

**The role of self-gentrification in sustainable tourism:
Indigenous entrepreneurship at Honghe Hani Rice Terraces
World Heritage Site, China**

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Keywords:	Entrepreneurship, Tourism gentrification, World Heritage Site, Indigenous , Sustainable tourism, Self-gentrification
Abstract:	<p>This article examines three forms of tourism gentrification occurring within the newly inscribed (2013) Honghe Hani Rice Terraces UNESCO World Heritage Site in Yunnan, China. The indigenous Hani and Yi communities who populate this remote mountainous area, possess distinct cultural practices that have supported the rice terrace ecosystem for centuries. This article draws on interviews and non-participant observation conducted with inhabitants and newcomers to analyse the types of gentrification occurring within the site. We argue that indigenous cultural practices, and consequently rice cultivation in the area, are threatened by gentrifier-led and state-led gentrification combined with high levels of outward migration of indigenous persons. This could pose a significant threat to the sustainability of tourism at this site and may ultimately compromise the site's World Heritage Status. In the midst of these dangers, some indigenous people are shown to be improving their socio-economic standing – and becoming “middle class” or “gentry” – particularly through adopting entrepreneurial strategies gleaned from their encounters with outside-gentrifiers and tourists. This article proposes the concept of “self-gentrification” as a way to describe individuals who seek to improve themselves and their own community, while under threat of gentrification.</p>

Detailed responses to Referee(s)' Comments:

Thank you very much for the recommendations for improving this manuscript. The authors would also like to extend our appreciation to all reviewers for their careful reading and thoughtful comments. We have now revised the manuscript in accordance with the reviewers' suggestions.

Referee: 1

Comments to the Author

This was an interesting paper and the gentrification perspective provided a unique approach to indigenous tourism studies that I have not seen before.

- Thank you very much for the recommendation.

The literature review was generally comprehensive. The authors note that the issue of gentrification has previously been applied in other studies of China. However, has this approach been used to study tourism related issues in contexts besides China? A review of this is warranted.

- Thank you for the generous comments.

- Tourism gentrification studies are well observed under urban and market town settings worldwide. We have restructured and strengthened the section "Gentrification in tourism setting" with a more thorough review of literature, including Chinese language literature. It is now 450-word strong and includes discussion on cases of tourism related gentrification in cities and rural areas in China, Asia and other parts of the world.

More detail is required in the methods regarding the numbers of respondents. It is noted that some 200 hours of audio was collected but how many respondents were actually interviewed? And how many respondents in each of the different categories of respondents (i.e. local residents, community leaders, etc.)?

- Please see the attached supplementary file, which provides the detailed profile of the respondents and the key areas of enquiry.

- In the profile of the respondents, we do not provide the full names and positions. There is a strong requirement to protect our subjects of research, particularly in view of the political and administrative situation at the research site. It is important to note that the subjects are easily traceable in a small community.

- Our research team is continuously working with all stakeholders in the site and there is a need to maintain a good rapport. We hope that we would be able to have some long-term impact on sustainable (tourism) development at the site.

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3 *The major issue with the paper is the need for editing. There are consistent grammatical*
4 *errors and typos throughout the article which must be addressed (either by the authors*
5 *themselves or seeking the services of a professional editor).*
6
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8 - We have addressed this issue with two rounds of editing by native English speakers on
9 the final draft.
10

11 Referee: 2

12
13 Comments to the Author

14
15 *This is an interesting research. However, several major weaknesses of this manuscript*
16 *are identified as follows:*
17

18 *1. The conceptualization of gentrification in particular self-gentrification is lacking. In fact,*
19 *more discussion on gentrification of tourism destination in Asia is needed. Furthermore,*
20 *the functions and types of gentrifiers requires more elaboration.*
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22

23 - Thank you very much for the generous and thoughtful comments.
24

25 - We have reviewed the sections on Gentrification and its agents, Gentrifier-led
26 gentrification, and State-led gentrification to provide a clearer conceptualisation of the
27 phenomena. We have also added a new section on the conceptualization of self-
28 gentrification providing a clear definition. We then add Table 1, summarising the types,
29 natures and impacts of gentrification.
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32 - We have restructured and strengthened the section “Gentrification in tourism setting”
33 with a more thorough review of literature, including Chinese language literature. It is now
34 450-word strong and includes discussion on cases of tourism related gentrification in
35 cities and rural areas in China, Asia and other parts of the world. There are however
36 more studies of gentrification in urban settings than in rural/indigenous community
37 settings, irrespective of the context of tourism.
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40 *2. In terms of the construct of indigenous entrepreneurship, no argumentation of*
41 *Literature Review is stated in this area! As a result, the significance of indigenous*
42 *entrepreneurship is in doubts.*
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45 - We acknowledge that the construct of indigenous entrepreneurship is barely minimum.
46 This article is multi-disciplinary in nature but with a focus on rural tourism gentrification
47 and key innovation in self-gentrification. Indigenous entrepreneurship is a mean to
48 achieve self-gentrification leading to sustainable tourism development in the site.
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51 - Nonetheless, we have taken the advice to strengthen the literature review in indigenous
52 businesses with 500 words on indigenous entrepreneurship and rural tourism
53 development in China. We examine the key barriers and key success factors for
54 indigenous entrepreneurship worldwide. Building on this literature and our fieldwork, we
55 added to the richness of this body of literature as well as providing practical
56 recommendations for improving indigenous involvement in tourism business at the site.
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3 *3. In Method part, the research limitation of adopting merely one single case is lacking!*
4 *The reviewer does not see the open-question list on interviews. How many interviewees*
5 *are involved in this research? Did the authors consider the cross validation of data*
6 *elicited from this research? With reference to data saturation of using interviews, the*
7 *authors failed to provide such information. As such, Method is relatively weak.*
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10 - We agree with the reviewer on the limitations of single case research. We, therefore,
11 have mentioned this limitation at the end of Section 5: Methods.
12

