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A realist analysis of civilised tourism in China: A social structural and agential perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates structural and agential mechanisms that bring about the value-informed practices in civilised tourism in China. It discovers that positional powers and the present social movement of civilised tourism development co-create a condition for agencies to suffice - triggering psychological and social causes engineered by agents' capabilities of recognising their concerns, reflexive and evaluative reasoning, forging of identity, moral engagement, and learning. The transition from being a moral self to a civilised Chinese tourist to one who represents China is highlighted. The study concludes: the good level of gelness between sampled actors and the ideation of civilised tourism, and identified variations in socio-cultural interactions suggest a morphogenesis of contingent complementarity (i.e. transforming the system). Practical implications are discussed.

1. Introduction

As a core industry in China, tourism further stimulates economic activities and enhances the harmony of the society through increased mobility across the country and internationally. According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China (hereafter the Ministry) (MCT, 2020, June 20), in 2019, over 154 million Chinese took overseas holidays while the number of domestic tourists surged to 6 billion, representing an annual increase of 3.3% and 8.4% respectively. One thing that has come with this boost is the growing reports of "bad tourist behaviours" of the Chinese (e.g. Branigan (2013), Kuhn (2015), and Zheng (2017)). To respond to this situation, the Chinese authority and its tourism agency have strengthened mechanisms promoting civilised tourism, for example regulating tourism businesses' practice and educating Chinese tourists to be more conscientious of their behaviours in public (Li, 2019; Toptour, 2013). Examples of governmental initiatives are the promotion of China's Guide to Civilised Tourism and Travel since the early 1980s to educate Chinese citizens (The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 2013) and the launch of the Convention of Chinese Citizens' Civilised Behaviours in Domestic Travel and the Guidance of Chinese Citizens' Civilised Behaviour in International Travelling in 2006 by the Civilisation Office of the Central

Communist Party Committee and the National Tourism Administration of the People's Republic of China with the aim to improve tourist civility and establish a good international reputation of Chinese tourists (Hu, 2006).

Civilised tourism, in essence, advocates moral/ethical rules and values that are deemed socially approved/accepted and discourages or even punishes those that are deemed uncivilised/unacceptable by the society; it is manifested by tourism stakeholders' conduct that have ethical/moral relevance i.e. actions that are ethical or morally right in contrast to those that are unethical or morally wrong. As such, an integral part of civilised tourism is ethicality defined as human conduct (i.e. thoughts, speech, and actions) that pertains to ethical and moral values and rules (i.e. value-informed practice). As Fennell (2018) points out, ethics and morality are considered to be different (e.g. Millar and Yoon (2000) and Miller (1991)) whereas others (e.g. Guy (1990) and Ray (2000)) regard them as essentially being synonymous - ethics are based on moral values. For Fennell (2018), the distinction may just be their application: ethics being applied to professions whilst morality is being applied to individuals and groups in general social contexts. In this paper, "ethics" and "morality" are used interchangeably, because they are operant based on the appreciation and embracement of values. Values are the root of moral systems (Smith, 1759/1966), and are

Abbreviations: SCV, socialist core value.

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“sedimented” valuations that have become attitudes or dispositions which are regarded as justified (Sayer, 2011, p. 25).

This government-initiated social movement in China has stimulated academic discussions and empirical research on civilised tourism, which contributes to the paradigm shift for value-laden tourism, e.g. Macbeth's (1994, 2005) call for an ethical platform for tourism, Pritchard, Morgan and Atelijevic's (2011) hopeful tourism, and Fennell (2006, 2018) on ethics in tourism. Civilised tourism research is more apparent in Chinese-written tourism literature than in English-written academic outlets (Huang, van der Veen, & Zhang, 2014; Xu, Ding, & Packer, 2008). Tuo and Li (2018) and Qu, Cao, Ge, and Liu (2021) are two examples of research on civilised tourism written in English. Research on this topic, emerged in the 1980s (Tian, 1999), tends to focus on uncivilised tourist behaviours (e.g. Tuo and Li (2018), Tse (2011, 2015), and Wang, He, and Bi (2017)) and identification of the influential factors of (un)civilised Chinese tourists' behaviours with an attempt to predict future behaviour or the intention of it (Gao & He, 2020; Huang, 2019; Li & Li, 2020; Lu, Yin, & Tao, 2019; Xu & Huang, 2019; Zhang & Qiu, 2020; Zhou, Xu, & Liu, 2021). However, civilised tourism has not been defined in literature, nor has an explanation of its emergence been provided. It is still unknown how the manifestation of civilised tourism in China is brought about. This study aims to address this knowledge gap by seeking some answers to this question: what are the structural and agential mechanisms that bring about the emergence of the value-informed practices in civilised tourism in China? To fulfil this aim, the following research objectives are set:

1. To understand the interests of collectivities of the agents in their respective social roles;
2. To identify the variations of Socio-Cultural interactions (if any);
3. To examine the extent to which the variations gel with the ideation of civilised tourism at the collective level;
4. To explain how the mechanisms that derived from the properties of structure and agency bring about the manifestation of Socio-Cultural interactions.

The rationale for proposing these objectives will be elaborated on in section 3 after “mechanism” is defined.

2. The realist conceptualisation of mechanism

Philosopher Roy Bhaskar (2008a, 2008b, 2011, 2014) has argued that scientific activities are to find the mechanisms that cause what people see and/or experience. Mechanism is “a way of acting of a thing” (Bhaskar, 2008a, p. 51). The “thing” can be either a system (e.g. the social system) or particulars, such as a conceptual idea (e.g. civilised tourism and the professional role of tour guide), a physical object (e.g. water), or persons (e.g. an agent acting in the role of tourist and a group of individuals acting in the role of tourism professionals). Things or entities have their characteristic way(s) of acting in virtue of their intrinsic structures (relations between internal elements) i.e. having the power to bring about change. The generative power of an entity (e.g. a person, an ideology, and a social system) is the irreducible property whereby the entity generates or prevents (offset), enable or constrain effects. This power is known as Power₁ (Bhaskar, 2008b). Entities also have their passive side i.e. liabilities. For a power to have an effect on a thing, the entity must have a propensity to be affected (Hartwig, 2007). Thus, the powers and liabilities themselves are mechanisms, through which things are affected (Go, 2021; Porpora, 2021). When relating to agency, our capacity to construct moral and ethical systems, feel, and initiating practices that transform our lived circumstances, for example, are considered as transformative Power₁. There is also Power₂ - negative characteristics, such as domination, subjugation, exploitation and control in a given social structure (Bhaskar, 2008b). Bhaskar maintains that Power₁ is often unactualised and is a sense of the good of being in and of itself while Power₂ is often manifested in such a way that is felt as

lacking or social ills. The bridge between Power₁ as possibility and Power₂ as structurally instantiated forms of domination is provided by the combination of an ontologically naturalistic basis to ethics (i.e. alleviating the causes of known harm to others) and the negation of real absence as a transformative solution to social ill. New practices initiated with an aim to eradicate the ill flow from the possibilities of human agency for flourishing is essentially the absencing of real absences directed at the transformation of Power₂ characteristics based on Power₁ possibilities. This process and the relations of the parties involved are dialectical because it is the tensions and contradictions of reality, its perpetual incompleteness, and the reality of absence that provide for the possibility of creating mutually wanted determinations (Hartwig, 2007, p. 373).

