghai, since Shanghai has been the leading economic and financial hub in China since the founding of the People's Republic of China. "*In my view, after visiting many places domestically, I feel Shanghai is the best place for living*" (SH1316).

Another travel pattern for the 1990s is outbound business trips (six informants). In the 1990s, many state-owned enterprises and government organizations started to organize outbound trips for their employees to travel abroad (mainly to developed countries such as the U.S. and Japan). These trips allowed them to visit related organizations for learning and training. In

Chinese, such trips were named "Kao Cha" (KM01, KM07)—a form of business investigative travel in which two-thirds of itineraries are usually dedicated to sightseeing. Such trips were taken as "a rewarding benefit" (KM07). All the informants noted that they clearly remembered their first outbound travel, and each informant described their experience in great detail. The informants who visited the USA changed their views towards capitalism:

"*I was so impressed by the civilization and the good order in the society. We visited their factory. It was so clean and the security was invisible…We also went to a concert and people arrived there in advance to wait for us. The concert started at 8pm sharp. Frankly, we felt strange since in China if you say 8pm it must mean 8:30pm….Anyway, the USA is quite different from what I read from the news and saw from movies in China*" (KM10).

KM01 was impressed by the prosperity and affluence in the USA, since he was treated in five-star hotels and theme park resorts. He started to think about the future of his daughter:

"*I wished my family would have a chance to see all this. I hoped my daughter would have a chance to study here, though I understand that our income can never support that. But since then, I paid attention to the news and information about study abroad. I encouraged my daughter to think about and find a way to study in the USA…in the end, she did that.*"

KM04 mentioned that a trip to Thailand inspired him to start his own business:
"*Thailand, though a small country compared to China, had started a market economy. I saw the benefits of that. I thought I should have more disposable income. I should not stay in a state-owned company for the rest of my life…later, I started my own travel agency.*"

Only one informant from Zhuhai (ZH05) reported a self-financed outbound trip at that time. She moved to Zhuhai from Guizhou in the early 1990s. Before she came to Zhuhai, she had literarily no travel experience due to her financial situation. After moving to Zhuhai, she started her own business and became wealthy. In 1995, she visited Thailand at her own expense. "*I was comparatively rich, so I was thinking about the expensive places that my friends visited. So I visited Thailand. I was deeply touched by the power of religion in Thailand.*"

In a nutshell, in the 1980s and 1990s, tourism mobilities were a practice of rewarding business trips, a benefit from state-owned employers, part of a university experience, and occasional self-financed leisure travel. People appeared to equate business travel as tourism as much as they treated sightseeing as tourism. International travel enabled the informants to understand the differences between other countries and China, both in economic and ideological terms. In those years, tourism was perceived as a benefit from employees rather than normal goods for consumption.

2000 onward: Tourism mobilities as relaxing vacations, fashionable accessories, and exploring retirement places and educational opportunities for children.

The first 15 years of the new century witnessed an explosive growth in population mobilities in China. On the one hand, the size of the floating population—migrants residing in a location different than their place of household registration—increased significantly along with the expanding inequity of regional development (Liang, Li, and Ma 2014). On the other hand, tourism expenditure increased from USD $16.759 billion in 2001 to USD $292.2 billion in 2015. China's domestic travel and tourism spending increased from USD $43.6 billion in 2001 to USD $525.7 billion in 2015, growing at an average annual rate of 23% (World Data Atlas 2018). Outbound tourism expenditure increased from USD $13.909 billion in 2001 to USD $29.2 billion in 2015, growing at an average annual rate of 30% (World Data Atlas, 2018).

The Chinese government played an important role in boosting both domestic and international tourism mobilities during this period (Wu, Zhu, and Xu 2000). In December 1998, the Central Government declared the tourism industry a new growth pillar in the national economy and tried to boost leisure travel by setting up the "Golden Week" holiday system (Wu, Xue, Morrison, and Leung 2012). Furthermore, the efforts of the Chinese government in

expanding destinations in the Approved Destination Status (ADS) program stimulated growth of Chinese outbound pleasure travel (Arlt 2006). By 2013, around 146 different countries and territories have signed an ADS agreement with the Chinese government.