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14 - Taking the advice of the reviewers, we have improved the section on research methods.
15 We have provided a supplementary file on the details of respondents and questions
16 asked.
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19 - We argue that triangulation or cross validation of data is achieved through the
20 combination of multiple sources, multiple visits, and continuous receiving of information
21 and discussion with key informants. We provide further explanation and support from
22 literature in the Methods section.
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25 - We do not expect saturation of data on gentrification as it is a live event continuing to
26 unfold itself. The research is also not design based on Grounded theory where saturation
27 is a key criteria. Neither is the research designed to be a large-scale survey of the
28 general population. Nonetheless, we have met with the majority of the key stakeholders
29 and conducted multiple fieldwork. We are also continuing to communicate via social
30 media with key informants. These provide a degree of confidence on the richness and
31 depth of data collected.
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34 Referee: 3

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36 Comments to the Author

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38 *This paper is interesting. It is clearly structured and easy to follow. However, there are*
39 *several issues which need to be addressed in this paper.*
40

41 *1. Literature is not taken into consideration sufficiently.*
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43 *The review can be theoretically enhanced by incorporating more scholarly work on*
44 *tourism gentrification and indigenous entrepreneurship in China and worldwide.*
45

- 46 - Thank you very much for the generous and thoughtful comments.
47
48 - We have restructured and strengthened the section “Gentrification in tourism setting”
49 with a more thorough review of literature, including Chinese language literature. It is
50 now 450-word strong and includes discussion on cases of tourism-related
51 gentrification in cities and rural areas in China, Asia and other parts of the world.
52
53 - We have taken the advice to strengthen the literature review in indigenous
54 businesses with 500 words on indigenous entrepreneurship and rural tourism
55 development in China. We examine the key barriers and key success factors for
56 indigenous entrepreneurship worldwide. Building on this literature and our fieldwork,
57 we added to the richness of this body of literature as well as providing practical
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3 recommendations for improving indigenous involvement in tourism business at the
4 site.
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7 *2. Methods are not clearly described.*

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9 *The paper said that “We interviewed local residents and community-leaders from a*
10 *number of villages, government officials at village, town and county levels.” However, it*
11 *did not explain how interviews were designed and conducted and how many residents,*
12 *government officials and tourism managers were interviewed.*

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14 *Triangulation of data also needs more explanation.*

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- Taking the advice of the reviewers, we have improved the section on research methods. We have provided an online supplementary file on the details of respondents and questions asked.
 - In addition, we have provided more information on how the respondents were selected and where they were located within the WHS.
 - We argue that triangulation or cross validation of data is achieved through the combination of multiple sources, multiple visits, and continuous receiving of information and discussion with key informants. We provide further explanation and support from literature in the Methods section.

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29 *3. Findings, conclusion and discussion need rework.*

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31 *The paper lacks information of the interviewees. It needs to provide the profiles of key*
32 *informants.*

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- We have provided an online supplementary file on the details of respondents and questions asked as requested.
 - We have revised and rewritten most of the paragraphs to improve the writing style of these two sections in order to be more precise, and to enhance conciseness and readability. We have added two paragraphs to summarise the contributions to sustainable tourism research and practices.

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45 *The paper mentioned that “the average annual income of less than 3,000 RMB per*
46 *person in the village”. What are the average annual incomes of guesthouse runners and*
47 *other tourism operators?*

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- 3,000RMB is slightly less than US\$500. We do not have the average annual incomes of guesthouse runners or other tourism operators as it is not our aim to assess their income level. But we suspect it is substantially higher. For instance, a small family-run guesthouse with 5 rooms sold at a rate of 100RMB/night and with full occupancy during two months of peak season would generate a revenue of 30,000RMB.

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56 *The respondents’ income RMB should be converted to US\$ to help the reader to*
57 *understand it more easily.*

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- We have done so after the comment.

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3 *In the section of self-gentrification of indigenous people, the paper mainly concerned on*
4 *a young “middle class” entrepreneur – Mr. Tian. It would be better if the authors can*
5 *provide more evidence from other local entrepreneurs.*
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8 - Thank you for the recommendation.
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10 - There are of course other indigenous entrepreneurs in the WHS as mentioned in the
11 second last paragraph in this sub-section. However, we believe that we could provide a
12 more convincing and rich data on one case under the constraint of a very tight word limit.
13

14 - Nonetheless, self-gentrification encompasses not only local entrepreneurs but also
15 other individuals – including returning indigenous migrants, who are able to take
16 advantage of the growing tourism to improve their socio-economic status – which we
17 have discussed in the prior sub-section of “Returning indigenous migrants as self-
18 gentrifiers.”
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22 *The authors need to discuss how the paper advances understanding of sustainable*
23 *tourism in theory or practice or both.*
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25 - We have provided a two-paragraph summary at the end of this article to encapsulate
26 the contributions to the understanding and practicality of ensuring sustainable tourism at
27 the end of the article.
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Peer Review

The role of self-gentrification in sustainable tourism:

Indigenous entrepreneurship at Honghe Hani Rice Terraces World Heritage Site, China

Abstract:

This article examines three forms of tourism gentrification occurring within the newly inscribed (2013) Honghe Hani Rice Terraces UNESCO World Heritage Site in Yunnan, China. The indigenous Hani and Yi communities who populate this remote mountainous area, possess distinct cultural practices that have supported the rice terrace ecosystem for centuries. This article draws on interviews and non-participant observation conducted with inhabitants and newcomers to analyse the types of gentrification occurring within the site. We argue that indigenous cultural practices, and consequently rice cultivation in the area, are threatened by gentrifier-led and state-led gentrification combined with high levels of outward migration of indigenous persons. This could pose a significant threat to the sustainability of tourism at this site and may ultimately compromise the site's World Heritage Status. In the midst of these dangers, some indigenous people are shown to be improving their socio-economic standing – and becoming “middle class” or “gentry” – particularly through adopting entrepreneurial strategies gleaned from their encounters with outside-gentrifiers and tourists. This article proposes the concept of “self-gentrification” as a way to describe individuals who seek to improve themselves and their own community, while under threat of gentrification.

