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China's Outbound Tourism during the 1980s - A Socio-Political Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Through the introduction of the Open Door and Reform Policy in the late 1970s and the ensuing period of social upheaval and re-structuring during the 1980s, the China outbound travel phenomenon exhibited some distinctive characteristics which are not readily explainable using the established tourism theories. The literature has generally characterized international leisure travel as discretionary consumption prompted by motivators (e.g. reasons for travel), and facilitators (e.g. discretionary income and available leisure time). Drawing upon an examination of Guangdong residents and their attitudes to the travel phenomenon during the 1980s, this exploratory paper proposes a model of outbound tourism behaviour which explores the interrelationship between migration and tourism and incorporates the concept of socio-political change occurring in the source market.

INTRODUCTION

The various economic reforms which began to take effect in China from 1978 facilitated personal and collective wealth creation and overseas travel opportunities. When the reforms were first introduced, the Chinese appeared hesitant and fearful, consistent with the disappointments that they had experienced through the recurrent power struggles which had characterised the three previous decades. The 1978 and subsequent Government reforms appeared to resemble previous political campaigns, which were frequently short-lived and quickly overtaken by upheavals and policy reversals. In this political context, many Chinese seized the first available opportunity to travel overseas, sensing that the door to the outside world would not remain open

for long. This behaviour took the form of the "waves of going abroad" which persisted through much of the 1980s. The present research investigates the wider social context behind the departure overseas of so many Chinese during this period. It reviews the relevant literature and examines the attitudes of residents in Guangdong Province.

According to conventional travel consumption theory, travel decision-making is determined by two major factors - motivators and facilitators. The present research suggests that the particular circumstances and relevant socio-political context surrounding China's outbound tourism from 1978 and through the 1980s should be used as a supplement to the established theories. This approach acknowledges the ongoing importance of government intervention in China, which has played a more central role than has been the case in the Western liberal democracies where most of the prevailing travel theories have been developed and tested. This investigation is timely given the increasing prominence of China outbound travel as a prominent global phenomenon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the late 19th century, China progressively overcame its economic and political weaknesses and emerged as an independent, albeit nascent democracy. After the Communist takeover in 1949, it firstly entered a period of central planning and then as a powerful economic force operating within a "socialist market system". Through the various stages of China's development, migration has been an important influence, whether permanent or (in the case of tourism) temporary. The present paper attempts to give greater and appropriate recognition to the magnitude of the socio-political changes affecting China through the 1980s and their influence on tourism. The proposed theoretical framework combines elements of population movement and tourism consumption, based on the proposition that the decision-making of prospective Chinese outbound travelers during the 1980s was strongly influenced by socio-political factors. It is proposed here that during the earlier post 1978 reform period such travel decisions had distinguishing characteristics which challenge prevailing theoretical assumptions.

Given the complexity of China's historical and political context it seems reasonable that the scope of any thorough analysis of outbound tourism should extend beyond the economic and business domain. To explore how the relationships between the travel decisions of individual Chinese and the wider socio-political context have evolved, Table 1 outlines the influence of 'push' and 'pull' factors on population movements generally and on outbound travel in particular. It is shown that the progressive levels of development and prevailing social conditions have played a major part in the development of outbound tourism and will continue to do so into the future. The following sections provide a narrative account of the evolution of outbound tourism from Guangdong Province in Southern China, taking into account both the socio-political and psycho-social dimensions.

During the 'Gold Rush' period of the later 19th century, hundreds of thousands of 'coolies' from Southern China, many of them from Guangdong Province, were shipped off to America and Australia. A number subsequently dispersed to other parts of the world. This phenomenon commenced the long history of mobility amongst certain groups within the Chinese community. Despite this established pattern, successive post war Chinese governments in the period up to 1978 sought to control all population movements. This was enforced domestically through strict household registration requirements and by controlling the supply of food and commodity vouchers. The very idea of international freedom of movement was suppressed from 1949 until 1978. Even those wishing to relocate from rural to urban areas within China itself were required to adhere to complex procedures with applications often extending over many years. It was not until the advent of the Open Door and Reform policy that government progressively relaxed its population controls. The relaxation impacted upon both tourism and migration.

