

How the Dark Tourism Development Effect on Post-Disaster Reconstruction – the Case Study

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Abstract: After catastrophe, sites and relics in disaster-hit areas usually develop and provides many opportunities for the local government to improve economic development, employment and to solve other problems there. However, as national large-scale reconstruction and private donations decrease gradually, social concerns for disasters reduce the sustainability of reconstruction will be faced with challenges. This article takes China as a case study, which is the epicenter of the "5.12 Earthquake" happened in Sichuan Province in 2008 as a case study. The author discuss the dark tourism development one of the main tasks planned after the catastrophe and its effect on local urban and rural development, structure and government policies based on the literature review, statistics data and field research. The article focuses on the changes of mainstream culture and social relations, the correlation of development of tourism and other local industries in the development process of tourism which due to the cultural background and psychological characteristics, etc. This article tries to clarify the role of planners in development, provide the basis for planners to deal with the problem faced by Wenchuan correctly, and provide reference for other disaster-hit areas development.

1. Research Background

1.1 The concept of dark tourism

The conception of Dark Tourism is first put forward by John Lennon and Malcolm MacDonald in their book *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*. It is defined as tourism to sites historically associated with death and tragedy, such as trips in the sites of disaster. Dark tourism generates strong emotional shocks in a deep way, which is totally different from other tourism projects just for fun. Inspiring the courage of tourists to face the disaster and receive sincere advice and warning to avoid repeat of tragedy.

1.2 Research status

The history of dark tourism research in academia is not long, but the number of articles is large. Among them, according to the international record by Philip R. Stone, there are nearly 2000 related articles which use dark tourism as the keywords in Google Scholar and the number came to 63900 in 2011. In China, by the end of May in 2015, there are 91 articles which are mainly about dark tourism on CNKI and analyzed their status. We know the real research of dark tourism in China started from the turn of the century. The climax in research process was caused by the earthquake in Wenchuan.

When running through the related articles, the author finds that most of the articles focus on concept defining, resource classification of dark tourism, the behavior motivation of dark tourists, the stakeholders of dark tourism, the development mode of dark tourism, dispute and effects, and they merely paid attention to the role definition and planning of planners in dark tourism planning.

2. Rethinking the development of dark tourism in Wenchuan

2.1 Overview of the development of black tourism in Wenchuan

2.1.1 The reason why Wenchuan develops dark tourism

From the aspect of internal factors, Wenchuan earthquake has been considered as one of the most devastating natural disasters in recent years. There are various types of disaster sites including inhabitation community sites of human beings, earthquake hazards sites, destruction sites of previous tourism attractions and so on. Besides, touching stories emerging from the earthquake rescue are valuable and precious. These factors are the development of the dark tourism in Wenchuan.

Referring to the external environment, Wenchuan is a comprehensive travel destination which combines natural landscapes, folk customs or histories and adventure tourism. In addition, there are abundant and high-quality tourism attractions surrounding Wenchuan such as Huanglong and Wolong giant panda nature reserve. Overall, the earthquake tourism can be matched and integrated with these surrounding scenic spots, which can become a new tourism resource.

Most importantly, the earthquake has raised Wenchuan's awareness and popularity level. Additionally, people have paid much attention to the disaster and the rescue area, which is another aspect to gain the focus with high degree. Hence, the attention of people is essential to the development of black tourism in Wenchuan.

2.1.2 The Planning work for the development of dark tourism in Wenchuan

Reconstruction is a long process, so making a positive and scientific development has a great meaning for the affected areas. Wenchuan enjoys its abundant tourism resource, and the development of tourism has been paid highly attention.

Aba, where Wenchuan located, has become a separate area compiled in the "Aba Reconstruction Implementation Plan" as the tourism industry-leading in the Sichuan plan. The plan identifies three tourism brands: World Wildlife Heritage and Tibetan and Qiang Cultural Tourism Brand and Earthquake Relic Tourism Brand.

This shows that although relevant plans propose to carry on earthquake relics sightseeing, landscape sightseeing, earthquake science education and earthquake simulation education, monuments, memorials, relief spiritual wealth, and earthquake disaster science. The plan also arranges two earthquake tour lines: Chengdu - Yingxiu - Wolong - Sigunia - Xiaojin - Baoxing - Chengdu, and Chengdu - Yingxiu - Maoxian - Beichuan - Sigunia. However, it also lacks targeted research and planning for dark tourism.