To put it simply, in the critical realist perspective:

- A mechanism is not correlation (Archer, 2015; Gorski, 2015); it is not an aggregation of habitual responses of individuals who are confronting a given situation (Gorski, 2015); it is not a statement about events or experiences either (Wight, 2015). Instead, it is a causal law, explaining how things work to bring about change (Groff, 2016), as well as to reproduce the existing system (Archer, 1995, 2008). Thus, they have an ontological existence - existing “above, beyond and regardless of the presence or absence of statistical associations with outcomes at the level of events” (Archer, 2015, p. 3).
- Mechanisms derive from the properties of structure (e.g. the positional power of a social role such as a tourist or a hotel's general manager) and that of human agency (e.g. one's reflexivity and emotions) (Archer, 2015). These properties are defined by the emerging entity's internal structure and its structural relationships with other entities (Archer, 2008; Porpora, 2021).
- Independent of the patterns of events that might be used as symptoms for the presence of laws (Hartwig, 2007), mechanisms are active, enduring and causally efficacious in open systems. If an entity (e.g. an individual tourist or a tourism practice) has the tendency to transform, then it is true that the entity is transforming, even if the transforming is not currently observed or is contracted by other tendencies (Bhaskar, 2009; Hartwig, 2007). In other words, the actual outcome, such as behaviours and practices that are identified as having relevance to the ideation of civilised tourism, is co-determined by a variety of mechanisms, some of which may be unexercised, some may be exercised but unrealised, and some may be undetected.
- The general causal powers of human agency (Power₁) make the absencing process possible. In that, new practices as positive causes of ill eradicated flow from the real possibilities of the human for emancipating their constitution, directing at the transformation of Power₂ characteristics based on Power₁ possibilities. The tensions and contradictions of reality, its perpetual incompleteness, and the reality of absence calls for dialectical relations of the parties involved.

Mechanism is a critical concept not only in Emergentism, as rehearsed above, but also in Elisionism (Archer, 1995). In the latter, Giddens (1989), for example, has coined the idea of structuration of structure - a structure is the “rules and resources, recursively draw upon and reconstituted in the processes of interaction” between agents and structure (p. 253) and exists “only in a virtual way, as memory traces and as the instantiation of rules in the situated activities of agents” (p. 256). Giddens' theory has influenced the ideas developed in actor-network theory (Warf, 2015) which advocates that the social orders are achieved through the process of “translation” - a process in which sets of relationships between human actors, non-human actors, and the relationships among them (Grabher, 2020; Jóhannesson & Bærenholdt, 2009). Actor-network theory emphasises the ontology of relational practice which is also extensively discussed in Porpora (1989), who argues that “the relationship of social positions ... to each other and

to space” (p. 351) are relational properties of the social structure. The approach that the present study takes to investigate mechanisms disconnects from the ontological central conflation in structuration theory and actor-network theory, but seeks a root from analytical dualism (Archer, 1995, 2008). The theoretical ground of this methodological programme is outlined in the next section.

3. Conceptual framework

Li (2022) has suggested that realist inquiry can focus on structural, cultural or agential mechanisms. She has, however, provided limited details on how to identify the mechanisms. Extending from Li's work, this study will probe structural properties and agential properties. It will also tap into the cultural dimension at the Socio-Cultural interaction level i.e. the present actors' thoughts, actions, and interactions that are identified as having relevance to civilised tourism. In a realist perspective (Archer, 1996, 2008), their accounts and experiences are socio-cultural in nature and are conditioned by the Culture System. Cultural mechanisms derived from the properties of the Culture System (i.e. contradiction and complementarity) are reported elsewhere due to the space limitation here.

As said above, mechanisms are expressed by virtue of the properties of the entities involved. The conceptual framework of the study is illustrated in Fig. 1. It is built upon Archer's (1995) critical realist social theory and adapted from Li (2022). The framework entails that:

- The properties of the Structural System, which is the constitution of social groups in a society (Archer, 1995), express themselves as time travels from the past (Time¹), to the present interval (Time² - the imminent future Time³), and into the future (Time⁴). Agential properties emerged from lower-order causes i.e. the real domain of chemical, physical, biological, psychological, and social (Go, 2021). These properties express themselves as mechanisms, through which structure and agency are affected.
- Ethicality in the present interval sits at the agency level. It is brought about by the workings of Structural System's properties (*rights and obligations*), and agential properties, including the *interest and powers* of groups, individual agent's *identity, self-interest, emotions, reflexivity, and moral reasoning*. The Socio-Cultural interactions of the present

agents (e.g. tourists, industry professionals, or tourism organisations) with the ideation of civilised tourism and the interactions among the agents are not only conditioned by the existing Structural System at Time¹ (i.e. relationship *a*), but also shaped by aforesaid agential properties (i.e. relationship *b*).

- Relationship *a* is concerned with structural conditioning - present practices being conditioned (facilitated and constrained) by the existing Structural System at Time¹. This structural generative power continues progressing into Time² and beyond. Its effects take place through the practice of the rights and obligations, interests and powers associated and embedded in the social roles that the present agents take. In other words, relationship *a* is “dissolved” in relationship *b* from Time² onwards. Relationship *b* involves multiple mechanisms derived from the workings of aforesaid structural and agential properties.
- Ethicality in the present interval is manifested in various modes of Socio-Cultural interaction, namely pro-active morality, inhibitive morality, moral muteness, and pragmatic morality (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, & Regalia, 2001; Kreps & Monin, 2011). These moral pronouncements ultimately affect ethicality elaboration or value-informed practices in civilised tourism.

Therefore, to answer how structural and agential mechanisms bring about the emergence of ethicality formation in civilised tourism in China, relationships *a* and *b* will need to be unpacked. The scope of this paper is set within the moral pronouncements displayed by present agents, and how they are conditioned by rights and obligations embodied in social positions, and how they are brought about by the generative power of aforesaid agential properties. Thus, to unpack relationship *a*, the task is to explain how structural properties express themselves to facilitate and constrain (i.e. conditioning) the present agents. To unpack relationship *b*, the task is to explain how aforesaid agential properties express themselves to effect moral pronouncements. Relevant literature is reviewed in the following sections.

3.1. Properties of Structural System (Power₁)

Rights and obligations. Society is often structured hierarchically wherein people have different rights and obligations which exist

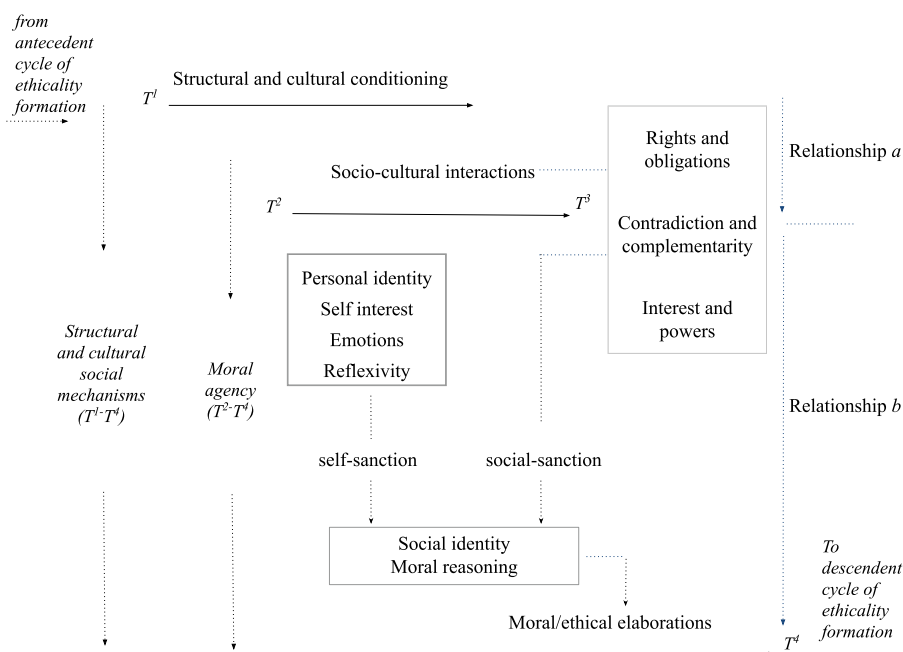


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework, adapted from Li (2022). Reprinted by permission of the publisher via RightsLink.

independently of people who happen to be in relational social positions (e.g. government-enterprise and tourist-host) (Archer, 1995; Lewis, 2000; Porpora, 1989). The rights and obligations embodied in social positions are the emerging properties of the Structural System (Archer, 1995; Lawson, 2019, 2021). They influence, not determine, individuals' and groups' course of action. For example, tourists have the responsibility to respect the local customs and protect the natural wildlife (Swarbrooke, 1999) while they have the right to enjoy their holiday.