During the 1980s, mangliu ('blind-flows') of population overwhelmed major cities in Guangdong and in other southern and eastern coastal regions and emerged as a critical social challenge for government. Mangliu refers to the influx from rural, less developed areas into the urban or wealthier areas of China from 1978 and through the 1980s. The difficulty of handling the phenomenon led to the prospect of major social and political unrest (Day and Xia 1994; Wong and Mok 1995; Perry and Selden 2000). The present investigation focussed on the Guangdong Province in Southern China in part because this region has been centre stage at the initiation and subsequent expansion of migration and tourism both domestic and international. The empirical component explores the views of Guangdong residents with a view to understanding consumer attitudes towards tourism within the wider socio-political and consumption context.

According to most theories of population movement, humans are mobile and commonly relocate to other places in search of a better life, typically in response to environmental conditions (Newton 1977; Wulff et al. 1993; Day and Xia 1994; Bell 1995). It is widely accepted that such movements have played a major part in the process of globalization. Permanent movements (in the form of emigration) and temporary movements (whether shorter or longer term) are of considerable social and economic significance (Stahl et al. 1993: xiii; Wulff et al. 1993; Hugo 1996:28). Since tourism forms a major component of temporary population movements, the migration literature is relevant to the present investigation. Indicative of the active relationship between tourism and migration, exploratory leisure-based trips frequently provide an opportunity for prospective migrants to learn about a destination and its attributes (Oigenblick and Kirschenbaum 2002).

The development of tourism from China to Australia is an instructive example of the relationship between tourism and migration during the post-1978 period. As is evidenced in the literature, travelling overseas in pursuit of a better life expands most rapidly during periods of natural and man-made dis-

Table 1. Socio-political Change and the Development of China Outbound Tourism

Pre – 1978	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Negligible.	Rapid growth.	Steady. Gathering market momentum.	Rapid growth. Worldwide recognition.	Steady growth. Major international source market.
High push. Low pull.	Extremely high push. Low pull.	Extremely high push. High pull.	High push. High pull.	Low push. Low pull.
Strict political control. Poor economic conditions. Strong ideology.	Relaxed political control. Improved economic conditions. Fading ideology. Uncertainty and insecurity about the future. Illusions about the outside world.	High uncertainty and insecurity. Greatly improved economic conditions. Weak ideology. High expectation of outside world.	Improved discretionary income and time. New knowledge. Psychological fulfilment. Quality of life. Upward social mobility. Approved Destination Status (ADS) and relaxed regulations.	Relaxation. Self-esteem. Globalisation. Quality of life. Minimal regulation.
Little action due to suppressed and unfulfillable desires.	Impetuous behaviour driven by emerging optimism and inadequate provision of information.	Risk-taking behaviours as a result of better knowledge and higher expectations about the outside world.	Mass travel as a result of easier access to destinations and relaxed entry control.	Market maturity leads to more sophisticated and individualised travel.
Strict and highly ideological central planning.	Chaos and uncertainty during early reform period. Under-established social mechanisms. Tentative relaxation of regulations.	Progressively better controlled with of economic successes and political stability.	Promising future after successful bid for 2008 Olympics and admission to WTO. Opportunities and challenges. Global integration. Better political and social order.	Deeper involvement in globalisation. Stable political and social climate.
Strictly controlled by socio-political conditions.	Highly sensitive to socio-political change.	Highly sensitive to socio-political change.	Highly sensitive to socio-political change.	Less sensitive to socio-political change.

Source: The researchers.

aster. During the post 1978 period, consumers harboured the fear of another man-made disaster even though its likelihood was overestimated. A recurrence of the political struggles and food shortages which characterized Mao's Cultural Revolution was widely feared and probably contributed to the surge in Chinese emigration (Seagrave 1995:262). In the context of the theory of consumption, the search by migrants for political and social certainty may be viewed as a "push" factor. This search prompted many Chinese to expatriate whether legally or illegally. Of those who travelled to Australia as outbound travellers during the 1980s, students comprised a prominent group within the broad category of shorter or longer term temporary migrants. Some departed with the intention of remaining abroad permanently, whereas others were seeking work to fund their travel expenses with a view to returning to China. The former group constitutes part of the long established pattern of outward migration which has been noted previously. The latter group was a newer category.