2.1.3 The action of the development of dark tourism in Wenchuan

In Wenchuan county, the development of dark tourism is placed as a very important task. In the second year after the disaster, the product of "One day exploring the epicenter" was promoted very quickly in Wenchuan. The highlights of this product included the resettlement village for the victims, White Flower Bridge, location of the hypocenter, the sky, Xuankou middle school site, the apron prime minister used, "5.12" 1:1 scale model, Yuzixi viewing platform, and earthquake fault zone, etc.

After seven years of development, "5.12" memorial has become a national AAAA level scenic spot, and the preparatory work for "Big Love World" cultural park, which takes great content, has been carried out, however, there is no more and deeper tourism products. Dark tourism appears. And the tourism products are still mostly ruins sightseeing. The humanistic spirit shown in the earthquake relief, lacking science education and earthquake hazard research or on simulation of earthquake that can be participated in. (Table 1)

Table 1. Overview the black tourism products system in Wenchuan

Class	Subclass	Content
Sightseeing category	The site of earthquake ruins	Xuankou middle school site White Flower Bridge location of the hypocenter earthquake fault zone Yuzixi

		viewing platform, etc.	
	The cultural landscape of earthquake	The apron prime minister used, "5.12" ladders, etc.	
	The display of the scene of reconstruction region	The centralized resettlement village for the victims, Yingxiu cove park The original Yingxiu primary school etc.	
	The natural wonders of the earthquake	Rocks fell from the sky.	
Education category	The exhibition about events of the earthquake	The memorial hall for the hypocenter, the memorial hall for Qiuguanghua, etc.	
	The popular science about the earthquake	Lacking	
Experience category		Lacking	

2.2 The impact of development of dark tourism to Wenchuan

2.2.1 The development of dark tourism brings positive impacts to Wenchuan

1) Improvement of the construction of infrastructure

Before the earthquake, domestic and foreign visitors could only entered Wenchuan 317 National Highway, there is no routine traffic tools between Tourist Attract the reconstruction and the development of dark tourism , which is quickly for earthquake, the tourism infrastructure and supporting facilities of Wenchuan is the highway between Chengdu and Wenchuan has been fully available. Also, number between Wenchuan, Yingxiu, Xuankou, Shuimo and the Wolong giant panda nature re ecological scenic spot have good traffic capacity. Similarly, tourism facilities farmhouse, have also been greatly improved, all kinds of infrastructure like water communication facilities, are far higher than the level before the earthquake.

2) Promotion of the economic growth

Based on Wenchuan county tourism related statistical data (Figure 1), before 200

less than 100 million domestic visitors, total tourism income was only about 2.3 billion yuan. By 2014, the county has received more than 666 million domestic visitors, total tourism income reached 29.3 billion yuan, comparing with 2007, it increased of 713.35% and 1139.89% respectively. During the seven years of the development of dark tourism, Wenchuan's tourism income showed stable upward trend, the economic benefits brought by tourism has far exceeded before. (Yanzhen Wang, 2013.)

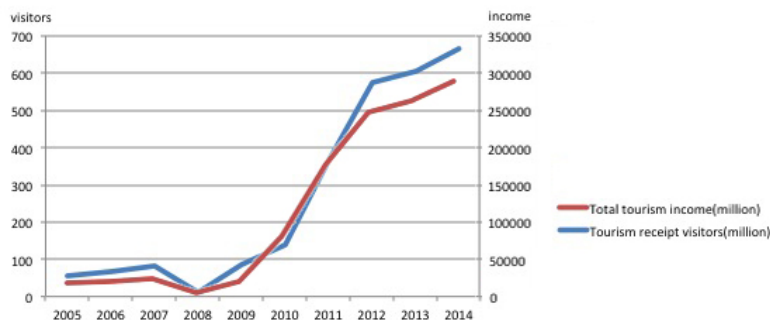


Figure 1. The development trend of tourism of Wenchuan county, 2005–2014

Source: Statistical bulletin for national economic and social development of Wenchuan county

3) Increase in employment

Tourism industry has strong linkage effect, the development of the tourism industry can promote the development of its associated service industry like catering accommodation and retail and transportation, and it will reversely promote tourism development. At the same time, also indirectly promote the development of other industries. (Jing Li, 2008.) This effect not only promotes the growth of tourism and related industries, also brings many jobs.

After the Wenchuan earthquake, dark tourism has a great demand for labor, and it can improve the employment level, low employment threshold, which is an important choice to ease the employment of earthquake. Xie Yuanlu, who is a professor of Sichuan Normal University, pointed out that in Sichuan province, the employment arrangement of every one person in tourism can drive the employment of 4.7 persons in entire society. (Yuanlu Xie, 2008.) According to the data in 2014, the county led 10000 people in employment.