The influences are conditioned by the distribution of interest and resources left from the pre-existing structure in such a way that the given social position *demands* its incumbent to take a certain course of action so that the position is maintained or advanced. At the same time, the influences are realised by providing varying degrees of *freedom* (e.g. access to a natural park) for the incumbent to exercise their agential power to maintain or advance the agent's vested interests (e.g. having a memorable holiday).

From a collective perspective, for instance, China's government has been involved in the country's tourism development, in that the involvement shifted from being a pioneer championing the quick formation of the industry capacity in the 1980s, to regulating the industry, and enabling it to develop from the mid-1990s onwards (Yang, 2013). It is through these involvements that the government ensures the prosperity of the industry and the society, which, in turn, secures its governance in the country. Thus, Lawson (2019) argues that positional rights and obligations are constitutive of positional power that expresses social practices.

3.2. Agential properties (Power₁)

Interests. Interests here refer to the concerns of agents as individuals - the things that are considered important to the agents by the agents themselves. These concerns are socially moulded out of agents' reflections upon what is important to them in their inescapable social lives and their ability to monitor and anticipate their emotions attached to objects and to their relations with objects and social normativity (Archer, 2000). The concerns depict what the agents value and also are ineluctably accompanied with agents' commentaries (i.e. emotions, see below) upon them. When an agent occupies a particular position/role, for example parent, teacher, manager or tourist, s/he acquires vested interests with the role. The agent's actions are both constrained and enabled by the position's dos and don'ts in conjunction with the penalties and promotions which encourage compliance (Archer, 1995). The ultimate, or highest, concerns reflect an ordered list of their concerns. It is through reflexivity that agents evaluate their emotions wherein they promote some and subordinate others so that the ultimate concerns are those they feel they can live with. Thus, to explain Socio-Cultural variations of moral pronouncements in civilised tourism, the key lies, following Archer (1996), "in how the social (or sectional) distribution of interests and of power actually gel" (p. 188) with the situational logics of civilised tourism. In other words, the things that present agents value will provide vital starting points to examine the gel.

Reflexivity. We are evaluative beings. We have the power to flourish but we are also vulnerable to various loss and harm. Because of this and because of contingency, we are necessarily evaluative beings, continually having to monitor and evaluate how we and the things that we are concerned with are progressing (Sayer, 2011). Indeed, we reflect upon the world, question ourselves about our ultimate concerns and what we should do about them, and evaluate our emotions wherein we promote some and subordinate others. We are capable of doing so because we possess reflexivity - a powerful human agency. Reflexivity is intrinsic to all human activities (O'Brien, 2013). It is a human capability that involves constructing an understanding of "the location of self within a social system", reflecting on and redefining their understanding of the surroundings (Maclean, Harvey, & Chia, 2012, p. 388). Reflexive thinking entails a strong evaluation of one's social context in light of one's concerns/interests and adjustment of the concerns vis-à-vis the

circumstances that one is in (Archer, 2012; Taylor, 1985). It depends upon "conscious deliberations that take place through internal conversation", taking the format of question and answer (Archer, 2007, p. 3). At the end of this reflexive elaboration, action plans are developed, some of which are acted upon. Thus, reflexivity is imperative, mediating the interplay between structure and agency.

Emotions. We are sentient beings; we do not just evaluate things but do so with our feelings. Emotions are affective modes of awareness of a situation or bodily commentaries on what we value - our feelings about our concerns and how we and our concerns are faring (Archer, 2000, 2003). They are part of our evaluative reasoning. We are sentient because we are concerned about our well-being and because we have the ability to flourish and, at the same time, are vulnerable to being hurt as a result of loss of what is important to us (Nussbaum, 2001; Sayer, 2011).

Emotions are reasons and imports that define the way in which our situation is related to our goals, desires, and aspirations (Taylor, 1985). The desires and concerns embedded in our bodily emotions motivate us to produce or prevent change. Craib (1998) also speaks of emotions attached to possible suffering from failure and loss, and profound emotional intersubjectivity, upon which identity is implicated. Bandura (1991) reports that when an action violates one's personal moral values and rules, the person can experience self-condemnation, of which feeling people tend to avoid. Indeed, emotions incline us to act in some way although we may override such inclinations (Oakley, 1992). In short, emotions are attached to things that matter to us; they are imports that shape our moral engagement and identity(-ies).

Moral engagement. Morality is grounded in our social being. It is constrained and enabled by not only our physical and psychological capacities and vulnerabilities, but also social structures and cultural discourses (Sayer, 2011). Indeed, people react to two major sources of sanctions, namely self-sanction (i.e. one pursues a moral conduct because doing so will result in self-respect and self-satisfaction) and social sanction (i.e. one refrains from a transgressive conduct because one anticipates that such conduct will generate adverse consequences and social censure) (Bandura, 1986, 1991).

Our moral thinking and moral pronouncement(s) or the actual (in) action are connected via our self-regulatory mechanisms. There is no uniformity of judgement but relativity of moral principles - people experience multiple moral mechanisms at any given time in varying degrees of importance, and these self-regulatory mechanisms are developed and mobilised in concert with environmental circumstances (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Bandura & Jourden, 1991). Self-regulatory mechanisms are exercised through three main sub-functions, according to Bandura and his colleagues (Bandura, 1991; Bandura et al., 1996): self-monitoring of conduct, evaluating the conduct in relation to the actor's moral template (i.e. embodied morality) and environmental circumstances (i.e. reflexivity), and affective self-reaction (emotions); there are also cognitive mechanisms that encourage moral disengagement, which can influence, when they are activated, the internal control, leading to immoral conduct.

Identity. Archer (2000) insists that selfhood and personal identity are ingrained in our imminent social interactions and that, initially, one's personal identity predates their social identity(-ies). She argues that social identity is formed through social interactions that "travel" from the quadrants of private/individual, to private/collective, to public/collective, to public/individual, and back to private/individual, instead of the sequence advocated in the Society's Being thesis whereby the development of a human begins with the cultural tradition that we are born into and proceed through socialisation; in other words, people are considered as the product of society (c.f. Bourdieu (1990), Harré and Gillett (1994), and Vygotsky (1978)).