Human mobility theory informs us that residents from poorer, underdeveloped countries habitually seek to relocate to developed, richer countries seeking a better life. Such relocations help to explain the growth of tourist flows from China to developed countries including Australia. Visitation fluctuates between temporary and permanent when conditions progressively improve in the generating country. Of all China outbound travellers, the intention to migrate permanently is most common amongst those who possess established ties overseas. During the 1980s those who were ineligible to migrate, used a variety of methods to achieve their goals. In the case of China to Australia travel, options included applying to travel under the categories of short term tourist, business or student visa. Despite the strict visa controls that have been applied to tourists from "high risk" countries such as China within more developed destination countries such as Australia, many intending illegal migrants reached their intended destination successfully (Mo 2004). At one stage during the 1980s, there were in excess of 50,000 Chinese short term business visa holders overstaying their designated visa period in Australia. This is indicative of the complex interplay between individual travel decisions and the socio-political environment prevalent in the source country. In the case of Australia, the declaration of an amnesty for Chinese overstayers in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Incident (1989) led to a subsequent rise in citizenship applications amongst those already in Australia. This is indicative of the impact of socio-political conditions at the destination, though further examination of this influence is regarded as outside the scope of the present investigation.

'Push' and 'pull' factors play a part in both permanent and short term travel movements. In the case of permanent migration, 'push' factors include unpleasant economic, demographic, social, political, or natural circumstances in the home country. 'Pull' factors refer to appealing economic, social, political and/or environmental related conditions within the destination country. Many migrants depart from countries experiencing low or stagnating living

standards and are attracted by the prospect of higher living standards, favorable economic conditions, and social and political stability. Push and pull factors also influence shorter-term movements. Residents from developed, industrialized countries may be 'pushed' from cramped Asian mega-cities and 'pulled' to countries such as Australia which offer a clean environment and comfortable lifestyle. Appleyard has characterised Asian migration as a symptom of demographic transition, with large scale emigration from early modernising countries such as China to more modernized countries (1991:5-6). However, it is not inconceivable that such movements could be reversed if China achieves its modernization goals. The pattern of China outbound tourism since 1978 appears to support the view that population movements fluctuate through the various stages of economic transition. Socio-political conditions in the source market clearly influenced travel movements generally and in the case of tourists from Guangdong, connections with the Chinese overseas diaspora.

The Tourism/Migration Relationship

The connections between the tourism and migration phenomena have been frequently noted (Oigenblick & Kirschenbaum 2002:1008; and Williams & Hall 2001:3). They were evident in the case of the Chinese students who departed during the mid 1980s and subsequently became permanent migrants. 'Push-pull' factors have formed an important part of many of the models which have been developed to encapsulate the migration phenomenon. They are especially applicable to tourism in the case of destination image and environmental factors within the generating country. In the former case Australia's Chinese diaspora may have contributed to the development of a positive destination image and reputation. In the latter case Chinese workers continue to earn low salaries by international standards despite significant improvements over the past two decades. This disparity has played an important part in prompting many Chinese to travel to developed countries, seeking entry using any available means. Some intending travellers acquired an appropriate visa at highly inflated prices, whereas some purchased forged passports from international people smugglers and a final group stowed away by boat or by land (Mo 2004).

Oigenblick and Kirschenbaum have suggested that push factors apply differently to migration and tourism, by increasing migration activity but reducing tourism flows. During the waves of outbound travel from China through the 1980s, 'push-pull' factors applied in both directions. China inbound tourism also grew rapidly, indicative of overseas interest in former 'iron-curtain' countries which became accessible for the first time in recent memory. This suggests that 'push-pull' factors vary according to the relevant setting.

