

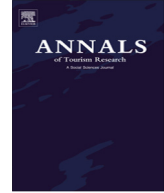


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Tourism as a territorial strategy: The case of China and Taiwan



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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the cultural and territorial politics of the rapid post-2008 growth in tourism from the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Taiwan. Additionally, this paper presents an innovative theoretical argument that tourism should be viewed as a technology of state territorialization; that is, as a mode of social and spatial ordering that produces tourists and state territory as effects of power.

Based on fieldwork conducted in Taiwan in 2012, it explores the engagement of PRC tourists with Taiwanese hosts, political representations of Taiwan and China, the territorializing effects of tourism, the production of multiple sensations of stateness, and the possibility that tourism is aggravating contradictions between the different territorialization programs of China and Taiwan.

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Introduction

In May 2012, Han Han, China's most popular blogger, published a post entitled, "Winds of the Pacific", about his recent trip to Taiwan:

I don't want to delve into the politics. As a writer from the mainland, I just feel lost. A pervasive feeling of loss. The society I grew up in spent a few decades teaching us to be violent and vengeful, and then a few more decades teaching us to be selfish and greedy. Our parents destroyed our culture, our ethics, our ability to trust, our faith and consensus, but failed to build the utopia that was

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promised. We may have no choice but to keep doing the same things. As a writer, I have to constantly worry about whether my words will step on some line somewhere. I assume people have ulterior motives when they treat me with warmth. Other than self-survival and competition, we have lost interest in everything else. This is how we have come to define ourselves.

...

Yes, I have to thank Hong Kong and Taiwan, for protecting Chinese civilization. Even when we have the Ritz Carlton and the Peninsula, Gucci and Louis Vuitton, wives of local officials with more money than their leaders, movie budgets 20 or 30 times theirs, the World's Fair and the Olympics, but, on the streets of Taipei, I didn't feel any bit of pride. Whatever we have, they already had; whatever we are proud of, their taxpayers will never approve; whatever we should be proud of, we've already lost (Han, 2012, translated in Yeh, 2012).

Despite his disclaimer, Han Han's post is nothing if not political. He may skirt the question of Taiwan independence, but he uses the island as a tinted mirror for what the People's Republic of China (PRC) could be but is not, or was but is no longer. Filled with anecdotes of the kindness of strangers—the taxi driver who returned a phone that Han had dropped in the back seat, or the eyewear store owner who guilelessly gave Han's friend a free pair of contact lenses—Han's post treats Taiwan not as a renegade province under the thumb of the United States or as an exotic tourist destination, but as a rhetorical device for an indirect critique of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) role in the corruption of "Chinese values". Han's taxi driver was not just a taxi driver—in the retelling, the cabbie came to represent of the supposed generous spirit of all Taiwanese people. Except, in Han's reading, the driver's generosity was not so much Taiwanese as it was *Chinese*, free of the corrupting influence of the CCP. Han therefore suggests he was not helped by a Taiwanese as much as he was by a more authentic Chinese subject. Taiwan's history as a Japanese colony and US protectorate, as well as its many other specificities and contingencies are elided in this account.

In this paper, based on fieldwork conducted in Taiwan in 2012 and informed by analysis of media reports and the influential posts of people such as Han Han, I argue that the recent rise in leisure tourism from the PRC to Taiwan is producing multiple, overlapping, and contradictory sensations of state-ness, state territory, and national identity within Taiwan. These effects are produced in part by the highly regimented structure of group tourism as managed by industry actors from Taiwan, the PRC, and Hong Kong, which reproduces a tourist experience sufficiently similar to that of the PRC. Subtle and inconsistent linguistic performances of national identity take place throughout tours, both reproducing and undermining the effect of state territory.

Both Han Han and my informants make clear that not only is cross-Strait tourism an occasion for recreation, but that stories about seemingly simple encounters take on important symbolic value in the context of an ongoing struggle over sovereignty. Moreover, the trajectory and meanings of such narratives are not determined solely by the regulatory arrangements between state or travel industry elites in Taiwan and the PRC. The emergence of such discursive dissonance suggests that tourism may be a problematic and unpredictable weapon in the arsenal of state power. Cross-Strait tourism does not require a superstar blogger to provoke widespread discussion about the different cultural values or behaviors of people in Taiwan and the PRC. In another quite typical case, a report on PRC tourists who carved their names into plants in an east Taiwan park provoked online protest and further depiction of PRC visitors as poorly behaved bumpkins overrunning the countryside (Fauna, 2012). Importantly, tourism has been not only the subject of such raucous social debates, but also the driver for the establishment of the first cross-Strait quasi-state offices since the founding of the PRC, with Beijing opening a tourism office in Taipei and Taipei opening an office in Beijing in April 2010 (China Times., 2010).

This growing flow of tourists and diplomatic exchanges between the PRC and Taiwan is taking place against the backdrop of a sovereignty dispute whose roots go back over a century, to late imperial China's cession of Taiwan to Japan in 1895, through the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) occupation of Taiwan in the 1940s, and all the way up to the recent thaw in cross-Strait relations. Since the 1980s, following political reforms on both sides, flows of people, goods, and capital across the Strait have increased. This has come in the form of investment, family visitation, and tourism, first

solely or predominantly flowing from Taiwan to the PRC, and more recently, going in the opposite direction. The former British and Portuguese colonies of Hong Kong and Macau typically served as transit points for visitors, but 2008 marked the beginning of regular, non-chartered direct flights between the PRC and Taiwan, which had followed a limited opening of the route between the PRC city of Xiamen and the nearby Taiwan-controlled island of Kinmen. Since then, PRC tourists have rapidly overtaken Japanese to become the largest tourist segment in Taiwan ([Republic of China Ministry of Transportation & Communications Tourism Bureau, 2012](#)). That this comes against a backdrop of a continuing major sovereignty dispute, involving massive military buildup on each side, is nothing short of remarkable.