Archer (2000) posits that it is through the realist sequence - differentiation, socialisation, personification and commitment - both the personal identity and social identity(-ies) are forged and modified. Indeed, the occupancy of a position in social life is an accepted status that grants a social identity - "to be allocated to a specific position is to

acquire the social identity of being so positioned" (Lawson, 2019, p 55). Likewise, Craib (1998) argues that identity emerges from the transitional area of creativity wherein "I" am aware of things that are going on within "my" psycho space and between "me" and the people around "me", as well as those that "I" am not aware of. Both Archer and Craib reject Modernity's Man (i.e. human rationality is the most important power) (e.g. Giddens (1991)) and recognise the significance of social forces in identity formation and emphasise the naturalist nature of being.

3.3. Structural properties (positional powers/Power₁ and Power₂)

Interests here refer to the invested interest of a group. Power or positional power (Lawson, 2019) is a relational property, exercised between two parties at the Socio-Cultural interaction level. It can be distinguished in three different strategies of cultural manipulations: decision-making in authoritarian containment strategy, non-decision-making sectional containment strategy, and ideational or ideological influence in naturalisation strategy (Archer, 2008; Dowding, 2006; Lukes, 2005) (thus, power here is related to Bhaskar's Power₂). The receiver(s) of cultural manipulations responds to the other party differently in accordance with their interests that are consistent, or conflict, with the situational logic they are dealing with, subject to their capability of human agency and access to available resources (Archer, 2008). Corrective movement by the dominant party is taken to repair any inconsistency. Protective cultural manipulation is employed to maintain systemic consistency. Subject to the degree of the corrective/protective manoeuvre's impingement upon the interests and capability of agency of the "receivers" of the cultural manipulations, Socio-Cultural variations exist in both consistency- and inconsistency-contexts (Archer, 2008). Over time, the actions bring about new systemic configurations that depend upon human agency.

As said above, the study aims to address "what are the structural and agential mechanisms that bring about the emergence of value-informed practices in civilised tourism in China?". In order to answer this question, relationships *a* and *b* need to be unpacked. As informed in the literature discussion, to unpack these relationships, the following research objectives need to be achieved:

1. To understand the interests of collectivities of the agents in their respective social roles;
2. To identify the variations of Socio-Cultural interactions (if any);
3. To examine the extent to which the variations gel with the ideation of civilised tourism at the collective level;
4. To explain how the mechanisms that derived from the properties of structure and agency bring about the manifestation of Socio-Cultural interactions.

4. Methodology

4.1. Philosophical underpinnings

This research is underpinned by the epistemological stance that echoes critical realism's ontological propositions (Bhaskar, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011; Go, 2021). That is, reality composes stratified domains of empirical (i.e. things that we experience and our perceptions), actual (i.e. events that have happened but we are not experienced) and "deep" (i.e. the real, including the empirical, actual, and mechanisms that reproduce or transform the system) (Bhaskar, 1994, 2011). Social reality emerges from structure, agency (i.e. a human's thinking, talking and acting), and the interplay between them. It is the structure that governs the reproduction and transformation of social activities, yet its existence requires human actions (Archer, 1995, 2000, 2008; Archer & Elder-Vass, 2012). This study aims to answer "what are the structural and agential mechanisms that bring about the emergence of value-informed practices in civilised tourism in China?". The interplay

between structure and agency can be studied through the methodological principle of analytical dualism (Archer, 2008). That is, methodologically, the examination of structure can be carried out in isolation from social life; the relations between structure and agency can then be analysed. Therefore, the empirical study reported here employed a three-block knowledge production approach:

- Block A focused on the empirical domain i.e. events experienced by sampled social actors;
- Block B focused on the actual domain i.e. the events that may or may not be experienced by them but somehow may have influenced their lived experience;
- Block C took the burden of retroductive reasoning (Danermark, Ekström, & Karlsson, 2019), dealing with the transcendental task of moving from events (i.e. the empirical and actual domains) to things with causal powers (i.e. the real domain).

4.2. Research design

Block A involved a purposive, snowball sampling strategy with the use of semi-structured interviews. Subjects needed to be those who were over 18 years old, born and brought up in China or having been working in China over the last five years. The sampling strategy permitted the team to reach the informants who were willing to tell their lived experiences openly. The research topic in nature is closely linked to the values that people hold about themselves and their interactions with other people and the social settings, which can be socio-culturally and, possibly, politically sensitive. Thus, good rapport and trust are vital for gaining rich data.

Through personal and professional contacts that the researchers held in China, participants were recruited in Dalian (in north east of China), Yinchuan (in north west of China), Shanghai (on the east coast of China), Guilin and Nanning (in the south of China). These locations were selected because they are popular tourist destinations. Three sets of interview questions were developed according to the (primary) social role of the subjects as seen by the research team. In total, 17 one-to-one interviews, five focus groups (the group size ranged from 3 to 4) and three group interviews (the sizes of which were 10, 21 and 32) were conducted between 2017 and 2019. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The length of the interviews ranged between 30 and 90 minutes.

Block B involved the use of covert observation of signages and posters in public places and tourist attractions and overt observation of the business settings of two tourism companies (one international hotel located in Dalian and one Chinese travel agency in Guilin). The researchers also visited various sites in six Chinese cities and regions between 2018 and 2019. The process generated 138 images/photos. Through the observations, two demi-regularities (Fletcher, 2017) are identified, namely a national promotion of 12 socialist core values (SCVs) and an advocacy of civilised tourism with an emphasis on tourist civility. The SCVs are prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship.

Further procedures were taken to understand the systemic sayings of SCV and civilised tourism. "社会主义核心价值观" or SCV was used to identify relevant academic articles published between 2012 and 2018 in China's national database of literature. From the initial search results (1265 academic articles), 140 papers were selected based on their titles and abstracts that suggest a focus on the meanings of the cultural items. Twenty four articles (out of 140) that include "文明" (civility or civilisation) in the titles and abstracts were further examined in greater depth. Further, "文明旅游" (or civilised tourism), "游客文明素质" and "旅游素质" (or tourist civility) were entered in the built-in search engine of the website of the Ministry to search relevant publications between 2019 and 2020. The search generated five items. Therefore, 29 articles in total were imported to NVivo for data analysis. The list of the articles

can be accessed via the link to the resource list that is provided in this paper.

The primary concerns of Block C are: (1) what innate properties cause the outcome, and (2) how the casual relations themselves unfold. The first concern was addressed through a categorisation strategy that involves use of framework analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) on 25 interview scripts. The analysis followed the steps of familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation. Codes were developed inductively and deductively. The second concern was addressed through a connecting strategy with the use of listening guide (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2009). In that, four steps were followed, namely listening for the plot (i.e. what is happening, when, where, with whom, and why), focusing on the voice of the “I” (i.e. picking up the distinctive cadences and rhythms of the first-person voice and listening to what the person knows about her- or himself and her/his interactions with other objects/subjects), listening for contrapuntal voices (i.e. the different layers of a person’s expressed experience), and composing an analysis. This method has been used in relational psychology research and offers a way of “illuminating the complex and multi-layered nature of the expression of human experience and the interplay between self and relationship, psyche and culture” (Gilligan et al., 2009, p. 169).

4.3. Data collection

Ninety-four individuals participated in the study. In that, the number of participants in their pre-assigned social roles are one, three, five, 11, 11, and 63 for the roles of resident, tourist, educator, industry professional, parent, and student, in that order. There were role shifts during interviews. Five managers and 11 parents spoke about their perceptions of and their (expected and actual) tourist behaviours and business practice in civilised tourism. One parent and one manager shared their tourism-related experience and views as residents. The participant whose primarily role was that of resident gave her position on parenting. This means that, for example, resident’s voices were given by three interviewees (instead of 1 as originally planned) whilst 20 participants (instead of 3) provided tourists’ voices. The parents’ voices were captured in twelve participants’ accounts, instead of 11. Table 1 outlines the background information about the participants who are cited in the following section.