Echoing the general picture of tourism mobilities at the national level, in the first fifteen years of the 21st century, the informants' patterns of movement are strikingly different from those of the previous two periods (Figure 2c). The informants engaged in both business and leisure travel around the world. The domestic trips that were elaborated upon were mainly personal leisure trips. The informants noted the popularity of domestic leisure trips but showed no intention to talk about business trips because "*Chu Chai was too much and it was only for work*" (Informant SH10).

Among the 25 informants, only one did not report any overseas travel experience. Four informants reported both business and private international trips, and 20 of them depicted their frequent self-financed and self-motivated international travel experiences. For the informants, travel has become an essential component in their lives. Domestic trips were too frequent for them to describe, since they travel for both business and leisure reasons. International travel has become a very popular and frequent activity in the Chinese society. For example, ZH03 mentioned:

"*After my trip to Macau in 2000, I was thinking I will travel around the world once I can afford it…then I became rich in around 2005. I started from the countries in Asia, then Europe, America, and Australia. Anyway, we plan to go to a different country every year.*"

In general, the informants differentiated the representations of domestic and international tourism mobilities. They perceived domestic tourism mobilities as frequent business trips and leisure activities. Many informants held a similar opinion as informant SH10:

"*I cannot really remember domestic trips since I had too many, for business or short family vacations…We don't really plan for those; particularly in recent years, it is so easy to get (flight) tickets and high-speed trains. We just go whenever we want if we have free time.*"

The informants view outbound tourism as "*real serious tourism*" (SH08). As informant SH01 shared, "*Everyday life is more or less the same. So we need some changes. Now, tourism is a norm in my life. By going to different countries and experiencing different cultures, I feel relaxed and have regained a passion for daily life again.*" Informant SH03 described her value perception changes for outbound tourism. Comparing outbound trips in early 2000 to the ones she made in recent years, SH03 valued early outbound trips to Japan as "*opportunities to learn*" and the ones in recent years to Japan, Bali, and Indonesia as "*enjoying luxury hotels and relaxation.*"

"*We felt that we can afford that kind of travel, in which you stay in a resort and do nothing. I never could understand this kind of travel before; I thought it was a kind of waste. But now I think we like this kind of slow tourism*" (SH03).

For some informants, particularly the group born between 1950 and 1959, overseas trips are often gifts from their adult children or rewards for themselves. They showed no particular preferences toward destinations. "*As long as it is somewhere we never have been before and overseas, we have an interest to try…I think we should travel when we are still healthy and mobile*" (SH04). The informants' depictions of outbound tourism experience to European countries, the U.S., Canada, and Australia seem to suggest that outbound tourism is not about learning and appreciation, but more about experiencing a different lifestyle in terms of food, transportation, and the family relationships in destination societies. Informant SH05 described her annual outbound tourism experience as "*fashionable accessories*" because their children usually arrange such tourism mobilities for them to improve their life quality and "*to be the same as their peers.*"

One pattern of reflections for this cohort is about divergences between socialism and capitalism. This cohort grew up with the Cultural Revolution and was educated about Marxism-Leninism and the Mao Zedong Thought in their youth. During their youth (in the 1970s), they believed only in socialism and held hostile or skeptical attitudes toward capitalism. During their 30s and 40s, this cohort was exposed to the news and knowledge of western economies and their manifest materialism and way of life, which nurtured their curiosity regarding developed countries. As some informants reported, international travel triggered reflections on their own ideology and way of life. Curiosity toward Western countries was an important driving factor for them to conduct international travel:

"With more and more trips made, I get to know different countries; I think the differences among countries are originated from different values and attitudes…We should not judge right or wrong. I mean, revolution is not necessary. They have their own views and reasons…" (SH10).

"When I was young, we had a perception that anyone from Western countries is rich. So when I could travel abroad, I would like to visit the most developed countries, to see their society, their technology to verify the view…However, when I arrived at Charles de Gaulle Airport, I was disappointed. It was old…I like America…from a political point of view, they are different from China, but it does not mean that we should hold hostility toward a different country." (ZH05).

As a result satisfying their curiosity about western countries, some informants reported enhanced patriotism (SH06, SH04, SH10; ZH05):

"I always joke with our Party Secretary in my university, saying our overseas trips should be funded by the Party, since every time is a patriotic education event…I compare many things when I travel, and I find China better in many ways. For example, we always complain about the inefficiency of civil service in China. You will know what inefficiency means in many other developed countries" (SH10).