While Taiwan democratized in the 1990s and its leadership has gradually dropped serious claims to sovereignty over China, the PRC continues to claim Taiwan as part of its territory. Despite the PRC's denial of Taiwan's sovereignty, PRC tourists, whatever their opinions or education about Taiwan's sovereign status, nonetheless follow its border-crossing procedures when they arrive at Taiwan's international airport terminals. Even if they may feel they are in a territory that rightly belongs to the PRC, upon arrival in Taiwan, they are confronted with the specter of the Republic of China (ROC), the name still used in official documents of Taiwan's state administration, as well as its flag, national anthem, public holidays, and other symbols of a state the PRC leadership describes as illegitimate.

Past work suggests that the strategic deployment of tourism is part of China's foreign policy apparatus ([Arlt, 2006](#); [Richter, 1983](#)). [Nyíri \(2006\)](#) has argued that PRC state agents use tourism and tourist sites to articulate hegemonic claims about cultural identity and state authority, even beyond China's borders. If this is true, then tourism to Taiwan should be no exception. Yet, it remains to be seen exactly how tourism may be serving the PRC's claims to sovereignty over Taiwan, or possibly producing unintended effects of alienation. Though mediated by state and market forces, the narratives of tourists and toured are taking on political meanings and trajectories of their own, potentially reconfiguring the modes in which Taiwanese and PRC subjects recognize and engage with each other. Han Han is one of several million PRC citizens who have toured Taiwan in the last several years. While more typical tourists don't have the opportunity to shake hands with ROC President Ma Ying-jeou, as did Han, or have their reflections read by millions, they are (re)forming political opinions about the relationship between the PRC and Taiwan. What would otherwise be (extra)ordinary encounters between tourist and toured thus become animated by, and may themselves animate incompatible nationalisms. With this comes new imaginative geographies of the cultural character and extent of the territories claimed by Taiwan or the PRC.

While cross-Strait tourism may seem an extraordinary case, it is precisely its extraordinariness that makes it valuable for a theoretical discussion of the territorial politics of tourism in general. So much of the modern interstate system is taken for granted in the literature of tourism that the study of an extraordinary situation may uncover what, through repetition, has come to seem ordinary—a world split into nation-states with mutually exclusive territories, a global mobility regime of visas and passports modulated by international agreements such as Schengen, and so on—but is in fact a quite peculiar and contingent configuration of space and bodies. This configuration is performed and transformed by the practice of tourism. This paper therefore uses the cross-Strait case to make a broader theoretical argument that *tourism should be viewed as a technology of state territorialization*. Like any technology of power, tourism may both reinforce and destabilize the subjects and objects it constitutes within its field. I take as my starting point that these subjects and objects—tourists, states and nations, borders and territory—have no essential existence. They emerge discursively and are recognized, reconfigured, and reproduced through spatial practice ([Lefebvre, 1991](#)). The state here is treated not as an autonomous or unitary entity and territory not as a place, but rather as *processes* of which tourism may play a constitutive part.

Tourism as a technology of state territorialization in taiwan and china

Tourism, borders, peace, and Taiwan and China

Most past work on PRC-Taiwan tourism assumes a normative trajectory of reconciliation, which is symptomatic of tourism studies' general assumptions about peace and borders. Territorial

assumptions about the state permeate both academic and industrial discourses: thus we have the fundamental divisions of domestic tourism versus international tourism, and inbound versus outbound tourism, produced and reproduced in scholarship and state and industry practice. While perhaps useful for state and industry planners, such discourses also reify states and borders and can even obscure the sociospatial processes that produce and disrupt them.

The general relationship between tourism and borders has been explored most extensively by the geographer Dallen J. Timothy (2004). Building on the work of Matznetter (1979), Timothy offers the following three categories for understanding the relation between tourism and borders: The border as a barrier, the border as destination, and the border as a modifier of the tourism landscape. Beyond this typology, he does not offer any conceptualization of tourism's role in the production of borders.

Timothy co-authored a journal article which treats Taiwan and mainland China as partitioned states and offers suggestions for promoting cross-Strait tourism flows to promote "reconciliation" and unification (Guo, Kim, Timothy, & Wang, 2006). Such a position is shared in one of the few other English-language pieces that has discussed the politics of cross-Strait tourism (Yu, 1997), and recent work continues to treat the cross-Strait case as "rapprochement tourism" (Zhang, 2013). As for Chinese language scholarship, most accounts from both sides of the Strait assume a normative trajectory of reconciliation and focus more on economic impacts or destination marketing (Ho, Chuang, & Huang, 2012; Liu, 2009; Wang, 2011; Yi, 2008). What is missing here is an appreciation that tourism does not necessarily promote "reconciliation," but has instrumentalities that serve particular, even competing interests or programs of government (Lanfant, 1995).