The participants aged from early 20s to early 80s. The majority of participating professionals of the tourism industry and those of the education sector were in their 40s. Three out of five subjects with a primary role of parents were in their 30s with young children to look after.

Table 1
Information of the participants cited.

Pseudonym	Social role	Nationality	Place of interview
Bao	CEO, travel agency	Chinese	Guilin
Bei	Head of Department, 5-star international hotel	Chinese	Guilin
Bob	GM, 5-star international hotel	Expatriate	Dalian
Cai	CEO, travel agency	Chinese	Nanning
Chan	CEO, 5-star attraction company	Chinese	Guilin
Chang	GM, Chinese hotel chain	Chinese	Dalian
Daisy	GM, 5-star international hotel	Expatriate	Shanghai
Fang	Manager/Tour Guide, travel agency	Chinese	Ningxia
Jian	Tourist	Chinese	Guilin
Jiang	University student	Chinese	Dalian
Lin	GM, 5-star international hotel	Chinese	Guilin
Meiwen	retired doctor/resident	Chinese	Guilin
Shi	School Headmaster	Chinese	Guilin
Xiong	Tourist	Chinese	Guilin
Xue Fang	Parent	Chinese	Shanghai
Yanyi	University student	Chinese	Ningxia
Zhong	Manager, 5-star international hotel	Chinese	Guilin

Twenty-one were males. Among them, three males held the primary social role of industry professionals as assigned in the study. The rest of the male participants were university students. The sample is over occupied by the females. This is due to (1) the students on the tourism and hospitality management programmes were primarily females and (2) more willingness from the females than the males. This was evident in the effort wherein the participation invitation was sent out to a group of 18 tourists who were touring Guilin, among which 15 tourists were males. However, this effort resulted in voluntary participation from the female tourists only.

4.4. Research evaluation

In case studies, triangulation is often used to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (Stake, 2006). Methodological triangulation, data triangulation, and investigator triangulation (Denzin, 1978) were used to ensure the validity of the study. To ensure the understanding of the phenomenon appreciates the multiple perspectives of the social reality, observations, investigation of academic and governmental documents, and interviews were employed to tap into different data sources. This was followed by data triangulation whereby images, literature, observation notes, and interview data were cross-referenced. Themes identified in texts and the interpretations of the data were compared and reviewed among the researchers.

The first author and one of the co-authors who is also a Chinese native exchanged their interpretations of pictorial data and reached consensus. The first author then communicated with the other co-author, who does not speak or read Chinese, and sought his perception of the photos gathered. Discussion points were entered as memos into NVivo by the first author. With regard to the interview data, codes were created by the first author, which were then reviewed manually by the other two authors because the team did not have access to NVivo Cloud. The same process was carried out to ensure coding was appropriate and consistent.

The validity of a study’s conclusion does not only depend on whether specific procedures are used and how they are used, but also on how the actual conclusions are drawn by using the procedures in the given context (Maxwell, 2012). The research team kept logs of commentaries. These situated voices are vital to prevent potential slipping into the relativist philosophical position (Bhaskar, 2011; Li, 2021).

5. Findings

5.1. Social groups’ interests, socio-cultural interactions, and gel

This section reports the findings that address research objectives 1, 2, and 3. The overall pattern is that (1) each social group has its ultimate concerns vis-à-vis the social role that they occupy, (2) the variations of Socio-Cultural interactions exist but they do not seem to fundamentally challenge the discourse of civilised tourism, and (3) the social groups clearly gel well with the ideation of civilised tourism. The unit analysis in sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.2.1 is at the collective level while that in section 5.2.2 is at the individual level.

5.1.1. Social groups’ interests

The government’s “voice”. There is one “voice” from the central government - calling for the development of a civilised society (including tourism) in the Ministry’s publications (MCT, 2019, 2020 November 5). Likewise, the academic community, based on sampled academic papers, shares this advocacy voice, following closely the contemporary ideological development of “China’s Dream”. Sampled tourism academic papers often take a more “practical” approach to seek solutions to address problems such as uncivil or immoral tourist behaviour so as to accelerate or enhance the development of civilised tourism. Civilised tourism is said to be “a landscape of beautiful scenery” while civility is regarded as “the most beautiful scenery”. This is not to

say that idealisational disagreement between the stakeholders does not exist. It nevertheless appears to be less visible within the public knowledge domain.

Things that matter to businesses. Accounts provided by the industry professionals reveal a shared set of matters that are important to their businesses. They all made reference to cost and sales most frequently, competitions in the market, the quality of tourism products and services that they offer, and the quality of their customers. Variations exist among the managers. Hotels seem to focus more on being hospitable than the travel companies. The participants that represent the hotel sector spoke of the relationship with guests, recognising its importance in their efforts to deliver good services whereas the managers of travel companies are more concerned about the safety and experience of the tourists who are on their tour. Corporate social responsibility is also featured in the accounts by the majority of the managers.

Things that matter to tourists. Based on the accounts provided by three tourists as well as five managers and 11 parents who had spoken about tourism as tourists, having a good tourism experience is important. The good experience is described as one driven by “enjoyable, accepting new and positive ideas, and interacting with friendly and civilised others” by Bao, and “authentic” by Chan and Xiong. Some participants highlighted the importance of mutual trust between tourists and tourism businesses in shaping their tourism experience.

It was commented that tourism experience could be jeopardised by the behaviours of other tourists at the attraction site, social interactions with the tour guide and/or other tourists, the crowdedness at the site, and insufficient management of the site. A great emphasis has been given to tourist civility - improved tourist civility is deemed as a resolution to (potential) loss of a good tourism experience. “[At a tourist attraction] if everyone queues then the order is good. But, if everyone doesn’t queue, there wouldn’t be any order. Effectively this is about people’s civility - civility decides the order of the whole society” (Zhong). It was also recognised that lack of capacity and inappropriate management could affect a positive tourism experience.

Things that matter to parents. Children’s well-being is a primary concern of the parents. “We’ve heard so many cases that some children committed suicide or walked out of the family because of the pressures they were put under”, Su said. “I’d rather my child be happy and in good health. As long as, in the future, she is independent and has the capabilities to work and has a happy life”, Hei exclaimed. Xie also said, “I don’t demand my child to be at the top of the class with her studies. I wasn’t [when I was her age], so why should I require her to be so?”

The parents have also spoken about the kind of person that they wish their children to become: “who has good virtues, being kind to people” (Hei); “who has a positive attitude to life” (Su); “who can choose to do the things that she likes to do, but within the limit of the laws” (Jiang); “who respects the grand-parents and us [parents]” (Xie); “who can deal with difficult situations in life and get on with different people around her” (Gu); and, “who is accepted by the society” (Yan).

Things that matter to educators. Schools pay great attention to pupils’ personal development. School headmistress Shi explains that all primary schools have three broad areas of curriculum: academic education, moral and ethical education, and physical education. She said, “the class teacher has to give each pupil a score on their behaviours each term to say how this pupil has been doing in terms of helping others, politeness, respecting others”. Teachers from a vocational secondary school give a particular emphasis on professionalism that their students need to develop for working in the tourism and hospitality industry. Huang explains, “If a child is very good at vocational skills but doesn’t have good virtues, then you are effectively producing “a dangerous product” for the country. So, we put virtue learning first”.

Things that matter to residents. One parent commented that it was not straightforward to tell tourists from the locals in Dalian; however, she highlighted that civilised tourist behaviours are something that the residents would like to see. Her view is shared by a resident, Meiwen, in Guilin, who remarked: “We welcome tourists who have good civility ...