Similarly, the cohort born between 1960 and 1969 equates overseas tourism with sightseeing and cultural learning. A different theme for this cohort is that they closely associate overseas travel with educational opportunities for their children. "Parents in China travel for their kids. They would like to take the summer break and Golden Weeks to take their kids abroad to

learn about different cultures and broaden their horizons" (ZH01). From 2000 to present, this cohort's children were experiencing the transition period from high school to university or postgraduate study. Therefore, another motive for overseas trips for this cohort is to explore and discover potential destinations for their children for future education and their own retirement:

"My daughter has settled in the U.S. now. Actually, I had a vision for this since 2007 after my trip to the U.S. and Australia" (ZH05).

In a nutshell, tourism mobilities, post-2000, have gradually become a practice of relaxation-oriented vacations, fashionable accessories, and means to explore retirement locations and educational opportunities for children. Our informants differentiated leisure trips and business trips, and embraced multiple formats of tourism such as a resort experience, cruise, or weekend getaway. Sightseeing is not the only meaning for tourism mobility. International tourism is a normality in ordinary people's life, through which the informants experienced different lifestyles, initiated reflections about values and ideological understandings, and developed visions of their children's future and their own retirement in other countries.

Discussion and Conclusions

Answering Cresswell's (2010) call to "disentangle" tourism mobilities (movements, representation, and practice) as well as given the need for the macro-lens to complement dominating micro-spatial views on tourism behavior, we have examined tourism mobilities from a developmental perspective in the historical context of China in 1950s to the present (2016)—a fast evolving society embodying a changing tourism patterns and connotations. Within each of the three periods: the 1950s to 1970s, 1980s to 1990s, and 2000 onward, tourism mobilities were described and analyzed in an attempt to provide a depiction of the entanglement of travel

movements, representations, and practices: representation of tourism mobility is associated with each movement, and, through time, practice is shaped through the accumulation of movements.

The practice of tourism mobility is associated with, and, in fact, emerges from the accumulation of life mobilities over a certain period of time. For instance, the informants who had university experience during late 1970s and early 1980s exhibited more leisure travels than the others due to the mobility capacity afforded by the train trip between hometown and the place where a university is located in. The findings is consistent with those of time-space geographers (albeit focused on the movement component) in Western European contexts who also show that international migration and temporary mobilities (e.g. studying abroad) are the formative forces affecting subsequent patterns of mobilities. In Frändberg (2010), young Swedes who studied or temporary worked abroad exhibited more intense leisure mobility patterns, marked by the so-called "returned travel," or trips back to the place of temporary stay. In addition, after 2000, our informants experienced frequent movement domestically and internationally for the purposes of leisure, escape, and exploration. Some informants (e.g. SH04, KM03) recalled their trips to visit the places where they stayed during the political campaign of "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement" (*Shangshan Xiaxiang Yundong*). However, different from the travel directed by political order in 1970s, now the travel movements for them represent (as shown Table 2) relaxation, reflection, and learning, and they are arranged by their own free will.

Furthermore, while this study illustrates the evolution of tourism mobility over time, it emphasizes that tourism mobility evolves with the changing macro-environment. We demonstrate that the macro-environmental forces drive and enable changes in tourism mobilities. The etic aspect of tourism mobilities (i.e., the travel movements) were enabled by increasing economic autonomy as well as the development of infrastructures, the service industry, and

favorable international relations for a given state. The emic aspects of tourism mobilities were shaped by institutions and regulations (e.g., political endeavors, organizational policies and benefits, and social norms) that enabled travel movements. Our data suggests that travelers develop meanings for travel against the backdrop of historical events and societal practices of particular historical periods. Specifically, political, economic, technological, and cultural forces drove the evolution of tourism mobility. The findings show that individual-level patterns of tourism mobilities reflect the changes in those forces in the macro-environment during the 1950s to 2010s in China. As is shown in Figure 1, from the 1950s to 2010s, China has evolved from an impoverished country to one that witnesses not only rapid development of the economy and infrastructure but also major changes in ideology and international relations. Correspondingly, Figure 2a-c and Table 2 display the evolution of both etic and emic aspects of informants' tourism mobilities, including the expanding geographic scope of travel movements, the increasing travel frequency, and the changing perceptions towards the meaning and the roles of tourism mobilities in life. These patterns attest to Frändberg and Vilhelmson's (2003) observation that, due to increasing flexibilization in citizens' of many countries use of time and space, intensity, extensity, and velocity of long-distance travel is on a rise, attesting to the idea of time-space compression. In China's case, this flexibilization was enabled by economic prosperity, more or less open borders, and relaxed outbound travel policies. The transition to the socialist market economic system in late 1970s was instrumental in developing the practice of travel as a commodity, fashionable accessory, and a means to look after one's wellbeing, in the present.