Policy prescriptions that promote international tourism as a palliative for conflict owe to past work on tourism's potential instrumentality for peace-making and reconciliation (D'Amore, 1988; Jafari, 1989). While it would be nice if tourism indeed functioned as a peacemaker, there is little evidence to warrant this belief. Litvin has observed that "the health of tourism is always the result of peace, never the cause of peace" (Litvin, 1998, p. 64). Litvin also points out that tourism has often been used contra peace-making efforts, as in the case of threats against or even kidnapping of tourists.

A corrective case study to such peacemaking fantasy is Park's ethnography on tourism from South Korea to North Korea (2005). Park instructively pays attention to the mundane details of border stamps and identity cards, with their coded phrases and differently named state entities, suggesting that North Korean authorities use these instruments to articulate state sovereignty. While tourism can produce feelings of internationalization and de-territorialization, it may also produce "retrenchment of identities in a territory" (116). The practical outcome is that despite hopes for peace, tourism is also "an arena of contestation and cooperation where different states compete, negotiate, manipulate, and maneuver cultural meanings and representations to find their places in the complex and changing international political order" (116).

In the case of the Koreas, as in Taiwan and China, the place of these states in the international order remains unsettled. But unlike the Korean case, which both states characterize as intra-national tourism (with each side pointing to the other as a false state), or which Park suggests is "inter-state tourism where two states, however hostile, belong to one nation" (125), authorities in Taiwan stopped claiming sovereignty over the PRC long before permitting inbound tourism. Moreover, a clear majority of the people in Taiwan do not identify as Chinese in opinion polls (National Chengchi University Election Study Center., 2012).

Given this complexity, rather than assume a normative trajectory of reconciliation or greater mutual understanding, scholars should attend to the ways in which state actors use tourism for possibly contradictory ends. The key point is that tourism is a politically messy enterprise with uneven and unclear outcomes. In the next section, I will advance a theoretical argument that allows for this indeterminacy.

Tourism as a technology of state territorialization

Millions of tourists cross borders every year. Passports in hand, these tourists act as the citizen-subjects of the various nation-states of the world. They travel for any number of reasons. When they cross borders from their own country into another and then return home, they, I contend, are not only carrying memories and souvenirs—they, along with border agents and airlines, travel agents and tour

operators, are enacting the borders that they are crossing and the state territories that they are traversing. Reciprocally, tourists and their interlocutors simultaneously constitute or exclude themselves (depending on their claims or obligations of citizenship) as subjects of such nation-states.

This argument is informed by a Foucauldian “analytics of government” (Foucault, 2009; Lemke, 2007; Rose & Miller, 1992), one that does not treat the state as a unitary subject with autonomous powers or necessary or timeless functions. Nor does this approach assume the a priori existence of its subjects as atomized, autonomous individuals. Rather, such an analytic instead looks to ensembles of relations and practices of government that conjure and produce the state and its citizens not just as agents, but as *effects* of power. Such relations and practices include technologies of power and technologies of the self, “each a matrix of practical reason” that human beings use to dominate each other’s bodies and minds, and also to shape themselves as subjects with self-knowledge (Foucault, 1988, p. 16).

Not limited to the level of the individual body, these technologies of power also scale their targets up towards totalizing entities such as the state and its population. Connecting these two directions, Foucault’s later work explores the “contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self” (1988, p. 17). Such technologies never produce truly finished subjects and objects—each is always in a state of flux, of becoming, of change, contradiction, rupture, and reformation.

Such an approach illuminates the mutual constitution of both the state and its subjects through technologies of power and the self, including, I argue, the practices and discourses that constitute and enable tourism. This conceptualization demands a more historical approach to the study of the state and its subjects, and indeed to the specificities of the global interstate system, than what is found in most contemporary tourism research. Such a detailed approach is necessary for the case of Taiwan and cross-Strait tourism, where everyday assumptions about the exclusive territory of the nation-state and its citizen-subjects break down. Methodologically, this theory also clarifies the relevance of using ethnographic research of everyday “micro-powers” and interactions between citizens and tourists, to understand “macro-powers” like those attributed to the state, and vice versa.

How then, might we characterize the state in a way useful for tourism research? Painter has usefully borrowed from Abrams (1988) and Mitchell (1991) to define the state as an “imagined collective actor”. To illustrate this, he uses the passport in a travel-appropriate analogy:

When I apply for a passport identifying me as a citizen of a state, the passport, the office and the officials that issue it, and the border post through which it allows me to pass all exist. However, the state in whose name they function is neither an aggregation of these elements, nor a separate reality behind them, but a symbolic resource on which they draw to produce their effects. (Painter 2006, 758)

This definition implies that studies of the practices and products of the foreign policy elite, the border guard, and the passport holder are all essential for understanding state technologies for the regulation of mobility in general and tourism in particular.

The state is of course not imagined in a world without space. Elden’s general gloss serves as a useful starting point for a treatment of territory as a concept and set of practices: “Territory is more than merely land, but a rendering of the emergent concept of ‘space’ as a political category: owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered, and controlled” (2007, p. 579). Following this, I will use *state territorialization* to refer specifically to those practices and processes by which space is rendered or configured as belonging to, bounded by, and subject to the sovereignty of the collective actor imagined as a particular state.