2.2.2 The development of dark tourism brings negative impacts to Wenchuan

1) Hurt the emotion of residents

In the study of whether Wenchuan is suitable for developing dark tourism, some scholars

perception and attitude of local residents towards to develop dark tourism bas ruins. (Zhi Li, 2011.) The results show that most residents have a positive developing status, and focus the progress of the development. So the scholars t of dark tourism conform to their expectation about post-disaster reconstruction emotional taboo of local residents.

However, as per the field survey results (Figure 2) of the author, even if occurrence of the disaster, there are still partial local residents believin behaviors of tourists in dark tourism had caused harm to their emotions, and dan expanded the psychological shadow brought by disaster to them.

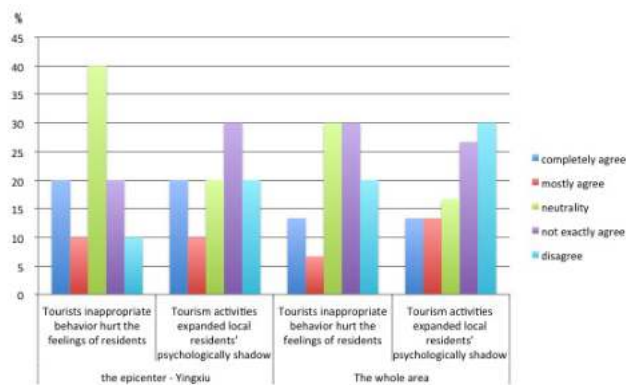


Figure 2. Residents attitude towards Dark tourism bring certain emotional damage

It can be seen that local residents maintained positive attitude to the development conforms to social exchange theory just because of the advantages and benefits. However, the consent of local residents on the development of dark tourism with does not represent that they are not harmed in emotion.

2) Impacted on the mainstream culture

There are many natural landscapes within Wenchuan County, such as Wolong giant reserve, Sanjiang ecological scenic spot, and there are also many cultural resources. Qiang culture and the three Kingdoms cultural relics, etc. Wenchuan County has hometown of Chinese folk art "Qiang embroidery village", it is also the hometown that are called the living fossil. (Committee of Chinese Communist Party and the of Wenchuan County, 2011.) However, according to the main tourist attractions in searches on the Web after a period of development of dark tourism (Figure 3), dark tourism resource like Wenchuan earthquake memorial and Xuankou Middle School more than people's attention comparing to other resorts.

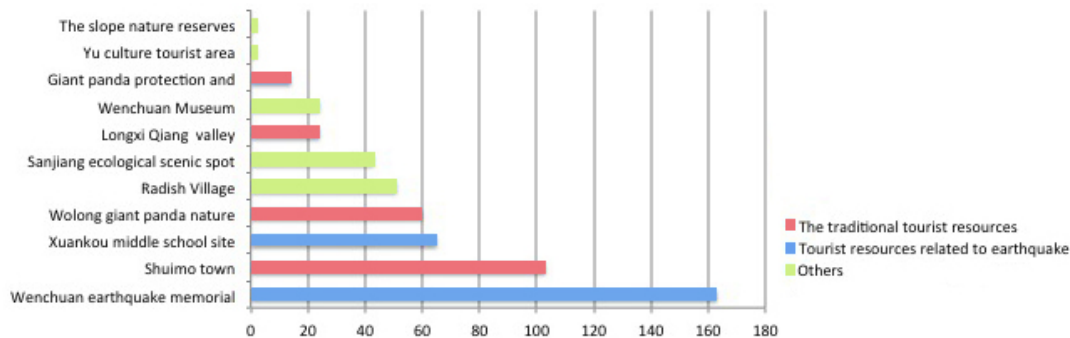


Figure 3 Search volume for major tourist attractions in Wenchuan County, Source: <http://www.mafengwo.cn/travel-scenic-spot/mafengwo/10691.html>

And through the feedback of the questionnaire survey to local residents (Figure 4), residents made it clear that the local cultural identity gave by the dark tourism to local traditional culture, and the number of residents who think the dark tourism impacted on the local traditional culture, is only less than one third.