Keywords: self-gentrification; indigenous; entrepreneurship; tourism gentrification; sustainability; World Heritage Site.

Introduction

On 22 June 2013 UNESCO inscribed Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (herein ‘Honghe WHS’) as a Cultural-landscape World Heritage Site. The designation refers to an area primarily populated by indigenous Hani and Yi ethnic minority persons who have carved the mountain slopes into large swathes of spectacular rice terraces. The remoteness of the area means local communities still observe cultural practices, which can differ from the main Chinese Han ethnic group. Rice-terrace cultivation is an integral part of their cultural practices, with ‘vernacular knowledge’ ensuring the sustainability of the system, maintaining the balance between agriculture and the natural environment. This harmonious co-existence is precisely the main reason cited for the UNESCO inscription (UNESCO, 2013). Local people therefore celebrated the global recognition of their culture that the inscription represented, and are equally excited about what this could hold for the future of both themselves and the rice terraces they live in.

Prior to the inscription, Honghe WHS had gained significant domestic and international reputation as a tourist destination, with visitor numbers steadily increasing over recent decades. Inscription has created an expectation that such growth will continue exponentially. However, amidst this change, communities have also been experiencing severe outward migration of young people to neighbouring cities for work (Chan, Zhang, McDonald, & Qi, 2016), albeit reflecting a general trend across rural China (see Cai, Park, & Zhao, 2008). This exodus of indigenous people raises concern over loss of local cultural knowledge and practices, especially those related to rice cultivation. The influx of tourists and tourism operators further escalate these concerns particularly in displacing indigenous families and converting traditional dwellings for tourism purposes, both of which are typical phenomena of gentrification. This article proposes a new concept of ‘self-gentrification’ which describes how long-term residents can respond to gentrification in a proactive manner that benefits them, while also ensuring a sustainable future for the WHS.

This article uses the notion of gentrification to understand social transformation in the WHS. This concept is especially useful for understanding situations where in-migration puts pressure on native groups, bringing about an increase in living costs and a change in use of land and limited housing stock. While the term “gentrification”

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3 was not literally used by the participants of this study, it has been widely applied to
4 describe similar processes in China (du Cros, Bauer, Lo, & Rui, 2005; Gu & Ryan,
5 2012; Su, 2012; Qian, He, & Liu, 2013), and the authors believe it helpful in
6 understanding phenomena occurring in Honghe WHS.
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10 This article also contributes to indigenous tourism studies by highlighting
11 gentrification in the context of specific indigenous minority groups and asks whether
12 a gentrified Honghe WHS can be sustainable. It contrasts a number of different forms
13 of gentrification occurring in the area, discussing the impact on sustainability for each.
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17 Despite many examples of successful gentrification in touristic market towns in both
18 China (Su, 2012; Xu & Han, 2013) and elsewhere (Smith, 2002, p. 439), this article
19 argues that tourism gentrification would not be sustainable in the Honghe WHS
20 because of the inter-connectedness of the local population and the rice terraces. The
21 absence of the indigenous people caused by gentrification would likely result in
22 degradation of the rice terraces, which are the main tourist attraction.
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28 29 **Gentrification and its agents**

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31 The term gentrification was coined by Glass (1964) to describe a process of changes
32 in housing stock that took place in Islington, London following demand from
33 incoming middle class persons, resulting in a constriction of provision for working
34 class people. Glass viewed the displacement of long-term residents – most of whom
35 belonged to deprived or disadvantaged communities – as an injustice. Since then,
36 gentrification in city neighbourhoods has been extensively studied by researchers and
37 practitioners in a variety of fields, while retaining its distinctly moralistic flavour.
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43 This article adopts a more inclusive definition of gentrification, applying the concept
44 to study similar phenomena in non-urban settings such as rural (Phillips, 1993; Hines,
45 2010) and market towns (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; Smith & DeFilippis, 1999;
46 Su, 2012; Xu & Han, 2011). Hackworth (2002, p. 815) defines gentrification as “the
47 production of space for progressively more affluent users” resulting in the gradual,
48 indirect displacement of long-term residents. This definition is broader than the
49 conventional meaning of “gentrification” used to describe the process of middle class
50 colonization in disinvested urban neighbourhoods, resulting in changes in the social
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3 fabric, along with increases in properties prices, and rental and living costs (see Glass,
4 1964).

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7 There are numerous overviews of gentrification research and debates in the literature
8 (see Atkinson, 2003; Clark, 2005; Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Slater, 2006). The
9 literature has tended to focus on the definition, causes, processes, geographical
10 identification, causal and resultant migration, political assignation of victims and
11 perpetrators, and policy recommendations in response to gentrification. The following
12 subsections critically review the literature on gentrification and its implications,
13 analysing in particular gentrifier-led and state-led gentrification. We then offer the
14 concept of self-gentrification as a key proposal of this article. Subsequently, we
15 provide a contextual review on the application of gentrification on tourism and
16 indigenous tourism, particularly in China.
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24 ***Gentrifier-led gentrification***