Moreover, from the lens of the new mobility paradigm and taking a developmental view, this study makes connections between macro- and micro-forces in shaping tourism mobilities.

The policies and experiments dictated by neoliberalism, which is an ideology dominated in the economic development in China for decades (Wang 2003), resulted in special economic zones, the emergence of an economically elite class, increased discrepancy between urban and rural living standards, and a "floating" population. We specifically noted the uneven mobility (Sheller 2016) among informants in one city, and among informants in different cities. These patterns reflected the supposition that mobile capability is related to economic development and social status. For instance, in 1960s, SH08 came from a family in which her grandfather and father were high-ranking military commanding officers. She described her experience visiting her grandfather in a military base in Fuzhou, Fujian Province. The long-haul train travel in a luxury cabinet was rare in the Chinese society then and is a privilege granted by her grandfather's social status. In 1990s, ZH05, a female entrepreneur in Zhuhai, reported a self-financed outbound trip, which was very rare in 1990s and a luxury goods for the wealthy class. Such a mobility pattern was enabled by the economic affordability gained from the special economic development zone policies in China. From this angle, this study echoes Kirillova et al. (2018)'s study in attesting to the interplay of social macro-forces and leisure travel practices, while it differs from their study by using tourism mobility as a conceptual tool to expand the scope of investigation beyond leisure travel, and to include etic (physical movement, practice) aspects of travel along with emic (representation, practice) aspects of travel.

This study complements the research stream regarding Chinese travelers from a sociological lens. Different from the existing studies, our study investigated tourism mobilities in the context of China via a longitudinal view casting travel drivers, meaning-making and practices as juxtaposed into the larger and evolving social and economic fabric. The evidences of this

research corroborate with the proposition that the development of society in China shaped the changes of Chinese travelers' behavior and travel related sense-making in the past decades.

Theoretical contribution

Aside from the above discussion, this study contributes to the bourgeoning literature on mobilities by empirically demonstrating the intertwinement of representations, movements, and practices: one movement may have different representations; likewise, same practices may be associated with different movements and representations. The study is one case in point to illustrate this complex entanglement. Although research on tourists' spatial movements is common, especially among human geographers, tourists voices on how they themselves understand and interpret these movements, as well as make sense of what affects these movements, are typically missing. Thus, the present study have provided a much needed emic perspective on tourism mobilities, while maintaining the macro-level of analysis. Based on this, we suggest that in their analyses of tourist behavior, researchers should consider looking at tourist practices and representations beyond "purpose of visit," business vs. leisure vs. VFR,", which oversimplifies the emic component of mobilities, and to recognize that tourism is inherently related to tourists' other (non-tourism) movements, as well as non-movements. Second, we contribute to the tourism scholarship by illustrate how the socio-political-ideological-economic environment plays a role in tourism mobilities' development. There are many societies in the world, each with a unique developmental path. Our insights can be considered when predicting current and future development of not only tourism flows but also trends in tourist motivations in developing societies and benefits they seek when integrating into the mobile world. Finally, with the specific focus on tourism mobilities, the study deepens the analysis of the economic miracle phenomenon in China.

Practical implications

Albeit its size and rapid ascend to the status of the world's largest travel market, the marketing strategies oriented towards the Chinese travelers have been established based on rather static and episodic research observations. The outcomes of this research underscores the importance of understanding the traveler needs and preferences based on a developmental lens. Today's Chinese traveler behavior is undoubtedly a product of where and who they were, and a product of the social genesis shaping their travel DNA. The developmental lens on how consumers interpret the act and meaning of travel has important management implications for tourism management for China and for destinations aiming at better precision in their marketing messages and experience delivery for the Chinese travelers.