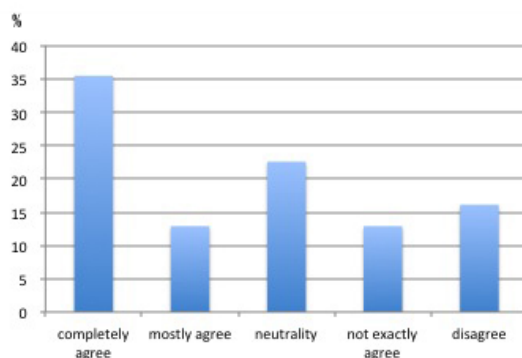


Figure 4. Residents' attitude towards dark tourism's impact on local traditional culture

Therefore, whether it is from the perspective of the outside of Wenchuan under the point of view of local residents, the original culture, landscape resources and the traditional culture to them in Wenchuan, are suffering from the shock by dark tourism resources and the characterization of new cultural elements for them after the disaster.

3) Widened the gap between the rich and the poor

Figure 5 shows that it is generally believed that economic interests generated by tourism only benefit certain people. In particular, on one hand, in the initial stage of tourism, partly original rich residents recovering rapidly after disaster and benefit the most because they occupy most of the catering and lodging market.

advantages of capital and connections. On the other hand, residents living near tourist transport centers of dark tourism can get more economic benefits from the tourism through low-budget personal business as they have easier access to most dark tourism.

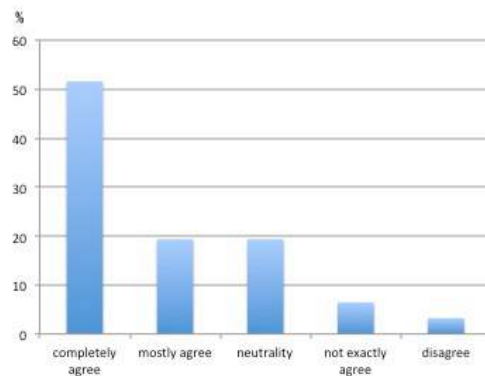


Figure 5. Residents' attitude towards Dark tourism benefit only certain

The unfair distribution of tourism benefit widens the income gap between residents. It is noticeable that some residents who benefit from dark tourism emigrate from Wenchuan cities like Chengdu after income improving results from the longing for city reconstruction, which causes not only the tense relationship between neighborhoods but also increased uneasiness of local residents.

3. Discussion on the role of planners during the process of post-disaster reconstruction

Based on the analysis of the problem above, and combined with the development of dark tourism with scientific planning. The author believes that, for dark tourism development in post-disaster reconstruction, planners should pay attention to the following four points:

3.1 Composite type of product - make a transformation of product type to a multiplex

As mentioned before, after seven years of the development of dark tourism, the tourism is still related to relics, memorial stadiums in disaster and use them as selling points. The form of production is mainly in low-end and extensive ones. However, this is so simple, is not enough to support long-term development of dark tourism.

Therefore, when designing dark tourism commercial activity, planners should first activate relic-type resources via stage play exhibiting earthwork relief human. On the other hand, it can facilitate disaster-hit area residents to acquire benefit via direct

tourism activity; on the other hand, it can show the cheerful and positive life in the face-to-face contact between tourists and survivors.

Secondly, planners can design tourism products with strong participation and science and education connotation such as geological disaster scientific research and experience combining with anti-seismic lab, so as to further enrich the variety of products and strengthen local tourism attractiveness.

Finally, similar to tourism product of any theme, only all-weather commercial activities can attract and retain tourists. Thus as to Wenchuan, increasing night products with positive connotation such as candle blessing concert to change the tourism commercial activity of morning to have a look and coming back to city at night for lunch can not only increase local income, but also promote the mutual understanding between tourists and local residents. It will be of positive significance to the development of dark tourism.

3.2 Humanities concern - from tourists first to the local residents first

Dark tourism plays a positive role to educate tourists cherish life. However, dark tourism needs to be based on a period of painful memories that will bring some emotional trauma to local residents inevitably. Especially for Chinese, who have traditions and cultural beliefs of peace and luck and avoid disaster, death etc., although there are a number of cases in international arena, deep-rooted traditional attitudes and patterns of taboos make it difficult to present dark tourism by the form of disaster and death.

Hence, during the development of dark tourism planning, planners should pay attention to local residents' emotions. Firstly, we must respect and understand Wenchuan local residents' traditions and beliefs. If it involves some sensitive issues, such as death and disaster, planner shall design a project that is acceptable for the earthquake survivors, and the project shall be based on that planner understand local people's wishes and fully respects their traditions and emotions. In addition, to avoid dark tourism bringing back local residents' painful memories, dark tourism shall reduce the description of pain of the disaster, and tend to guide local residents' memory for the earthquake victims.