During the experience of severe poverty and periodic starvation within China prior to 1978, most consumption involved satisfying physical needs. Overseas travel was restricted to diplomats, to a few exchange students and to those escaping to adjoining countries (eg. Thailand) and territories (eg. Hong

Kong). The immediate response from Chinese consumers to the Open Door and Reform policy was to satisfy their physical and biological needs. The announcement of the new freedoms unleashed an immediate desire to acquire daily necessities. Having satisfied these needs consumers then moved on to the next level in search of social safety and political security. During the mid 1980s the prevailing desire safety and security led to the 'chuguo chao' ('waves of going abroad'). This coincided with in the lead up to the 'Tiananmen Square Incident' a military crackdown by the Chinese Government following a student movement in June 1989 which led to a loss of many lives. According to Tang (1997) and Mo (2004), travellers who left China during this period were seeking a better life and may be described as "opportunistic". Most were unable to finance their own travel, and were reliant on borrowings from friends and relatives. They intended to work hard for a few years and repay their debts progressively. Such travel activity was an "investment" rather than an example of hedonic consumption. During 'chuguo chao' domestic tourism was largely confined to business related travel and/or visiting friends and relatives. The era of domestic leisure travel did not arrive until the 1990s when government introduced extended paid leave provision (King, Shaohua and Tang 2005).

As China's reforms progressively deepened and lives improved, the need to emphasise personal safety and political security diminished and travellers increasingly shifted from social to self-esteem needs. This trend was evident in the steadily declining proportion of overstayers within the increasing outbound tourism flows to developed countries such as Australia (Melbourne Daily Chinese Press 2002). The attempt to satisfy "social needs" was particularly evident amongst Chinese students and amongst travellers undertaking fully inclusive package tours. In the latter case everything is handled by service providers such as migration agents, travel agents, and education providers. The influence of socio-political context on the ultimate decision-making of the Chinese outbound travellers during the 1980s is illustrated in Figure Two.

The proposed 'Preliminary Model of Chinese Outbound Tourism' suggests that factors in the socio-political environment determine travel choices prior to the influence of conventional travel decision-making processes. The Chinese experience as modelled may have relevance for other developing countries, where the socio-political environment has strongly influenced the development of outbound tourism. By acknowledging the distinctiveness of Chinese travel decision-making relative to its Western counterpart, the model places the more established economic and psychological factors within the wider socio-political context.

If the proposition is accepted that China outbound tourism manifests different characteristics from its equivalent in the developed Western world, to what extent are Chinese-type practices exceptional and to what extent symptomatic of behaviours prevalent in other socialist nations? To date the Chinese authorities appear to have avoided a recurrence of the "velvet revolution," which swept the countries of formerly Communist Eastern Europe.
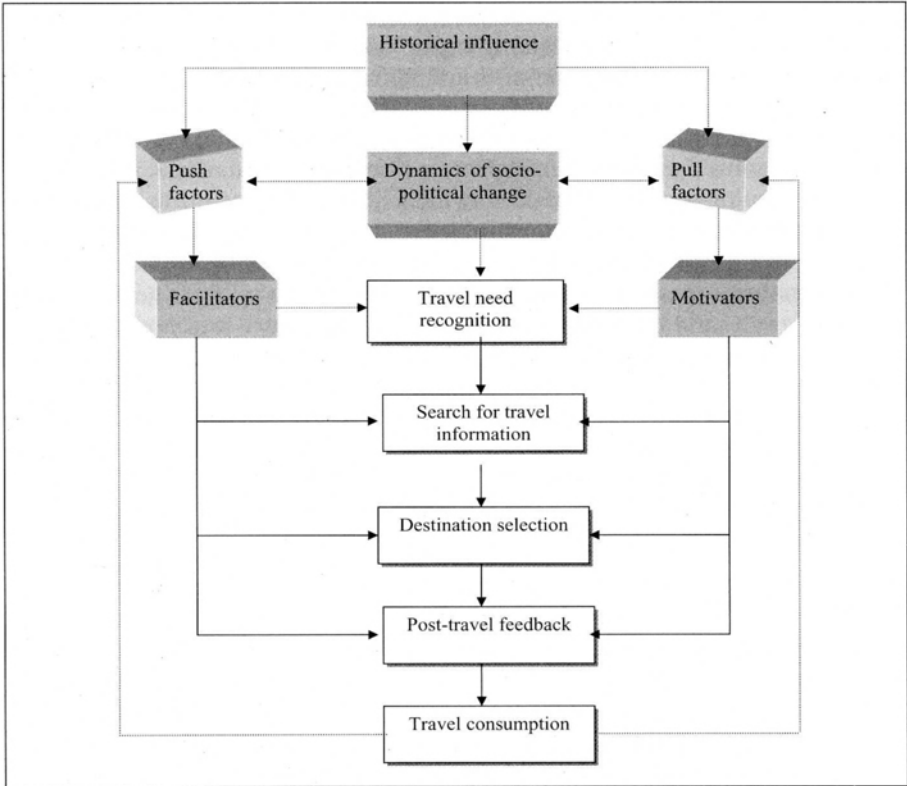
Figure 1. Socio-political Change and the Development of China Outbound Tourism