This effect requires borders, which “comprise the basic element in the construction of territories and the practice of territoriality” (Paasi, 2003, p. 112). But borders are not simply lines on the map, or state institutions or practices that are manifested or enacted in specific sites, but also “processes that exist in socio-cultural action and discourses” (Paasi, 1998, p. 72). These processes saturate sites designated for border crossing, such as land border stations and airports. While such sites are crucial for observing the material and affective geopolitics of the everyday (Burrell, 2008; Jansen, 2009), borders are also discursively produced elsewhere through routine performance of the nation-state and its territory in national iconography, media, and education systems (Balibar, 2002; Paasi, 1998; Paasi, 2000), and should therefore be examined in broader domains.

Assuming that borders are the constitutive elements of state territorialization, tourists and the apparatuses that facilitate and restrict their flows play a fundamental role in state territorialization. A study of this requires an examination of the particular sites, nodes, tools, devices, practices, and performances that produce the effect of borders and state territory. Therefore, an inquiry into tourism as a technology of state territorialization must also include the processes of bordering and territorial socialization (Newman, 1999) immanent in tourism.

In sum, the interstate tourist is constituted through an ensemble of practices and devices, from passport and visa applications, to border crossing, to site visitation and everything else enabled by the infrastructure of tourism, including performances of the state and its territory. The interstate tourist, in turn, constitutes states and their territories. All of these sites, devices, and subjects belong in a study of tourism as a technology of state territorialization. Like other technologies of power, the practices that produce these subjects harbor the possibility of a failure of repetition. When tourism is subject to changing constraints, prohibitions and taboos—and when the contours of state territory and national identity are vague, shifting, and in constant contest, as in the cross-Strait case—the potential for breakdowns, bifurcations, ruptures, or contradiction multiplies.

Methods

Multi-sited, mobile approaches (Buscher & Urry, 2009; Marcus, 1995), including ethnography, participant-observation, and semi-structured interviews compose the primary research methods of this study, which was conducted in Taiwan over a period of seven weeks in the summer of 2012.

Group tourists, instead of FIT (Free Independent Travel) tourists, were selected as primary research subjects for two reasons. First, with their greater numbers and longer history, group tourists are producing a measurably larger impact in tourist sites and on Taiwan's society and economy. PRC group tourists were permitted to enter Taiwan in 2008, while FIT tourists were not permitted to enter until 2011, and group tourists still composed approximately 90% of tourist arrivals in 2012 (Republic of China National Immigration Agency, 2013). Second, as group tour sales and itineraries are managed by PRC state-owned travel agencies, group tourists were the appropriate target for this study of tourism as a technology of state territorialization. FIT tourists may experience a different Taiwan, but a full account of this is beyond the scope of this paper.

Based on analysis of tourist itineraries and discussions with tour guides, several Taipei sites were chosen for participant-observation and interview subject recruitment. For four weeks, I conducted near-daily participant-observation at the Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, the monument to the late founder of the ROC, officially celebrated in both Taiwan and the PRC, and therefore of particular salience to this study. Three day trips each to the National Palace Museum and Songshan Airport were included as well. Additional research was conducted at Sun Moon Lake in central Taiwan, the southern city of Tainan, and at various stops on the eastern coast. My longest mobile engagement was with a group of six tourists from Shanghai, who I accompanied on two full day tours in Taipei.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 36 tourists who were recruited either directly at tourist sites, or through snowballing introductions from previous respondents or my contact networks. Ten Taiwanese tour guides, six PRC tour directors, and ten Taiwanese vendors, site staff, or protestors were recruited in the same fashion, for either interviews or informal conversation with field notes. Based on respondent availability, interviews ranged from 10 to 75 minutes. Most of these interviews took place on-site while tourists, guides, and tour directors had free time or were waiting for their groups to reassemble; the other, more in-depth, interviews took place in hotel lobbies or cafes.

As a fluent Chinese-speaking US national with a non-Chinese appearance, I occasionally became something of a minor tourist attraction myself while conducting participant-observation, which at least served to draw more interview subjects. More seriously, the US history of support for the ROC is a continuing thorn in the side of US-PRC diplomatic relations. Therefore, my positionality required sensitivity and adaptation to the territorial ideologies and linguistic conventions of both tourists and Taiwanese.

Interview transcriptions and field notes were anonymized and coded according to emergent themes and patterns. Results were discussed with peer researchers, including PRC and Taiwanese,

to avoid theoretical or geographical bias, and then re-analyzed using conventional qualitative techniques (Silverman, 2011).

Discussion

This discussion focuses on two interweaving issues: One, how cross-Strait tourism is producing multiple, ambiguous, overlapping, and contradictory sensations of stateness within Taiwan, and two, how tourism is both ameliorating and exacerbating contradictions between and within the territorialization programs of the PRC and Taiwan. The first point—that cross-Strait tourism has produced multiple, ambiguous, and overlapping sensations of stateness and state territory within Taiwan—illustrates the argument that the state should be viewed as an effect, and not a unitary actor. This is demonstrated by the remarks of many PRC group tourists that feel as if they are still within China—not just because of the PRC’s territorial claims—but because state and industry actors shape their touristic experience of Taiwan in ways that are very similar to those of the PRC.