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26 The dominant perspective on gentrification sees it as a process largely initiated and
27 sustained by incoming populations. Neal (2010, p. 557) views gentrification as a
28 gradual process where the gentrifiers are “pioneers who seek to tame the wilderness
29 of rundown urban neighborhoods, and in the process potentially reap a profit from
30 rising property values”. This group is sometimes said to be typified by their
31 indifference to the existing population (Brown-Saracino, 2009, p. 3).
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37 Other scholars have challenged the assumption that middle class gentrifiers are purely
38 guided by an unwavering desire to civilise their new locality. Schlichtman & Patch
39 (2014) identified six ‘pull factors’ that appeal to would-be gentrifiers: economic
40 (affordability of houses), practical (centrality and connectivity of the location),
41 aesthetic (character houses with historical *caché*), presence of amenities (proximity of
42 museums, parks, waterfronts), social (e.g. cultural ‘melting pots’), and symbolic (e.g.
43 community history and authenticity). Gentrifiers, they claim, are willing to accept the
44 inconvenience of living in a deprived area for one or many of the pull factors.
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51 Gentrifying populations sometimes display awareness of the potential impacts of their
52 arrival, such as the physical, political, economical, and cultural displacement of the
53 long-term residents (Brown-Saracino 2009, p. 4). Brown-Saracino (2009) has
54 proposed that gentrifiers could be categorized based on their attitude towards the
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3 social-cultural heritage of the community. Despite these qualms held by some
4 gentrifiers over their own impact, studies suggest they do bring some benefits to long-
5 term residents. For example, middle class gentrifiers tend to be more influential
6 advocates when it comes to defending local communities, their presence improves the
7 local economy of usually rather deprived areas, and they offer better social capital and
8 networks that extend beyond the locality (Schoon, 2001).

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13 This process, which is here defined as gentrifier-led gentrification is distinctive in that
14 by being initiated by early gentrifiers (both individual and commercial) themselves,
15 the gentrification process often appears scattered and unorganised. Examples of this
16 have also been observed in China by Feng & Sha (2009) and Qian et al. (2013).

20 21 *State-led gentrification*

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23 Another form of gentrification frequently identified in the literature is organised, large
24 scale gentrification occurring under the direction of government, in partnership with
25 investors and developers. This process has also been expanded, intentionalised, and
26 policised by governments, resulting in what has been termed state-led gentrification.
27 Government has played a leading role in the effort of re-engineering urban
28 neighbourhoods since the late twentieth century (Smith, 2002).

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33 As such this also reveals how the scales on which the concept of gentrification have
34 been applied have shifted, from an almost accidental process arising out of similar,
35 but independent choices made by typically unconnected individuals to an orchestrated
36 process that forms part of bureaucratic systems of governing. Here, both these
37 agencies and the incoming residents may be labelled as gentrifiers (Hackworth and
38 Smith, 2001, p. 467).

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44 This state-led gentrification forms part of political decision in which concepts of
45 urban regeneration and revitalisation are employed to serve varying policy objectives
46 such as increasing local tax revenues (Hackworth & Smith, 2001), creating
47 neighbourhoods with more stable social orders (Uitermark, Duyvendak, & Kleinmans,
48 2007), reducing crime, increasing social diversity, making places more 'liveable'
49 (Florida, 2002) and fostering sustainable communities (Lees, 2008). In this context,
50 gentrification has increasingly become a "global urban strategy" (Smith, 2002) of
51 reinventing central urban cores deemed to have the potential to become places of
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3 enhanced economic and cultural production and social cohesion (Uitermark et al.,
4 2007).

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6 State-led gentrification projects seem to produce mixed results. While Byrnes (2003)
7 posits benefits for existing low-income long-term residents, not all scholars agree.
8 Clark (2005) suggests this process of state-led gentrification has its price in that the
9 influx of middle-class residents does not necessarily increase social cohesion, but
10 rather results in an uneasy cohabitation with the long-term residents, contrary to the
11 policy objectives of its proponents (Rose, 2004). Numerous scholars have suggested
12 that state policies of social mixing in gentrifying neighbourhoods have only limited
13 success (Atkinsons & Blandy, 2006; Lees, 2008; Veldboer, Kleinhans & Duyvendak
14 2002).

15
16 Gentrification in cities occurs beyond Euro-American context, and now constitutes a
17 global phenomenon (Clark, 2005). In Asia, cases of large-scale and state-led
18 gentrification are also well documented (e.g. He, 2007 and Zhao, Kou, Lu & Li, 2009
19 in China; and Lee and Joo, 2008 and Shin, 2009 in South Korea). Gentrification in
20 Chinese cities is the result of urban development strategy to upgrade building stock
21 and revitalise the economy, and occurs on a particularly intensive and large scale (He,
22 2010). The expulsion of original residents is also well organised and large-scale (He,
23 2010; Su, 2012; Zhao et al., 2009), with some being relocated to particularly distant
24 areas.

25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 ***Conceptualisation of Self-gentrification***

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40 In summary, gentrification has traditionally been conceptualized and understood in a
41 number of different ways. In its most essential form, gentrification has stood out as an
42 unusual reversing of upwardly-mobile physical and social migratory trends, with
43 those of high social and economic capital intentionally inhabiting environments that
44 were generally considered not becoming of them, and in so doing gradually
45 transforming the status of those locales (often to the exclusion of the original
46 inhabitants). The majority of gentrification research foregrounds the detrimental effects
47 of gentrification (Atkinson, 2002, p. 20).