They have resolutely resisted any loosening of the political authority of the communist party. The continuing party monopoly of power has undoubtedly perpetuated the fears and uncertainties evident in the minds of many Chinese during the 1980s. This is despite the fact that the departures which occurred during the 1980s were 'facilitated' by more relaxed government policies and improved economic conditions. The psychology of individual travellers involves a complex interplay with the socio-political environment, where government plays a powerful role in shaping this environment including examples of quite erratic influence. The applicability of the findings of the current study does not extend directly to other socialist countries, but may be a worthwhile focus of future investigations, particularly where central government control and regulations have undergone rapid liberalisation.

In the context of China's long history of diaspora, the 1980s marked the first contemporary 'waves of going overseas' in search of a better future. Many departed under the guise of studying abroad, before subsequently joining the community of overseas Chinese known as 'Greater China' (Bolt 2000; Hwang 2002). Their collective contribution to the overseas Chinese network, plus ad-

vances in information dissemination and globalization created a strong 'pull' factor for many Chinese in pursuit of a utopian dream (Mo 2004). As has been noted in Figure 3, the phenomenon resulted from the interplay between push and pull factors, the dynamics of socio-political change, and the role of relevant facilitators and motivators. In extending conventional travel decision-making theories, the researchers maintain that the revised model helps to explain the mentality and behaviours of the China outbound travellers during the period prior to the achievement of full market maturity.

Within Figure 2 it is assumed that the prospective China outbound tourist must possess motivating and facilitating prerequisites such as time, money, an opportunity and desire to travel and visa eligibility. It is proposed here that other influences include: political factors (eg Government regulations); economic factors (eg consumer employment and discretionary incomes); social factors (eg peer group influence); and psychological factors (eg the perceived appeal of overseas travel). These interrelated factors influence decision-making and may be analyzed at both the macro (eg the socio-political environment) and micro levels (eg the traveller's personal circumstances and disposition).

METHODOLOGY

To understand the relationship between the individual traveller and the socio-political context, the researchers conducted a pilot study consisting of 71 personal interviews followed by a quantitative survey of 588 consumers within Guangdong province. It was felt that conducting a quantitative consumer survey would provide useful Chinese insights from respondents who had observed the 1980s travel phenomenon first hand and would have been aware of its characteristics and significance. To gather insights from prospective respondents, the researchers undertook a survey based investigation. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used to gather a range of primary and secondary data (Creswell 1998:15). Prospective respondents for both the semi-structured interviews and the survey-based investigation were residents of Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhongshan, and Dongguan cities within Guangdong province. The qualitative component was used as a way of scoping the investigation and included participant observations, small group discussions, and in-depth interviews. The qualitative element was considered to be important in view of the exploratory nature of the research and in the light of the limited representativeness of the survey of Guangdong residents. The central proposition of the investigation was that travel consumption during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s was not determined exclusively by 'push' and 'pull' factors, but by the socio-political context, including the activities of China's political, economic and social institutions.

The research has a number of limitations: First, the scope of the survey was confined to cities within Guangdong Province. Although Guangdong is the largest single source of Chinese outbound travellers, the sample cannot be viewed as representative of the size and diversity of China or the totality of