On the other hand, ordinary Taiwanese suggest that they don’t want to go to sites popular with PRC tourists, because they don’t want to feel like they are “in China”. This leads to the second point: The more that PRC group tourists engage with Taiwanese, the more they express a sense of cultural affinity, admiration, and crucially, *identification* with them as fellow Chinese nationals. Yet, the more Taiwanese engage with PRC group tourists, the more culturally, socially and politically alienated Taiwanese feel from China and PRC nationals. Such a contradiction between the delight of guests and the distaste of hosts is certainly not unique to cross-Strait tourism. What makes this case remarkable is that PRC group tourists, almost invariably believing that Taiwan is a part of China, identify with Taiwanese hosts as fellow (ethno)national subjects that should rightfully be under the sovereign jurisdiction of the PRC, even if these tourists acknowledge the existence of Taiwan’s different state administration. Therefore, the push and pull of this encounter is of consequence for the territorial socialization of tourists and the toured, as well as for the trajectory of cross-Strait diplomatic engagement, especially given Taiwan’s democratic political system.

The touristic production of PRC stateness in parts of Taiwan—that is, the apparent territorialization of tourist areas as parts of the PRC—coincides with the deterritorialization of these same areas as Taiwanese. The more that PRC tourists go to tourist sites, the more that Taiwanese tourists avoid them. As one middle-aged Taiwanese man, a research colleague’s relative, told me, “I don’t go to the beach at Kenting any more. There are too many mainlanders there now. It’s like going to China.” Even experienced Taiwanese tour guides who are gaining economic benefit from increased work opportunities, complained about the “mess” [zao] that rapid tourist development has brought to such destinations. Meanwhile, PRC tourists, even if they sometimes say they feel like they’re in China, often comment on their pleasant interactions with Taiwanese people. The sentiments of the writer, Han Han, who praised Taiwan and Taiwanese people in his blog, were widely shared by my informants from the PRC.

Nearly every PRC tourist I spoke with said that they found people in Taiwan generally more “civilized” [wenming] than people in China. Even group tourists who had little interaction with Taiwanese who weren’t guides or vendors uniformly praised the superior customer service personal warmth [reqing] and kindness [tiexin] of the local people, as well as the clean streets. Like Han Han, many of them attributed these qualities to Taiwan’s supposedly better preserved Chinese culture, and never mentioned the Japanese colonial period as a possible factor in Taiwan’s social differences. “People here didn’t go through the Cultural Revolution, so they treat each other with more trust than we do,” said one typical female tourist. On the other hand, Taiwanese locals, including vendors, complained to me about the poor behavior of Chinese group tourists. Common complaints included loud talking, smoking in inappropriate places, poor hygiene and public urination and spitting, and refusal to wait in line. “They send us all the worst, lowest quality [suzhi] people in China,” said a woman working the door at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, who compared PRC tourists unfavorably to Japanese tourists.

This points to a fundamental contradiction: The more that PRC tourists engage with Taiwanese, the closer the affinity they express for Taiwan and Taiwanese people, supporting a unificationist territorialization program. Yet, the more that my Taiwanese informants engaged with PRC tourists, the more alienated they felt from China’s people and culture, undermining the unificationist program. Such an

uneasy outcome suggests that tourism, as a technology of state territorialization, is a fundamentally problematic and potentially self-sabotaging tool in the arsenal of foreign policy elites.

Multiple, contradictory sensations of stateness in tourist sites in Taiwan

Sun Moon Lake, in Nantou County, is one of Taiwan's most popular tourist sites. Traditionally popular with Taiwanese families and honeymooners, Sun Moon Lake is now a near-mandatory stop for all PRC group tours. Reliable statistics on tourist identity remain sparse, but according to every vendor I interviewed, the PRC tourists already vastly outnumber Taiwanese tourists, and their proportion continues rising. Sun Moon Lake is, along with Alishan, one of the two tourist sites in Taiwan that all PRC tourists reported learning about in their high school textbooks. As one Shanghainese tour director told me, "If we don't go to both places, it's like we've never been to Taiwan." These sites combine several themes that are familiar for PRC tourists: The "scenic spot", with mountains and water, that has been inscribed with meaning and relevance by state-sponsored literati (Nyíri, 2006); and the cultural attractions of indigenous people and practices. Sun Moon Lake's major draws are its alpine lake views and indigenous Thao ethnic culture. Indeed, one tourist from Anhui remarked, "This is just like back home in China proper [neidi]. We also have minorities too, and song and dance shows."

The influx of PRC tourists has dampened the Taiwanese desire to visit Sun Moon Lake. "It's pretty but I don't go there anymore. If I wanted to feel like I'm in China, I'd just go to China," said a Taipei colleague. His friends nodded in agreement. But Sun Moon Lake is not just viewed by Taiwanese as a "Chinese" space—PRC tourists themselves reported feeling as if they were still in China. Although this effect is not limited to Sun Moon Lake, I will first focus on this particular site before extending this observation to the entire island. I argue that this perception is not simply due to the large number of PRC tourists in the area, but is produced by the structure of the tourism industry itself. Essentially, the Taiwanese tourism industry, in concert with PRC-based sales agents and tour directors, has begun producing an experience so similar to that of PRC domestic tourism that PRC tourists are able to ignore other markers of national-territorial difference. This effect is primed and multiplied by the PRC's territorial claims to Taiwan, and a vast system of ideological control that pervades the PRC's education system, mediascape and even its devices of mobility. PRC tourists don't just learn about Sun Moon Lake from their high school textbooks and TV shows about tourist destinations—now they see it printed in the new PRC passport as an image that further claims Taiwan as their province (Chung, 2012).