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54 Moving forward from whether gentrification helps or harms existing communities,
55 this article addresses an under-explored area in the literature – how long-term
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3 residents appropriate the process of gentrification for their own ends. There is only
4 limited literature discussing these responses - for example, long-term (early)
5 gentrifiers using nostalgic narrative to counter further gentrification in Lower East
6 Side, New York (Ocejo, 2011). However, the above case illustrates defensive
7 strategies by the long-term residents to counter the advance of gentrification, rather
8 than any proactive approach to improve their own socio-economic standing.
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11 We propose the concept of self-gentrification as:

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15 *Under the threat of other forms of gentrification, the long-term residents adopt*
16 *a proactive approach to become the 'gentry' themselves. As such they are able*
17 *to benefit from the positive aspects of gentrification whilst avoiding much of the*
18 *negative effects, particularly displacement.*
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23 The notion of self-gentrification adds a further dimension to the concept, allowing for
24 the gentrifier to be a native of the community undergoing transformation. It possesses
25 both individualistic features (i.e. a desire to improve one's lot), but also concern for a
26 wider community to whom one belongs. As such, this version of gentrification is
27 perhaps acutely prone to ambivalence, and contradictory feelings, especially in Asian
28 contexts where values of extended family, community and place of origin are so
29 strongly emphasized. **Table 1** summarises the features of these three types of
30 gentrification.
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44 [Insert Table 1 here]

45 **Gentrification in tourism settings**

46 Increasingly, research in gentrification has been applied to describe similar processes
47 under different contexts and locales (Phillips, 2014). Gentrification has also been
48 applied in suburbs and market towns (Smith, 2002, p. 439; Smith & DeFilippis, 1999),
49 rural areas (Phillips, 1993; Phillips & Smith, 2001; Hines, 2010; Stockdale, 2010),
50 and sites of tourism (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; Gotham, 2005).
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54 In tourism studies, the concept of gentrification became popular between the mid-
55 1990s and early 2000s (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990, p. 95). The majority of studies
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3 took place in the context of historical urban areas or small towns (see Judd, 2003;
4 Page & Hall, 2003). In China, large-scale tourism gentrification, which happened in
5 cities or market towns, was mostly led by government and big corporations and
6 resulted in the extensive relocation of long-term residents away from the main
7 tourism site to the peripheries (e.g. Su, 2012; Zhao et al., 2009).

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11 In the process of tourism gentrification, space is transformed into affluent enclaves to
12 accommodate better-off tourists. Extreme cases of tourism gentrification have been
13 described as cases of “fantasy city” (Hannigan, 1995), “museification” and
14 “mummification” (Bouché, 1998), where gentrifying projects turn urban space into
15 “tourist bubbles”.

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21 The gentrifiers are both outside owners and employees of establishments catering to
22 tourists, as well as the tourists themselves. Clark (2005) notes that although individual
23 tourists may be transient, the continuous stream of tourists may lead locals to view
24 them as an ever-present outsider. Similarly, the original inhabitants may find
25 themselves leaving the area because of difficulties in coping with the overwhelming
26 presence and sometimes the unfamiliar social behaviour of the tourists. Locals may
27 also respond to increasing property prices and living costs in touristic areas, and
28 relocate to less expensive and calmer zones.

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34 The process of tourism gentrification in suburbs or urban peripheries has also
35 generated positive outcomes. For instance, tourism gentrification can contribute to
36 protection and revitalisation of the built cultural heritage and urban landscape. The
37 regeneration of Wendeka in Quebec City sponsored by the Canadian government in
38 partnership with local indigenous authorities helped to revitalise the indigenous Huron
39 culture and language (Iankova, 2008).

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45 Beyond touristic cities and towns, tourism gentrification in remote rural tourism areas
46 remain relatively unexplored, with very few exceptions (e.g. Hines, 2010; Stockdale,
47 2010). This imbalance likely emerges from the fact that conflicts emerging as a result
48 of gentrification are usually linked to competition for land for development. Land is
49 usually more plentiful in rural settings, however the unusual topography of Honghe
50 WHS restricts available land and provides a unique context for a study of tourism
51 gentrification in a rural setting.
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Indigenous entrepreneurship and rural tourism development in China

Rural tourism is often typified by being “built upon the rural world’s special features of small-scale enterprise, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, heritage, 'traditional' societies and 'traditional' practices” (Lane, 1994, p. 14). Its development is often contingent on the conservation of nature and cultural heritage (Lane & Kastenholtz, 2015). Particularly in China, the government often attempts to guide rural tourism development as a means of rural socio-economic regeneration (Su, 2011).

Chinese indigenous tourism is distinctive in occurring under an authoritarian state that practises market-socialist economic governance. Despite considerable reform from the 1980s onwards the state still regulates many forms of economic activity and land use, for instance, using *hukou* system (Chan, 2010). The establishment of numerous autonomous ethnic regions and districts in areas throughout China has not necessarily resulted in minority groups taking more control over their own resources and destinies (Swain, 1989; Xie, 2001). In this regard, Harvey (2005) describes the Chinese economic reality as an increasing incorporation of neoliberal elements integrated with authoritarian centralised control, in contrast to cases in most of the developed countries where the indigenous communities may enjoy greater control of their economic activities including tourism (Hinch & Butler, 1996).

Despite booming indigenous tourism in China (Oakes, 1998; Walsh & Swain, 2004), the majority of entrepreneurs in the indigenous tourism sector tend to be Han Chinese migrating from other parts of the country, which increase the economic leakages out of the indigenous region and leads to unsustainability. For example, a study by Yang & Wall (2008) in another indigenous tourism destination in the Yunnan province suggests that Han entrepreneurs dominate tourism business whereas local indigenous people have limited involvement. The participation of the indigenous people at managerial level is frequently non-existent or marginal.