Domestically, for example, the Chinese national holiday system presents as an acknowledgement of the value of tourism to its citizens. Both the government and the private sectors can leverage the evolving tourism mobility tendencies to guide their attraction and hospitality resources development. Tourism becomes one of the drivers, for example, for the economic development of Chinese rural and remote regions. This research can provide an effective contextual depiction of today's travelers preferences and needs. Increasingly, for instances, Chinese tourism providers have moved towards transforming a sightseeing focused business model to leisure and wellness driven model. This shift will align well with the current consumer valuation of tourism. In other words, relating everydayness and everyday needs into tourism experience design and marketing may represent a forward-looking orientation.

Internationally, as competition for the Chinese outbound travel market intensifies, it would be unwise to treat this market as a single mass without establishing a richer understanding of their evolving tendencies and reasons behind the exhibited specificities. The complex

interaction between the evolving social, cultural and economic factors and that of meaning of travel for a society can inform generational imprints of how and why travelers make their destination choices and do the things they do at the destination. The evolving nature of travel representations can further enhance practitioners understanding of what offerings may best address Chinese travelers' representational needs. For example, this research noted that an important representation pattern for Chinese travelers today is to experience the lifestyle differences in terms of food, transportation, and the family life styles in the destination societies. If so, tourism service providers need to consider the trade-offs between standardization and tailoring. In other words, too much tailoring of services in the name of Chinese meals, Chinese interpretive services, Chinese style services and amenities may prohibit the visitors from fulfilling the representation needs of getting to know "the other".

Treating the Chinese market based on an established image of Chinese traveler mobility patterns (such as group travel), sense making and satisfaction (such as photo taking and shopping) may not be reflective of the current and near future needs of this market. Special interest tourism products, staying-put resort style vacationing, socialization oriented experiences are some examples of capitalizing on the evolving nature of travel meaning making of Chinese consumers. There is a need to carefully couch the understanding of Chinese traveler behavior and preferences in a research paradigm that allows an evolving view of this traveler market. In that sense, this research represents a refreshing step towards establishing such a strategic framework that encourages longitudinal and contextual knowledge of product preferences.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations of this study include its focus on only one generational cohort of Chinese citizens. On one hand, it allowed a focused inquiry into the mobilities of a certain historical period. On the other hand, it did not permit an exploration of events influencing mobilities before the 1950s or as experienced by younger generations of the Chinese—the citizens who grew up in a more open China. Multi-generational or focused research into these aspects could be a welcomed addition to the tourism and mobilities literature. Further, we illustrated the development of tourism mobilities in the context of a single country. Multi-case approaches comparing and contrasting transformations of tourism mobilities in societies with distinct paths of social, economic, and political developments would be helpful in further understanding the diversity of the traveling world. Methodologically, biographical research methods as employed in this study are criticized on the basis on memory bias because of the temporal gap between an event and the time of interview (Huber et al., 2017). Future studies adopting this method are recommended to supplement data collection with mementos, e.g. travel diaries, photographs, souvenirs. Further, the data were collected in cities and thus the participants were chosen to represent the middle class urban China who may not reflect mobilities of Chinese citizens of less urban or rural China. With the constructivist position, qualitative research design and purposive sampling approach, the findings are not generalizable across the population. The constructivist stance underpinning the study also means that 25 study participants are sources of data inasmuch as the three researchers are data interpreters and creators of the final narrative. Yet, we believe that, although inherently subjective, the study supplements the commonsensical narratives shaped by the Chinese public discourse by providing this very emic interpretation of tourism mobilities juxtaposed on the canvas of historic events in the 1955-2016 China.

Finally, given the nature of the study, we introduced the selection bias by recruiting individuals who travelled in the past and continue traveling (although not necessarily internationally) in the present. Thus, the sample contains participants who have means to travel, which is, again, a characteristic of China's middle class (Zeng and Go 2013). Mobilities paradigm scholars, however, are increasingly calling for an attention to immobilities and uneven mobilities that are produced and re-produced by mobility-constraining mechanisms (e.g. policies, economic and political power relations) (Sheller 2016). Future research in citizen's tourism non-mobilities (e.g. staycation) is welcome.

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