Sun Moon Lake's leisure tourism itinerary is straightforward. Most PRC tourists arrive in large buses driven from Taipei or Taoyuan. The vast majority stays in hotels in Shuishe, a lakefront tourist town, and eats pre-ordered group meals of so-called local specialty dishes like "President Fish", so named because it was supposedly a favorite of the late ROC President Chiang Kai-shek. Either the same or the following day, they charter a boat from the Shuishe Port and circle the lake. The boats all stop at Itashao, the home of the several hundred member-strong Thao tribe, on the opposite side of the lake from Shuishe.

Itashao is also home to the Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village, an ethnic theme park with replica villages of nine different indigenous groups in Taiwan. The theme park is connected to the boat pier via a cable car. Popular with Taiwanese tourists, it is rarely visited by PRC group tourists. A 34 year-old male tour director from Hangzhou explained that, "Mainlanders aren't really interested in Taiwanese aborigines. We have our own minorities. Our tourists are more interested in seeing scenery and maybe some Kuomintang history." However, according to three area vendors, shopping-focused itineraries and the high entrance price of the park (over US\$20, even with a group discount) are more likely explanations for the park's dearth of PRC tourists. Indigenous heritage is certainly for sale throughout Itashao, and serves as the theme for large restaurants and souvenir shops that now cater almost exclusively to PRC group tours.

The structure of tourism in the area is now so commercially regimented and socio-spatially segregated that it was difficult for me to even enter these shops as an individual visitor. After rejections from staff at five shops who explained that they only host pre-arranged tour groups, I finally found two shops where I was able to browse products while observing as groups entered and exited. The basic sequence proceeded as follows: A large group of tourists entered the store and sat on chairs

in front of a counter filled with various products for sale, including bee jelly, mushrooms, and other “health supplements”. After the tourists took their seats around the corner, a female store employee dressed in aboriginal regalia, including feathers, animal skins and a headdress, welcomed the group with a Mandarin Chinese-language song about local aboriginal culture. Several male tourists lit cigarettes in direct view of the store’s anti-smoking signs, and were not admonished by store staff. After finishing her song, the store hostess offered a few more words about the local Thao people, and then explained that their products were “National Treasures of Taiwan [Taiwan guobao]”, an unremarkable phrase for a Taiwanese tourist, but possibly provocative for a PRC tourist. Staff behind the counters began pouring copious amounts of tea and aggressively selling their products to the tourists, who seemed mostly disinterested.

The above description of ethnic-themed shopping tourism should be familiar to anyone who has personally observed or read reports of such tourism in the PRC, or even of Chinese tourism abroad. The structure of the sale process, as well as the indigenous aesthetic theme, was almost identical to what I’ve observed in the PRC’s Hainan Island, among other places. What is remarkable here is how commission-based group tour shopping, previously uncommon in Taiwan, has become the dominant model, and how this along with the territorial ideology of “One China” is producing an effect of PRC stateness for PRC tourists.

One tourist from Anhui stated it clearly: “I feel like this is more or less the same as touring in China proper [neidi]. We get on the bus, get off the bus, take some photos, eat, shop, jump back on the bus, and go back to the hotel. It’s all the same. We all know that Taiwan is a part of China, anyway.” I heard similar remarks from nearly every other PRC group tourist I spoke with in Taiwan, both in formal interviews and as passing remarks. Sometimes these sentiments were bookended with phrases from a nationalizing strain of discourse. The most common was, “Same race, same culture [tongzhong, tongwen]”, a phrase first used in the late 19th century among proto-pān Asianists to posit commonalities between Chinese and other Asians in opposition to European and American imperialists (Karl, 1998). This phrase has a complicated and ironic heritage. It was used in its Japanese form [dobun dotsu] in the 1930s to justify Japanese colonialism in China. Several Taiwanese businessmen have told me that while doing business in the PRC in the 1980s, they also used the phrase, “tongzhong, tongwen”, to advertise their relative cultural advantage and knowledge when competing for business with other non-PRC investors. Later in the 1990s, Jiang Zemin used “tongzhong, tongwen” to argue that Taiwan is a part of China (Sautman, 1997). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that PRC tourists in Taiwan speak from this same nationalizing script.

The effect of PRC stateness is perceived not just by first-time tourists at Sun Moon Lake, but also by PRC tour directors who have been to Taiwan many times. In an interview at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Cai Cai, a young tour director from Hubei Province, said, while taking photos with her iPhone, that she felt like she “hadn’t really left China proper”. She explained that this is because the people look similar, the language is similar, and after directing several tour groups, she was already familiar with Taiwan. More importantly, the commercially-mediated experience of space and time was nearly identical. “I might as well be touring in the mainland. The tour sequence is almost the same. . . except for having to get a permit and pass immigration lines.” As a comparison, I asked her to contrast this with her experiences leading tours in Europe. “Yes, itineraries are also rushed there, and we do lots of shopping, but mostly for international brand name products. Everything there looks and feels so different from China. The language is totally different, the people don’t look like us. We don’t have a common history, or common race or culture.” Again, the “same race, same culture” phrase emerged, showing how effective the territorial socialization engendered by PRC education has been for producing effects of PRC stateness in Taiwan.