The lack of rural tourism enterprises may be because when they do exist, such enterprises are typically fragmented and poorly organised (Lane & Kastenholtz, 2015). Equally, indigenous tourism enterprises in many parts of the world are mostly micro-businesses and have their viability threatened (Fuller, Buultjens, & Cummings, 2005) by similar problems such as land tenure issues, low literacy, lack of access to capital,

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3 weak social capital, insufficient business skills, no training opportunity, and no
4 knowledge of market trends (Cachon, 2000; Jeremy et al, 2010; Weir, 2007). Other
5 obstacles identified are favouritism and clientelism faced by entrepreneurs in local
6 communities, lack of perseverance when problems first occur, and not knowing how
7 to seek good support (Iankova, 2016).
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11 In ensuring sustainability of rural tourism, Bramwell (1994) proposes that attention
12 should be “given to the role of local communities and local businesses...” instead of
13 excessive external intervention. Cornell (2006), in analysing indigenous business in
14 the USA, suggests that success may depend on adequate start-up funds, smart
15 management, adequate infrastructure, and a strong business network of indigenous
16 and non-indigenous partners. Fuller et al. (2005) have also noted the advantages of
17 partnership with larger corporations in the survival of Australian indigenous
18 enterprises.
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25 *Issues of cultural change*

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27 Literature in indigenous tourism in China presents tensions between cultural
28 exoticism (tourists’ desire for “authenticity” by “freezing” the culture in past
29 representations), cultural commodification (selective modification of culture in
30 accordance with tourists’ taste), and cultural preservation versus modernity
31 (indigenous people’s desire to achieve modernity) (Swain, 1989; Xie, 2001; Yang &
32 Wall, 2008). Non-indigenous tourism operators often (with varying degrees of intent)
33 misrepresent indigenous persons. For example, Yang & Wall (2008) argue “authentic”
34 representations of ethnic people are often being interpreted and controlled by these
35 *Han* tourism entrepreneurs, for instance, through the construction of “alien”
36 architectural forms, which may even be subsequently adopted by local people
37 themselves.
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46 In China, local theories of cultural change have taken their own specific flavour, at
47 times drawing on the wider global debates on cultural change (Baos, 1911; Steward,
48 1955). It should be noted that evolutionary perspectives – that viewed non-Western
49 cultures as essentially static (Tylor, 1881; Morgan, 1877) – still hold important sway,
50 in part because of the influence of Marx-Engels unilineal schema of the evolution of
51 society, which was appropriated by the Communist party and applied to existing
52 Chinese understanding about race (Dikötter, 1992). The ideology advanced through
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3 these accounts is that societies go through various stages of cultural evolution, from
4 primitive, to petty capitalist, then capitalist, before emerging into socialism and
5 eventually finishing in communism.
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8 The work of Gillette (2000) is particularly relevant given the ethnic minority focus of
9 this article. Gillette, studying the material lives of Hui Muslim minority populations
10 in northwest China, noted how Hui and Han both appropriate these evolutionary
11 ideals to different ends. The Han often stigmatise Hui populations as being
12 ‘backwards’. In response, the Hui increase their own consumption of modern
13 consumer goods in order to be able to assert themselves as being more advanced than
14 Han populations. Although Hani and Yi minorities differ in important ways from the
15 Hui in Gillette’s example, it remains a possibility that indigenous populations may
16 appropriate gentrification in a similar way.
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23 *Honghe WHS context*

24 The Honghe WHS is defined by a complex co-existence of multiple ethnic minority
25 villages with different religions, socio-cultural systems and languages, in addition to
26 other incoming populations. The main ethnic group, the Hani, build their villages and
27 terraces at the highest altitude, from 1,400m to 1,800m above mean sea level, while
28 the Yi ethnic group occupies middle altitude mountains, mostly below 1,600m (see
29 Chan et al., 2016). In total, there are 82 villages with a total population of around
30 50,000 in 166 square kilometres of core area and 295 square kilometres of buffer zone
31 in the Yuanyang county, Honghe prefecture (UNESCO, 2013).
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39 The rice-terrace ecosystem has existed for circa 1,300¹ years, and it has also become
40 reflected in, and sustained in local cultural concepts. In the core area of the Honghe
41 WHS, the upper slopes of the mountain with altitudes of higher than 1,800 metres are
42 primarily forested while the terraced rice fields are distributed in the valley down to
43 700 metres above sea level with, at times, gradients of 15 to 20 degrees. The Hani
44 build their villages in between their sacred forests at mountaintops and earthy rice
45 terraces further down the slopes. The villages are populated with traditional Hani
46 mushroom like dwellings – commonly two-and-a-half storeys with a thatched roof.
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55 ¹ Manshu, Tang Dynasty (618-970AD), documented minority ethnic groups practising an ingenious
56 form of mountain farming in southern Yunnan, but without further details. The more reliable records
57 describing rice terraces and irrigation channels appeared in Ming dynasty (1368-1644AD) (Shimpei,
58 2007).
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3 The Hani religious practice of forest worship encourages forest conservation, which
4 helps to deliver sustainable water supply for the villages and rice terraces (Lu,
5 2011:121; Mao 1991; Wang, 1999). During the formation of a new Hani settlement,
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7 villagers establish a forested sanctuary to house the spirits with whom they have
8
9 entered into a kind of contractual relationship (Bouchery, 1996). The forest plays an
10
11 important role in the local water cycle by acting as a natural moisture trap and water
12
13 reservoir, supplying ever-running streams via a complex web of natural and man-
14
15 made drainage channels and sluice gates distributing water throughout the terraces via
16
17 a democratic social system with an elected irrigation headman (*yiroharapo*) to
18
19 manage and apportion water resources (Shimpei, 2007).

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21 The local people maintain the terraces themselves in the course of rice cultivation.
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23 This is primarily subsistence farming, and families supplement this with raising
24
25 livestock and fishing in the terraces. However, communities are losing young people
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27 who move to urban areas for jobs and education, a trend familiar in almost all of rural
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29 China (Chan et al., 2016).