China's outbound travel market. Second, whilst every attempt was made to secure a diversity of responses, questionnaires were distributed predominantly amongst professionals and more highly-educated respondents. The researchers were reliant upon academic and professional networks to support the distribution. Though the principal researcher undertook much of the surveying personally and distribution was highly coordinated, a dependence on third parties for distribution purposes may also have resulted in sampling error and incomplete data. Finally, the surveys were not longitudinal and were conducted in 2001, many years after the experiences of the 1980s. While respondents had the benefit of perspectives gained over many years subsequent to the events described, their opinions are likely to reflect changed conditions and sentiment and may include some faulty recollections.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 2 provides a profile of the survey respondents to the questionnaires. Some notable features of the sample are the fairly equal number of males and females and the substantial number of respondents in the 26-45 age group (52.9%). Most respondents (62.7%) were married. The fact that over half of the respondents (55.6%) were tertiary qualified is symptomatic of the professional and managerial orientation of the respondent profile. Professionals and executives make up a substantial proportion of the respondents (38.1%), consistent with the predominance of city residents in the more prosperous coastal regions of China's south east. Most respondents (83.1%) were from Guangzhou city. Only 16.1% of respondents reported household incomes in excess of 4,000 RMB per month. Though one should acknowledge the growth in both incomes and prices in China since the surveys were administered and the over representation of the more affluent echelons of society, the modest incomes are indicative of the limited spending capacity of respondents by developed country standards.

Respondents associated income levels, occupation and employment status, education and overseas ties with the attainability of overseas travel. Their optimism about the prospects for outbound travel was evident, despite the modesty of the reported incomes relative to the cost of international travel at the time the survey was administered. Most respondents (83.1%) regarded the open door policy and subsequent reforms as key drivers of improving travel opportunities. The reasons provided to explain increasing outbound travel included: relaxed government regulations (60%), greater consumer choice (39%), increased freedom of movement (33.2%), more information about the outside world (32%), more favorable conditions generally (25.2%), and more favourable economic conditions (11.6%). Despite the generally positive view, around 13% of respondents felt that travel had not become more accessible for them, citing the difficulty of obtaining visas, and concerns about diminishing government welfare payments. It is likely that such views would be more prominent still, if the survey had been conducted in a less economically advanced part of China.

Table 2. Respondent Demographic Profiles

Variables	Frequency (N=588)	Valid percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	293	49.8
Female	291	49.6
Missing	4	0.6
Age		
15-25	109	18.5
26-35	149	25.3
36-45	162	27.6
46-55	99	16.8
56-65	50	8.5
Over 65	19	3.2
Marital status		
Married	369	62.7
Never married	170	29
Divorced	1	0.2
De facto	3	0.5
Missing	45	7.6
Education		
Primary school	12	2.0
Secondary school	233	39.7
Tertiary and above	327	55.6
Others	14	2.4
Missing	2	0.3
Occupation		
Professional	90	15.3
Para-professional, trade-person, technician	92	15.6
Executive, business owner, entrepreneur, sales-representative	134	22.8
Public servant	47	8.0
Blue collar / white collar workers	97	16.5
Others. eg. student, housewife, farmer	57	9.7
Missing	71	12.1
Employment		
Private sector	145	24.7
Public sector	212	36.1
Joint-venture	50	8.5
Self-employed	76	12.9
Unemployed	20	3.4
Retired	59	10.0
Other	1	0.2
Missing	25	4.2

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Profiles (Continued)

Variables	Frequency (N=588)	Valid percentage (%)
Personal Income		
Less than RMB 1000	102	17.3
RMB 1001-2000	228	38.8
RMB 2001-4000	104	17.7
Over RMB 4000	94	16.0
Missing	60	10.2
City of residence		
Guangzhou	487	83.0
Zhongshan	47	8.0
Dongguan	29	5.0
Shenzhen	25	4.0

In the case of the 71 personal interviewees, most agreed that travel attitudes have been affected by social changes underway within China. All interviewees welcomed and expressed a degree of pride about the Open Door and Reform Policy and subsequent progress. Most agreed that the policy had provided business opportunities for capable and hard working people, and had made travel more accessible. This view was expressed most clearly with reference to domestic travel, which had been encouraged by government and where development had been accompanied by the expansion of relevant public and private sector organizations. In contrast to the attitudes which might have been prevalent during the late 1970s and early 1980s, most respondents expressed confidence about the longevity of the various reforms and felt that it was unlikely that China would revert to the circumstances prevailing 20 years previously. The greater open-mindedness of China's leadership was also viewed as a key influence. Whilst respondents were optimistic about China's future, some unresolved political issues were noted, including relations with the USA and independence claims in Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang province.