The Taiwanese travel industry is collaborating in the touristic performance of Taiwan as a part of China. Much of the performance is linguistic. On numerous occasions, I observed Taiwanese tour guides and souvenir salespeople conversing with PRC tourists and using expressions like “China proper” [neidi], and “we Chinese” [zanmen Huaren], which are almost never heard otherwise in Taiwan. A saleslady at an Apple electronics reseller at Taipei 101, once the world’s tallest skyscraper and now a mandatory stop on the PRC tourist circuit, observed, “Yes, we adjust our speech to make them more comfortable. We’re not really trained to do it, but we just learn what makes them comfortable. Look, we even list the renminbi [Chinese currency] price on all the items.” Another Taiwanese tour guide at

the same location explained that he consciously modifies his speech to avoid language that suggests that Taiwan is politically independent, even when tourists asked about political differences. He did this, he said, in order to keep his workday smooth and enhance guest satisfaction.

Other tourism professionals confirmed that they alter their language largely in order to reduce the possibility of tension. One tour guide, Howard, told me how he and his colleagues will often use PRC euphemisms to refer to Taiwanese political institutions. For example, he sometimes refers to the ROC Presidential Office [zongtongfu] as the “Taiwanese Leader’s Office” [Taiwan lingdaoren bangongshi], which is the expression used in PRC media. However, while accompanying Howard and a small group from Shanghai on a two-day tour of Taipei, I observed inconsistent usage of such euphemisms. Sometimes, Howard would compare Taiwan with “China proper” [neidi], which is a politically acceptable term for comparison. Sometimes, however, he would compare Taiwan with “China” [Zhongguo], something not uncommon for a Taiwanese to say, but something likely to get one into trouble with a PRC citizen who believes that Taiwan is part of China. In the recreational context of the tour and the rapport that Howard had already developed with his guests, this slip was not mentioned out loud by the tourists. Howard’s comparisons were not the only cases of inconsistent language usage observed in this study. Taiwanese speakers frequently used expressions that predate the arrival of PRC tourists and may be politically provocative for them. For example, the indigenous-attired store hostess from Sun Moon Lake referred to her nutritional fungal products as “National treasures of Taiwan”. Her language, which implied that Taiwan was a nation or country, could have provoked a heated dispute in less regimented circumstances.

To me, PRC tourists often referred to Taiwan as “Taiwan region” [diqu], “Taiwan Island”, or “Taiwan Province,” as it’s often named in PRC public discourse, to emphasize their feeling that Taiwan is a part of China. Taking this further, during an interview in a Tainan museum, a respondent from Anhui who had used the expression “Taiwan region”, said that there was, “no difference. . . same race, same culture,” and then waved her finger while announcing to me in front of her companions, “Anyway, this is our national territory [guotu]!” When I asked for elaboration, she said, “We are just commoners [lao-baixing] and don’t want to talk politics,” despite having initiated the issue.

Political conflict and contradictions of cross-Strait tourism

Counter-currents threaten the semblance of cross-Strait state, business, and cultural harmony. Outbound PRC tourist destinations have become magnets for religious and other activists who are repressed or banned outright within the PRC. In particular, Taiwan’s visual landscape has been transformed by Falun Gong, a quasi-Buddhist spiritual group that is persecuted in the PRC. Falun Gong billboards have proliferated throughout the island, and are particularly prevalent near hotels that receive PRC tour groups.

Falun Gong activists maintain graphic displays and distribute flyers and booklets not only at major tourist sites, but also at duty-free shops. Having received permits from the Taipei City administration, they maintain a permanent presence at, among other places, the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall. Adjacent to the tour bus parking lot, they display anti-PRC billboards with graphic, sometimes bloody imagery of PRC state repression, play audio recordings exhorting Chinese Communist Party members to abandon the party, meditate in public areas, and attempt to distribute flyers and booklets to PRC tourists, most of whom ignore them. Likewise, Christian missionaries target the same site and others, and distribute bibles in simplified Chinese, the written language of the PRC and not Taiwan. In an interview, a Falun Gong activist and retired professor mentioned that a PRC tourist, perhaps confused about what country he was in, attempted to call the local police to report illegal, anti-government activity. The police took no action.

The Taiwanese travel industry has been compelled by its PRC partners to keep tourists away from anti-PRC activists, particularly Falun Gong. Several Taiwanese guides told me that their agencies instructed them to warn tourists against taking Falun Gong handouts, by telling them that they would be in trouble if they brought any materials home. The guides said their employers instituted this policy in response to requests from PRC-based agents. This is an instance of not only the perception of PRC stateness within Taiwan, but actually the realization of PRC social prohibitions beyond its effective territory. This is not dissimilar to what the PRC attempts to do with countries that have earned its

“Approved Destination Status” (Arlt, 2006) for tourism, but the terms are different, as the ROC and PRC don’t officially recognize each other as countries.