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31 The indigenous communities and rice terraces thus face a unique set of challenges that
32
33 place them in an especially precarious position as tourism and gentrification bite in.
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35 These challenges differ substantially from most other heritage sites such as ancient
36
37 cities and places of architectural interest - with a notable exception of the Philippines
38
39 Cordilleras rice terraces (Villalon, 2012), where the key elements of the UNESCO
40
41 inscription are at danger of disappearing as a result of gentrification

42 **Methods**

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44 This study has focused its fieldwork solely on the Honghe WHS so as to provide a
45
46 fuller account of the gentrification occurring there in the context of growing tourism.
47
48 In this study we paid attention to the dynamics of gentrification agents - the
49
50 gentrifiers, and the indigenous people.

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52 This article draws upon primary and secondary evidence collected from a larger
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54 research project relating to innovation and tourism at Honghe WHS. The sources of
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56 primary data come from semi-structured interviews, unstructured in-depth interviews
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58 and observation, as appropriate depending on the types of respondent. Secondary data
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3 mainly came from statistics collected by the government and companies (including
4 the state-owned tourism company that assumes the main responsibility for managing
5 and developing tourism in the WHS), in addition to policy documents and narrative
6 accounts.
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10 Combining these different sources allowed the researchers to examine competing (and
11 sometimes contradictory) forms of evidence, which allowed for more convincing
12 findings (Yin 2009). This was also the approach taken to triangulate some data, which
13 was particularly useful in the case of sensitive evidence, and helped to make for more
14 reliable conclusions (Yin, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994).
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19 The main fieldwork was conducted in Honghe between June and July 2013. Close
20 contact with key informants in the WHS has been subsequently maintained through
21 social media, where we obtained updates and followed key events. A team member
22 conducted a 10-day revisit in May 2015 to collect further data. In August 2015,
23 another research team of seven members conducted a further two-week revisit,
24 helping to verify and update some data.
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30 The team met with owners and employees of tourism related businesses in the scenic
31 area, ranging from small guesthouses to the large state-owned corporation and its
32 subsidiaries. The targeted guesthouses were mostly located in the most visited
33 villages, which are susceptible to a greater degree of gentrification. We interviewed
34 local residents and community leaders from different villages, and also government
35 officials at village, town and county level, who have a portfolio related to tourism,
36 environment and development at the WHS site. An online supplementary to this
37 article is available to provide details of key respondents and interview questions. We
38 obtained approximately 200 hours of interview audio recordings. The interviews were
39 mostly conducted in Mandarin Chinese (putonghua), but on some occasions our local
40 guide helped as an interpreter (to and from Hani and Yi languages to Chinese
41 Mandarin), particularly amongst older villagers who often had difficulty speaking
42 standard Chinese.
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53 Interview recordings were transcribed and stored in qualitative data analysis software
54 Nvivo, along with the photos, videos and observations notes. This was examined
55 thematically according to the theoretical framework regarding the processes of
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3 gentrification (gentrifier-led and state-led) as depicted in the literature review, as well
4 as an emerging category of self-gentrification. We searched for evidence of these
5 processes, forces, and implications for the indigenous people and their responses to
6 such changes.
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10 The results of this research will have practical significance for sustainable
11 development in the WHS. It could be a *key case* (Thomas, 2011, p. 514) to exemplify
12 the analytical objects of the inquiry i.e. the phenomena of gentrification of
13 rural/indigenous tourism sites, and more significantly its location in a World Heritage
14 Site. Nonetheless, as a single case research, caution should be applied in claiming any
15 representativeness for other cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2009).
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21 22 **Findings**