Secondly, the development of dark tourism in Wenchuan is certainly conducive to local economy and promote reconstruction. However, there are some over-commercialization and dark tourism exploitation - such as chrysanthemums can be presented in Xuankou through buying flowers in the form of donate, which is also a kind of damage to the self-improvement Wenchuan survivors. Therefore, planner should adhere to the government organizations as dominant role when they designed the dark tourism operators.

business conducts which will undermine the image of the local residents and hurt the local residents.

Finally, planner should not only make arrangements for dark tourism products, development, work, etc., but also should take guidance measures to the behavior of dark tourism. For example, guidance for Xuankou middle school site, cemeteries of killed people or other sites. Also, restrict tourists disrespectful act, such as frolicking, inappropriate photography, etc. Such act would incurring discontent of survivors.

3.3 Combining with present and future - from a single cultural element to multiple elements.

With regard to the dark tourism that was caused by earthquakes and other natural disasters, the development of its tourism activities often went out attention as time gradually passed. In the development of dark tourism in Wenchuan, the impact of new tourism products in Wenchuan surpassed its original tourism label, such as Panda Hometown, Qiang Village if we just stressed the earthquake relics and failed to combine its local tourism resources. Then, as the memory of calamity gradually faint, the existing competitiveness of local tourism resources will reduce.

Therefore, designers must be clear when plan the tourism that Epicenter Wenchuan. It should be a cultural element caused by natural calamity and people's attention. It could be a new cultural element in local in a short time, but it must has the overall relation with the other cultural elements based on powerful nature and long cultural tradition.

In the real action, designers can do from two aspects. From the perspective of space, combine Xuankou middle school site, location of the hypocenter and other local tourism resources, such as Wolong giant panda nature reserve, Mt. Siguniang etc., to form a continuous cultural tourism belt. From the perspective of the content of the products, combine the village reconstruction, earthquake relics and damaged with the concentrated areas of Zang and Qiang ethnic minorities. It can show the new look of affected areas in the form of reconstruction and the tourism products contains Zang and Qiang culture, natural scenes, and other tourism advantages. In this way, dark tourism can benefit other affected resorts and tourism resources in the early time. At the same time, it can also maintain sustained vitality in the local tourism resources.

3.4 Contacting with different space - from point-like development to the regional development

The unfair distribution of income from dark tourism, as discussed above, could

management measures like giving jobs and welfare to moderately benefit the di
More importantly, fundamentally integrate dark tourism resources and rural area
engage local people from different areas to be a part of the dark tourism throug

With regard to tourism resources, the planner of dark tourism should allocat
spatially according to their distinctions. For example, the horrifying disaste
named after Wenchuan, at which the core of the tour should have been. But res
famous Xuankou Middle School site were located in Yingxiu, a town 60km away fr
Given such circumstance, the planner should regard Yingxiu as resource-rich tour
main target is to the relics original and real, while Wenchuan should be regarded a
tourism region where artificial efforts should be done through publicity and exh
disastrous earthquake. By doing so, we can build up connection and spatial con
asymmetrical tourism resources.

For the development of urbanized tourism, villages and small towns in Wenchuan
foundation for leisure agriculture rural tourism by planting cheery and kiwi
actives don t operate as a holistic business even though they re all named after We
planner could try to boost the bundled development for dark tourism and rural
providing better traffic connection and planning themed activities. With these
attraction of dark tourism to the whole region instead of several key nodes, we
tourism business that benefits all of our people.

4. Conclusion and outlook

In recent years, the development of dark tourism in Wenchuan has been increasi
also brought some influence to Wenchuan. From the related planning, practice an
tourism in Wenchuan, it can be seen that the development of dark tourism is a
also needs multiple participations. As the strategists whom the local governmen
and local residents rely on together, the planners should fully pay attention to
culture and psychological characteristics in the planning of dark tourism, pro
from being hurt in the dark tourism activities. At the same time, the planners s
interests for most people by the means of spatial layout, product design to sa
order in the developing process of dark tourism and make overall judgment ab
development of the local entire tourism including black tourism to make sure th
of dark tourism that are suitable for different phases after disasters in the lo

In addition, to discuss the influence of dark tourism in post-disaster reconstr
combine the dark tourism planning with economic and social development planning,
overall urban planning, land use planning, ecological control planning, urb

planning and so on. How dark tourism planners promote the post-disaster recon. background of combining rules should be an important subject that needs to be es future.

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