Though most respondents were positive and optimistic, some expressed concerns about the negative effects of the reforms. The major threats were noted as social disorder, unemployment, bribery, the widening gap between rich and poor, environmental problems, unfair social wealth distribution and welfare, particularly the scaling back of the medical and housing systems. Respondents expressed concern about the diminishing role of government in the social welfare system. It was also felt that uneven wealth distribution might lead to civil unrest with a consequential impact on travel attitudes.

Most respondents (86%) characterized the outbound travelers of the 1980s as intending migrants, particularly in the case of those travelling to developed countries. Respondents noted that this situation changed significantly during the 1990s and attributed this to China's economic success. When asked to place themselves in the position of those travelling overseas, most respond-

ents (72%) stated that they would return to China within the stipulated visa period if a request to extend was declined. Respondents commented that those who had purposefully participated in illegal migration during the 1990s and had chosen to risk their lives were mainly from under-developed regions of China. Respondents characterised these travelers as less educated, inadequately informed, and as desperate to leave their home towns or villages in search of a better life. Respondents noted that these travelers were particularly vulnerable to illegal people-traders because of their lack of education and their eagerness to find a better life overseas. Indicative that circumstances in China have changed substantially since the 1980s, in one destination country, Australia's Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) has reported that the number of Chinese overstayers has declined steadily, prompting a loosening of the visa control regulations. Despite China's long-standing reputation as a "high risk" source country and contrary to the previously high overstay record of Chinese citizens, it is no longer one of the top 10 listing for either the general or visitor overstaying rates (DIMIA 2003). This is indicative of a change of Chinese traveller attitudes and of how social changes are shaping behaviours.

Most respondents agreed that the purpose of travel is influenced by the destination and trip duration. It was noted that nearby Hong Kong and Macau are strongly favoured by VFR travelers, whereas Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam (located slightly further afield) are more closely associated with leisure travel. They observed that travel to developed Western countries has often been business related or in connection with some form of technical exchange, and in some cases with learning about Western culture. If the survey were to be re-administered at the time of publication, it is likely that the emphasis on leisure travel would be stronger.

In the case of Australia-bound travel, behavioural patterns have evolved over time, demonstrated by the issuances of visas. According to Australia's Department of Immigration, student visas predominated during the 1980s (although this category was not recognized explicitly in the Short Term Arrival statistics issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)). During the 1990s short term Business Visas (Class 456) and long term Business Visas (Class 457) dominated. The share of tourist visas has increased substantially in the period since 2000, though business related travel has remained crucial (Tourism Australia China Market Profile 2002). The researchers note the ongoing importance of business related travel, reflective of China's urgent need to acquire the knowledge and skills associated with overseas technology during the economic transformation process. This is suggestive of a strong connection between socio-political change and outbound travel.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has provided some evidence that travel patterns and push and pull factors within China's Guangdong province changed during the 1980s

in line with the emerging socio-political context. The interplay between individual travel decisions and changes to the regulatory environment is complex; however, the preliminary model that has been proposed is an attempt to contextualise their relationship. It is clear that the appeal of various overseas destinations rose and fell as consumer purchasing power increased and fashions fluctuated. Whether the full market potential of particular destinations is realized will depend on the strategies adopted by policy-makers in tourist receiving countries such as China. Understanding the determinants of traveller decision-making and the socio-political environment will be particularly important in the case of strategy development for emerging source markets such as China.

The researchers have highlighted a number of limitations with existing consumption and tourism theories for explaining China outbound travel behaviour. In this analysis of Guangdong Province, it has been suggested that prevailing orthodoxies do not fully accommodate the complexity of China's socio-political environment, particularly in view of its vast population with provinces varying from highly to least developed and the sudden liberalisation of the rules governing sanctioned consumer behaviour. It is suggested that the socio-political context and the tourism model proposed in this paper in particular should be considered along with the relationship with migration when undertaking future research about China outbound tourism. Whilst the model needs to be tested more rigorously within China, it is also hoped that it may have some application to market environments such as Vietnam and Cambodia, which have experienced comparable socio-political conditions under the direction of a single party. Finally, the researchers suggest that further investigations should be conducted into the relationship between migration and tourism, as well as on-going investigation of the changing travel behavior of the China outbound market.

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