Guilin’s economy basically relies on primarily tourism ... tourism businesses would need to balance between their profits and offering civilised tourism services”. Implicitly, Meiwen’s words echo her concerns over the reliance of the residents on tourism. Her concerns were explicitly expressed by Zhong who commented on her low salary and the difficulties in access to public service as a result of the city’s development. Compared with Meiwen, Zhong probably relies more on tourism because she is professionally involved in Guilin’s tourism industry.

Things that matter to students. Interviewed university students have debated a wide range of matters in tourism, such as littering at attractions, forced shopping, damaging artefacts, and wasting food. The matters are concerned with the interplays between (1) people (e.g. tourist - tour guide), (2) people and organisations (e.g. tourist - hotel), (3) people and their surrounding objects (e.g. tourist - artefacts), and (4) socially organised collectivities (e.g. the Chinese government - Chinese travel agency overseas). The orderliness in these interplays or systematisation of civilised practice in tourism seem to be their primary concern. This is manifested in their advocacy of individual’s civility (with regard to interplay (1)), trustworthy business practice (interplay (2)), conscientiousness in protecting heritage and the ecosystem (interplay (3)), and obligation fulfilment (interplay (4)).

5.1.2. Variations and gel

All Chinese interviewees spoke of the idealisations of, for example civility, tourist civility, social etiquette, kindness, and trust, extensively regardless of their respective social roles; although, from the interview data, it is interesting to see that neither expatriate hotel GMs mention “civility” or “civilisation”. The Chinese participants regard one’s good civility as a necessary requirement for the betterment of society and tourism. They welcome the discourse of civilised tourism. Chinese industry professionals emphasise the positive effects of the civilised tourism movement on business operations and company reputations. Likewise, those who have voiced from the tourist point of view commented how other tourists’ behaviour and enhanced tourist civility can impact on their own tourism experience positively whilst the voice from the resident role gives a welcoming gesture to civilised tourism for its potential to improve the quality of life. Therefore, the social groups are largely in agreement with the call for civilised tourism; yet they prioritise the anticipated effects differently vis-à-vis their respective social roles.

In addition to the variations in prioritising concerns, some voices of “disagreement” are also present, although they do not seem to fundamentally challenge/conflict with the Chinese government-initiated social moment to “a landscape of beautiful scenery” (i.e. civilised tourism development) and “the most beautiful scenery” (i.e. civility development). For example, in her response to dealing with unethical or even illegal business practice, Cai stated: “In China, the usual way to deal with the problems is to “Kill One, Police Hundred” ... but the fundamental issue has not been addressed ... [For example] the governmental agency that oversees tourism is not an organisation that has the legal power to regulate or punish unethical tourism business practice ... Our legal system needs further development [to address the matter whereby] ... people tend to be sentimental and often give sympathy to and tolerate illegal acts.” Likewise, Shi raises her concern over promoting SCVs in schools (which is a part of civility development in China), but in principle she greatly welcomes the inclusion of the values in moral education. She said: “I personally think that the [governance of the] country is impetuous in many aspects, such as moral education ... focusing on the final scores ... which encourages superficial learning only”. Thus, it can be said that the social groups overall gel well with the discourse of civilised tourism (e.g. in Cai’s account) and that of civility development (e.g. in Shi’s telling); variations of Socio-Cultural interactions do exist, however they do not exist in sharp disagreement against the ideations of civilised tourism and civility.

5.2. The mechanistic processes of “gelling”

This section reports the mechanisms that have brought about the varying degree of gel, contributing to the explanation development (i.e. research objective 4). Its first subsection presents the mechanisms derived from the properties of structure while the second subsection outlines those derived from agential properties.

5.2.1. Structural mechanisms

Leadership and trust. Participants’ capacity to make a difference is facilitated by the working of structural properties of social positions. CEO Bao spoke of her leadership to implement civilised tourism practice within her travel agency. She said:

Since President Xi Jinping came to power, we have paid a great deal of attention to improve our relationship with our local government and the Party to develop the business ... We elect staff members for not only “The Best Tour Guide” honorary award but also “The Best Party Member Tour Guide” award ... We followed Guilin Tourism Development Committee’s guidance closely ... to ensure civilised tourism is embedded in our daily work activities.

Bao’s words provide evidence on the degree of private-public engagement in shaping business practice and imply a great deal of trust in the local government and the Communist Party. In contrast, hotel manager Zhong shared her involvement in the National People’s Congress as a representative of Guilin’s tourism industry - “there are ordinary people like me representing our respective sectors ... We voice issues such as low pay in the tourism industry. The issues are recorded and forwarded to the Central”. She maintained:

I am not a member of the Communist Party, but I feel that the Party is constantly reflecting on its own doings. Many people used to think that the Party was equivalent to corruption, but now ... since Chairman Xi Jinping led the country, the situation has changed a lot. People are now saying that they trust the government.

While Bao’s words convey a top-down engagement of instructing-complying between the private sector and the public sector, Zhong’s account details a bottom-up interaction of trust in the government. In both cases, the social actors lead changes within their respective contexts with trust in the government.

Economic gains versus socio-cultural loss. Chinese managers express that there is always a demand for cheap holidays and therefore the industry reacts to this demand offering low-cost tour packages. All interviewed tourists are aware that low-cost tours will include some sort of being-taken-to certain-stores-to-shop. They acknowledge there are some benefits of such shopping experiences but nevertheless feel deceived afterwards. CEO Chan remarked that low-cost offerings have resulted in a sense of “being deceived” in tourism experience and the loss of credibility from the business side. All interviewed managers express their rejection of the low-cost business model at the expense of quality of service and tourist experience.

Cultural conditioning in media and contingent transformation. “Now overseas media, including some Internet websites, report uncivilised behaviours by the Chinese tourists”, CEO Cai said, “yes, there is some truth in there but there are over 1400 million people in China. Those mentioned in the reports do not represent all Chinese”. She comments that the negativity in the media has caused significant negative impacts on tourism businesses. She argues that there should be more “positive energy” in the media, because “the majority of the Chinese tourists, tour guides and other industry practitioners are good [and] there have been many good cases where people help each other and are kind to each other”. Cai’s words signal the tendency of contingent change (i.e. depending upon human agency) in media that is more inclined to social positivity.

5.2.2. Agential mechanisms

Reflexive and evaluative reasoning. Reflexive reasoning is featured in all the participants’ accounts. The interviewees reflect upon things that and people whom they have encountered directly and/or indirectly vis-à-vis their primary concern(s) and in concert with the given situations that they were in. Such reflections are accompanied by their evaluative commentaries. Contextuality in reflexive reasoning is evidenced in, for example, the parents’ acknowledgement that their efforts to educate/guide their children are shaped by a range of influential sources, ranging from the grand-parents, other children whom the child comes to contact with, the classmates and teachers at the school, to the stories of other people reported in the media.

The evaluative nature of reflexive reasoning is shown in many examples. Uncivilised behaviours are acknowledged by all tourists, who also recognise the improvement of overall tourist civility over the years. “I don’t think it is just China. Other countries also have the problem of uncivilised behaviours”, GM Chang exclaimed. He believes that Chinese people have a good morality and that they sometimes just lack careful consideration on specific things rather than a matter of immorality. The importance of site management instead of a sole focus on tourist civility has also surfaced in some participants, for example CEO Cai’s comment about insufficient parking capacities at attraction sites.