A popular claim, also expressed in an interview with a staffer from Taiwan’s opposition and vaguely pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, is that the PRC is using the spending power of its tourists to increase Taiwan’s economic dependence on China and foreclose space for anti-PRC action. This has caused significant debate and confusion within the Democratic Progressive Party. Southern Taiwan, traditionally a pro-independence stronghold and now a major fruit exporter to the PRC, has been a particularly contentious site. About 60% of international tourists in Kaohsiung now come from the PRC, twice as high a percentage as the national average (Lin, 2012). In 2009, following a visit from the Dalai Lama, and the Kaohsiung Film Festival’s screening of a documentary about exiled Uighur Muslim leader Rebiya Kadeer, who the PRC considers a terrorist, PRC tourist numbers collapsed. Occupancy rates at Kaohsiung hotels dropped from 60% to 30%, and department store and restaurant revenues plummeted. A goodwill tour of Taiwanese legislators and PRC leaders was launched to patch up relations, and Kuomintang politicians ended public funding for the Kaohsiung Film Festival. Said a Democratic Progressive Party legislator, Chao Tien-lin, “The economic benefit that the mainland gave to Taiwan evidently came with thorns” (Lin, 2012).

Yet, the PRC’s apparent political benefits are thorny as well. If PRC tourism is indeed producing greater social and cultural alienation among Taiwanese, as my research suggests, then tourism may be undermining the unificationist territorial program. My results therefore point to the problems and pitfalls inherent in the PRC’s deployment of tourism as a technology of state territorialization. Even if tourism may be used as an economic lever to encourage political unification, and even if PRC group tourists continue to perceive Taiwan as part of China, the effects on Taiwanese popular sentiment may diminish the apparent success of the PRC’s territorial program. Further research will be necessary to determine how Taiwan is perceived differently by FIT tourists, and whether their sensations of PRC stateness and state territory are less stable than those of group tourists, potentially further undermining the PRC’s program.

Taiwan is not navigating alone in Asia’s dense battlegrounds of tourism, mobility regulation, and territoriality. The PRC’s performance of state territory via the mechanisms of mobility has entered a new phase, engulfing the broader region in what TIME magazine has termed a “Passport War” (Tharoor, 2012). In May 2012, the PRC released a new passport that includes images not only of Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan, as seen earlier in this paper, but also of disputed territories in the Himalayas, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea, including parts of Kashmir (controlled by India), the Spratly Islands (claimed by Vietnam and the Philippines, among others), and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (claimed by Japan).

The legal import of these representations of internationally disputed territories—“stray maps”, as a US State Department spokesperson dismissed them—is dubious. Nevertheless, in November 2012, the passport began drawing strong objections from India, Vietnam and the Philippines, whose foreign ministries are now refusing to stamp the new passports for fear of legitimizing the PRC’s territorial claims. They are instead providing entry stamps on specially-issued, separate forms. Going a step further in reciprocation, India has even begun issuing visas to PRC nationals that includes a map of India that claims the disputed territories. Even if the territorial claims implicit in PRC passports have no international legal relevance, such tactics of bureaucratic-procedural resistance demonstrates that state foreign policy elites take them quite seriously. For its part, Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council issued a sharply-worded statement in mid-November 2012: “This [PRC passports’ claim of Taiwan territory] in its total ignorance of reality and only provokes disputes.” This research suggests that such disputes can be expected to continue, and that the territorial stakes of tourism deserve more attention.

Conclusion

In this paper, based on interviews and participant-observation at a variety of tourist sites, I have demonstrated that cross-Strait tourism is producing multiple, overlapping, and contradictory sensations of stateness and state territory within Taiwan. These effects are produced in part by the highly

regimented structure of group tourism as managed by cross-Strait industry actors, which produces a tourist experience very similar to that of the PRC.

I have also argued that tourism is producing a contradiction between PRC tourists' admiration and identification with their Taiwanese hosts, and Taiwanese hosts' alienation from their guests. PRC tourists praise Taiwanese for their manners and kindness, attributing such charms to an idealized Chinese essence projected onto the people of Taiwan. Meanwhile, Taiwanese people avoid PRC tourists and decreasingly identify themselves as Chinese (National Chengchi University Election Study Center, 2012). The PRC's strategy of using the economic incentives of tourism to project political power over Taiwan has provoked public debate in Taiwan, as have tourism's uneven economic benefits. Even if PRC group tourists continue to believe that Taiwan is a part of China, outbound tourism to Taiwan should therefore be seen as a potentially double-edged sword for the PRC's territorialization program.

More generally, I have argued that tourism reproduces the state and interstate system and projects state authority over mobility, identity, and territory. Performances of tourism—at tourist sites, performed on the streets and inscribed in passports—articulate state power through space, and form the ontological cradle of the tourist and the toured as national subjects. As tourists travel through and between territorial spaces of states, they, along with the agents of the state, enact state territory and borders. And in so doing, they may become instruments of a state's foreign policy apparatus. Whether as political, economic, or social subjects, their behavior both fixes and destabilizes borders, both deterritorializes and reterritorializes the state. Such a theorization suggests that researchers should attend to the political complexities of tourism without assuming a normative trajectory of peace or reconciliation.

The ambiguity of Taiwan's sovereign status may indeed be exceptional in the modern inter-state system, but this merely serves to highlight the exceptionality of the modern inter-state system itself. Global space did not used to be configured in this way—there is nothing inevitable about its current division into discrete, exclusive units. Attention to the shifting contours of “Greater China”, the “Chinese axis”, or even just Taiwan itself, reveal the political, economic, social, and cultural processes that underlie state territorialization. More broadly, a treatment of tourism as a technology of state territorialization reveals sites and practices worthy of research not only in this region, but beyond.

Research interests

Cultural politics of tourism, political geography, political theory, borders, state territory, nationalism, identity, tourist performance, China, Taiwan, Cross-Strait relations.

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