Evaluative reasoning is also evidence in seeking the responsibility for one’s civility. Some parents believe that familial, in particular the mother’s, influence is most imperative in a child’s development of good virtues. Meiwen remarked:

Traditionally, mothers stayed at home to look after the children, thus they had more interactions with the children. We always say “kind mother and strict father” ... Now, even mothers have heavy workloads [in their professions], they still communicate with their children more [than the fathers do]. This is in their nature.

Some parents hold the view that schools play a more important role in teaching/guiding one’s ethicality and civility development. From the educational perspective, school headmaster Shi reveals the class teacher’s reluctance to fail a pupil’s performance in etiquette and virtue learning because “there is more pressure for schools to achieve good academic performance by the pupils”. This draws a contrast to the expectation of these parents.

Some participants believe that tour guides play an important role in “educating” tourists to be more aware of their behaviours. Yet, travel company CEO Cai holds a slightly different view: “People get more than 10 years of education learning how to be as a person, but still behave uncivilised. How can you expect travel agencies to educate a person in just a few days?”

Ownership of the past and the present. The participants have behaved (through their words) in a certain way that they embrace their shared heritage and sustain that heritage vis-à-vis their social role as being Chinese. When speaking of virtue learning, the educators made reference to Confucian texts, such as Disciples Rules on respecting the old and loving the young, “inner beauty”, and the 12 SCVs. The influence of Confucian texts in educational settings are witnessed. One of the examples is shown in Fig. 2 wherein two pieces of ancient Confucian classics are inscribed on the wall at a secondary school’s entrance. Read from right to left and from top to bottom, the Three-Character Classic begins: “At the beginning of life, man is good in nature. Human nature is alike, habits make us different. For lack of education, the nature is in change ...”. This is followed by Disciples Rules: “These rules for students are guidelines, handed down to us by ancient sages. First, one obeys and cares for the parents, and then practises true brotherhood. Learn to be modest and honest, and cherish all living beings. Draw nearer to good-hearted people and study whenever you can ...”. The public display of the Confucian ancient texts demonstrates the cultural embeddedness of the past in the present time (i.e. cultural conditioning).

All Chinese hotel managers proudly elucidated their relationship with guests in a mindset of Confucian tradition of hospitality that links



Fig. 2. Inscription of Confucian classic texts (Taken in the street outside a secondary school, Guilin).

to civilisation. For example, GM Chang remarked, “beginning with Lao Tzu’s moral classics and Confucianism, China has a strong cultural background to support our development ... in the hotel industry”. Likewise, GM Lin stated, “in our hotel, we provide a service that follows our civilised way of doing things, which itself is a strong characteristic of our Chinese nation”. Lin’s and Chang’s words draw a sharp contrast to the view that expatriate GM Bob holds. Bob said that Chinese guests have less understanding of hospitality service quality than those in places such as Dubai. The references to Confucian thinking show the present actors’ ownership of the past in the present time, giving rise to the cultural conditioning and the continuity of culture in the Chinese context.

There is also an ownership of the Chinese community in the present time. Compared with the expatriates, Chinese managers appear to take more ownership of the corporate social responsibilities of the firms in the sense that they treat their local community as the land of their “home”. For instance, CEO Bao remarked, “our company donates book funds to schools in villages that are home to some of our employees. In doing so, these schools benefit from more learning materials whilst our employees feel proud about working here”.

Self-transformation: From moral beings to tourists to the national image. One’s personal habits in daily life are considered closely related to one’s conduct in public. Student Jiang expressed, “if you discipline yourself in your normal daily activities, you will be naturally more inclined to do so in tourism too”. Likewise, student Jun remarked, “if you do not care about [how you react to] small matters in daily life, then surely you will not care either when it comes to touring”. This transition from a moral being to being a civilised social being repeatedly surfaces in the participants’ accounts, for example from respecting the grandparents to respecting the teachers at school and from not littering at home to not littering at tourist sites.

There is also a transition from being a civilised tourist to one who represents the Chinese and China. Jian shared her feelings: “... In some overseas destinations, there are signs in Chinese to remind Chinese tourists of unacceptable behaviours, which affect the image of the Chinese tourists”. Xiong said, “As a Chinese tourist, when you travel to another country, you are not representing yourself, but the people in China”. Similar lines are said by many participants. For example, Shi expressed, “when a tourist is visiting an overseas destination that is very clean. You will then develop national pride - you will not litter”.

Ability to learn. Learning of good virtues (and thus enhancing one’s civility) are emphasised by the parents, educators, and the students. However, Shi raises her concern: “[Promoting the SCVs in schools] itself is a very positive thing. However, the learning is assessed according to

how much a child can memorise them and recite them ... but for young children, how much can they really understand?”

Shi’s accounts draw an interesting contrast to the interview interaction with a retired doctor in her mid 80s, which went as follows:

Meiwen: We have to stick to the socialist core values - prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship.

Interviewer: You can memorise all these!

Meiwen: Sure!

Interviewer: You haven’t taken any test. How can you remember them all?

Meiwen: I understand them.

Shi’s account and the interviewer’s dialogue with Meiwen demonstrate the relevance and importance of taking the ownership of one’s own learning in the present time.

6. Discussion

Each social group has its ultimate concerns vis-à-vis the social role that the participants occupy. They are a pool of things that are important to them. As Archer (1995) has pointed out, concerns are ordered whereby people evaluate their emotions promoting some and subordinating others, and thus the ultimate concerns are those they feel they can live with. The reported concerns provide a basis, upon which the conclusions were drawn from the Chinese participants - they welcome civilised tourism but prioritise the anticipated effects differently vis-à-vis their respective social roles. Chinese industry professionals emphasise the positive effects of the civilised tourism movement on business operations and company reputations. Voices from the tourists highlight how other tourists’ behaviour and enhanced tourist civility can impact on their own tourism experience positively. Voices from the resident role appreciate civilised tourism for its potential to improve their quality of life. Therefore, their varying concerns give them the reasons for their respective positions vis-à-vis valued-informed practices in tourism.

Ethicality elaborations in China’s civilised tourism are engineered by a range of mechanistic processes reported in section 5.2, which include those derived from structural property (i.e. leadership, trust, economic gains versus socio-cultural loss, and cultural conditioning) and that from the agential properties (i.e. reflexive and evaluative reasoning, ownership of the past and the present, self-transformation, and the ability to learn). These properties have causal generative powers (Power₁). The workings of structural properties, the historical cultural ideations of Confucian philosophy, and the present social movement of civility and civilised tourism development co-create a condition for agencies to suffice or to be visible. Identified social collectivities are seen or expected to work together to support and promote the development of civility and civilised tourism in light of their respective social roles and responsibilities. According to Archer (1995), every distinguishable social group has inherent responsibilities to do whatever the role is set out to achieve so that its existence can be maintained and/or advanced. This is evident in this research: Interviewed industry professionals welcome civilised tourism as it is regarded as a means through which businesses can benefit from enhanced credibility, reputation, and economic gains, thus they can continue to exist and flourish. The individuals are expected to act in a civilised manner in public, including in tourism settings. By committing themselves to civilised tourism, the best scenery is created so that they will be able to enjoy their tourism experience.

There is some evidence from the data that reflects negative Power₂ characteristics. It is acknowledged that uncivilised conduct or disorderliness in socio-cultural interactions does exist even though the overall tourist civility of Chinese people has improved significantly over the years. The disorderliness is also witnessed in variations within a

common voice. That is: While the main voice has been agreeing on the social movement of civility development and civilised tourism development, there are different voices that are concerned with who should be held accountable for addressing this disorderliness. Should it be the responsibility of the tourism industry, the families, the education sector, individuals, or the media? These voices of disagreement or variations manifest socio-cultural differentiations rather than social conflict because they do not fundamentally conflict with the ideations of civility and civilised tourism.

The findings have indicated the varying level of integration of the cultural items in the social interactions, which echoes Archer's (2008) notion of contingent complementarity (which is one of the four forms of morphogenesis). They are not random "noise" around the "norm", to borrow Mayr's (1982) words, but vital contingent causes of possible future social change as realists have been arguing (Archer, 2008; Bhaskar, 2008b). They are not imperfect approximations to the "ideal" but are "the fundamental fact of biology" as advocated in Darwinian evolutionary theory (Maxwell, 2012, p. 49). Indeed, Bhaskar's (2008b) has spoken about absencing of real absences. These voices signal what is absent in the current practice and emancipatory willingness for creating better forms of new practices ($\text{Power}_1 \rightarrow \text{Power}_2$). Be that as it may, these variations may be heard and acted upon via institutions such as the National People's Congress as it is the case described by Zhong, or other means such as the media as expected by CEO Cai and some other participants.

The government's advocacy of civility and civilised tourism development is well received by the Chinese participants. This is not to say that they are the product of socialisation (Bourdieu, 1990). On the contrary, this social movement provides a condition that has triggered psychological and social causes. As emerged from the data, the causations are engineered by agents' capabilities of reflexive and evaluative reasoning, forging of identity, and learning of virtues. The analysis of participants' reflexive, evaluative, and moral reasoning has revealed that things that matter to them are heterogeneous and are the reasoning for their agency to pursue the flourishing of society, tourism, and themselves. Therefore, Society's Being (i.e. human beings are the product of socialisation) and Modernity's Man (i.e. human rationality is the most important power) are rejected here. The social discourse of civilised tourism creates an environment that influences people's action, the naturalist nature of being is nonetheless primary.

The transition from being a moral self to a civilised Chinese tourist to one who represents China has been a very interesting finding. Archer (2000) has discussed how personal identity and social identity(-ies) are forged and modified through the realist sequence of humanity development, travelling through the quadrants of private/individual, private/collective, public/collective, and public/individual. If Archer (2000) is correct, the Chinese participants' self-identities would have emerged from differentiation as a result of their self-consciousness and sense of self while their social identity of being a parent would have emerged from the interactions with their family members. Both types of identities are brought into the public/collective quadrant wherein the social identities of being a Chinese, being a civilised Chinese, being a tourist, and being a civilised tourist are forged, which altogether result into a new entity - civilised Chinese tourist. This entity has its own characteristic - the bearing of the national image of China. To be one, the occupant of the position, as seen in this study, makes a personal commitment to maintain the image. This transition indeed echoes the journey from public/collective to public/individual wherein they recognise their responsibility for being a Chinese and being a tourist, and recognise the risk that uncivilised behaviours by Chinese can bring - loss of "face" and reputation of Chinese people. These recognitions have indeed affirmed Craib's (1998) argument that identity emerges from the transitional area of creativity that involves identification of responsibility for what we do, freedom, and the risks of failure and loss that accompany human action.

7. The Study's Contributions

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, it advances the paradigm shift for value-laden tourism wherein Macbeth (1994, 2005) has called for an ethical platform for tourism while hopeful tourism (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011) and ethics in tourism (Fennell, 2006, 2018) have been extensively discussed. In this value-laden tourism discourse, however, civilised tourism research is very much underrepresented in English-written academic outlets (Huang et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2008). This study provides great insights into this new phenomenon of social patterns, in particular the transition from being a moral self to a civilised Chinese tourist to one who represents China. Secondly, the study builds upon robust ontological stratification of critical realism (Bhaskar, 1994, 2008) and solid methodological foundations of Archer's analytical dualism, abductive, and retroductive reasoning that feature realist analysis of social phenomena (Danermark et al., 2019). Thirdly, it provides an exemplar of empirical realist research, extending Li's (2022) realist conceptual framework for ethical tourism research with specific evidence-informed mechanisms. Fourthly, the authors of the paper agree with Philosopher Roy Bhaskar (2011, 2014), who has argued that scientific activities are to find the mechanisms that cause what people see and/or experience. Finding causality is exactly the focal point of the present research. The study discovered that positional powers and the present social movement of civilised tourism development co-create a condition for agencies to suffice. In other words, this condition triggers psychological and social causes which are engineered by agents' capabilities of recognising their concerns, reflexive and evaluative reasoning, forging of identity, moral engagement, and learning.

8. Conclusion

The study has aimed to address "what are the structural and agential mechanisms that bring about the emergence of value-informed practices in civilised tourism in China?". In order to answer this question, relationships *a* and *b* (Fig. 1) need to be unpacked. The study discovered that positional powers and the present social movement of civilised tourism development co-create a condition for agencies to suffice (i.e. relationship *a*). This condition triggers psychological and social causes which are engineered by agents' capabilities of recognising their concerns, reflexive and evaluative reasoning, forging of identity, moral engagement, and learning (i.e. relationship *b*). It was observed that the ideations of civility development and civilised tourism development gel well with the interests of sampled Chinese social actors, which effectively sustains the existing system's configuration. This manifestation reflects the morphostasis of concomitant complementarity - reproducing the configuration of the existing system (Archer, 1995, 2008). The variations in socio-cultural interactions identified, on the other hand, reflect Archer's morphogenesis of contingent complementarity - transforming the system. Future research can (1) focus more on variations in socio-cultural interactions and investigate if they would bring about competitive contradiction in China, and (2) apply the approach adopted in this research to another cultural context to explore morphogenesis in tourism development.

This research reveals that the orderliness of social interactions is a defining characteristic of civilised tourism. This orderliness is achieved/enhanced through relational efforts among social actors not only across the micro, meso, and macro levels, but also within each of the levels. The tourism industry needs to recognise that civilised tourism is not simply a matter of tourists' civility and/or tour guides' professionalism, but also requires proactive management and practical tactics to address matters such as sufficient and appropriate amenities that can make visits easier and more enjoyable (i.e. from the meso level to the micro level). Thus, self-regeneration of civilised business practice through operations and professional training is important (i.e. within the meso level). The industry would also benefit from more support from the government to

initiate practical partnerships with the education sector, families, media, and other professional groups to raise the awareness of what civilised tourism entails (i.e. from the macro level to the meso level, and within the meso level).

To effectively engage with one's social identity forming process, the ideologies of civility and civilised tourism as advocated by the government and as voiced by other collectivities need to gel well with individuals' pursuit of well-being and flourishing (i.e. from the macro level and the meso level to the micro level, respectively). This requires policy makers and tourism organisations to understand individual social actors. It is through these social interactions that value the ideological ideas, that antagonism (Doxey, 1975) at destinations will be reversed and/or avoided. It is through these interactions that the arrival of the beautiful scenery of tourism can be accelerated. What is yet to be addressed in this paper is what the cultural items "civility" and "civilised tourism" actually say in the Culture System (i.e. the structural level). Their systemic "sayings" constrain and enable human agency, accounting for Socio-Cultural interactions. Thus, investigation on the cultural items, which is reported elsewhere, contributes to a more holistic explanation of ethicality formation in civilised tourism and practical implication for enhanced civilised tourism practice.

Contribution as per author

60% from Li Li, 30% from Samrat Hazra, and 10% from Jing Wang.

Data linking

Li, Li (2021) *Resource list on civility and civilised tourism*. BathSPAdata. Dataset. <https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.16997170.v1>.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100411>.

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