23 *Unsustainable gentrifier-led gentrification*

24 A low degree of gentrification in the villages of Honghe Hani rice terraces had
25 already occurred prior to its inscription as a WHS. Since 2004 a number of non-local
26 entrepreneurs (both Han and other minorities) from other parts of China had rented
27 indigenous dwellings and converted them into guesthouses or restaurants. By 2013,
28 the records of the Rice Terraces Management Bureau indicated such persons were
29 still few in number. In-depth interviews with four such owners revealed the beauty of
30 the rice terraces as key reason for their in-migration. This group highlighted concerns
31 regarding integration with indigenous people.
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40 Early gentrifiers can be distinguished by their place of origin: either big cities or
41 neighbouring towns. Those from neighbouring towns are typically entrepreneurs
42 belonging to other minority groups, who are keen to make the most of increasing
43 visitor numbers. Their familiarity with the local socio-economic system, culture and
44 languages, means they generally fare better than others from further afield. Building
45 on these advantages, one of the owners declared that they run a few guesthouses in
46 various tourist attractions in the surrounding regions.
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53 The second group often come from distant big cities. These lifestyle entrepreneurs
54 desert city lives to become guesthouse operators in the WHS. This 'amenity-seeking'
55 entrepreneurship is also observed in other parts of the world (Snepenger, Johnson, &
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3 Rasker, 1995). The three owners interviewed all presented similar reasons for
4 relocating: affinity to the terrace landscape, a spirit of conservation and desire to help
5 local communities. One of the earliest guesthouse owners, who has operated the
6 guesthouse for seven years, said:
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10 “Our journey began when my child came here and brought back many
11 astonishing photos ... beautiful area ... air is fresh.”²
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15 This group of lifestyle-seeking gentrifiers is not primarily profit orientated but could
16 also play an important role in the neighbourhood (Schoon, 2001). Madden (1999)
17 observes that the British and Irish-owned businesses in the Costa del Sol were
18 motivated by lifestyle or social reasons rather than profit. Other studies have pointed
19 out that conserving local culture can be a key motivation for indigenous and other
20 newcomers (Chang, Tsai, & Chen, 2010). For example, one lifestyle entrepreneur in
21 the WHS commented:
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27 “... we know that they don’t have enough teachers. We hope we can help them.
28 A lot of children stop going to school after fifth grade. I hope to change the
29 locals’ view on education and hope that the children [here] can attend higher
30 education. We will encourage our guests to become voluntary teachers and will
31 provide them food and accommodation. We hope to be a bridge to help them.
32 My wife has taught at the school for two years. These are the purposes of us
33 being here.”
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40 These two groups of newcomers also brought new (and often transferable) resources,
41 ideas and investment to the community. We noticed some local entrepreneurs seizing
42 opportunities, imitating business models and ideas, and learning to start their own
43 business and run hospitality establishments. One lifestyle entrepreneur explained that
44 he does not see such local competition as a problem, and is happy to share his
45 knowledge with locals to help them succeed in the tourism industry.
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51 Despite these positive contributions, the arrival of individual gentrifiers nonetheless
52 increases the pressure on the property market. A government ban on new construction
53 in the WHS for conservation purposes has caused high rental demand for existing
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57 ² All quotations are translated from Chinese unless specified.
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3 Hani dwellings. The same regulation also strictly controls modification to existing
4 buildings in order to protect the architectural authenticity of Hani dwellings.
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6 Nonetheless, it does not attempt to regulate the rental market on the traditional Hani
7 dwellings.
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11 The conversion of dwellings will lead to the displacement of existing occupants.
12 Some villagers rent out their dwellings under 10-20 years of long-term contract to
13 gentrifying-entrepreneurs. While conducting research within the WHS, only a few
14 days after the UNESCO inscription, interviewees informed us of an increasing
15 number of enquiries for renting indigenous dwellings. After two years, such renting
16 arrangements have become increasingly widespread. For example, by early 2015
17 Pugaolao village had 32 guesthouses/restaurants, constituting more than 20 per cent
18 of the total 147 households³ in the village. Eighteen of these are operated by non-local
19 gentrifiers who sign long-term rental agreements with indigenous Hani landlords.
20 During our 2015 revisit, a gentrifier declared the annual rental he paid to be about
21 USD10, 000 – a very high figure in comparison to the village’s average annual
22 income of less than USD 500 per capita⁴.
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32 The guaranteed stable income gained from renting one’s home proves extremely
33 attractive for many local families. However, although rental incomes act as a source
34 of wealth, rental agreements also run the risk of displacing villagers from their own
35 villages who must find new accommodation, often in neighbouring towns away from
36 the rice terraces. A few tightly locked guesthouses were observed during fieldwork
37 visits, presumably only open for business during peak tourist season.
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43 Gentrifier-driven gentrification almost always occurs free of central planning
44 oversight, and efforts to track it are currently minimal, making it difficult to mitigate
45 any of its negative consequences. For instance, Su (2012), who studied the nearby
46 gentrified market town of Lijiang, commented that it is often unclear where the long-
47 term residents have moved to. If such renting practices became ubiquitous, villages
48 here might become ‘ghost villages’, seasonally populated by tourism operators and
49 tourists, a phenomenon common in many touristic areas around the world.
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55 ³ Data for the number of households is provided by local government.

56 ⁴ Income figures were collected by local government prior to the application of World Heritage listing
57 in 2012.
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3 The sustainability of the rice terraces would also be in question. The rice terraces
4 require constant maintenance, and few beyond the indigenous population possess the
5 skills and knowledge to maintain it. Their absence increases the likelihood of this
6 landscape falling into disrepair. This possibility also raises the question of whether
7 Hani culture could survive in its current form without the rice terraces. Conversely
8 would the rice terraces – and its magnificent view and tourism industry built on it –
9 survive without the indigenous people?
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14 ***Roles of the state and corporation in gentrification***

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16 This study did not observe any systematic state-organised gentrification in the villages
17 within the WHS, or policies to that effect. Nonetheless, there was some discussion
18 around transforming some villages in the Honghe WHS. One well-connected
19 participant explained:
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25 “There are powerful people planning to relocate one of the Hani villages. They
26 were talking about moving the villagers to an area higher up the hill. Luckily
27 they haven’t found a suitable site; otherwise they would have implemented it.”
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32 Suspicions of large-scale state-led gentrification are not without ground, especially
33 given preceding examples of gentrification led by government and big corporations in
34 other cities or market towns in China (e.g. Su, 2012; Zhao et al., 2009). Moreover, the
35 main drivers of the intention to gentrify the entire village are expressed in terms of
36 providing a conducive environment and good standard of accommodation for tourists.
37 Proposed challenges in promoting tourism in the villages include acute shortage of
38 facilities, humans and livestock living at close-quarters, and poor sanitation and waste
39 water management, all of which the government believe act as creating barriers to
40 tourism growth.
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47 The tension between cultural exoticism and modernity is clearly depicted by the most
48 senior manager in the state-owned tourist development corporation Shibo-Yuanyang
49 Co. Ltd.⁵ in improving the general living conditions of the villages:
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56 ⁵ See Chan et al. (2016) for information on the roles and corporate structure of the company.
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3 “Some experts proposed that the more authentic [the culture is] the better; the
4 more ancient the better... you demand [indigenous people] to be poor,
5 backward, and remain primitive, but you want to stay in a luxurious hotel room!
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9 ...

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11 Our company position is... we are investing in this place, first and foremost, for
12 conservation. But if it is merely conservation, and no reasonable development,
13 the people cannot get rich. If local people are not rich, they will destroy [the rice
14 terraces].”
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19 Nonetheless, the necessity of preserving local culture in order to conserve the rice
20 terrace ecosystem is widely acknowledged by many stakeholders including
21 government officers, tourism development corporations and local residents. We did
22 not learn about any intended large-scale gentrification plan by Shibo-Yuanyang. The
23 manager explained that:
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28 “As for the indigenous [people], if something were to go wrong with them,
29 there wouldn’t be anyone cultivating the rice terraces, and it would therefore be
30 deserted. The scenery would no longer be there. The value of the rice terraces
31 would diminish, so too would the continuation of their culture.”
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36 While appreciating the vibrancy of tourism in nearby Lijiang, tourism executives and
37 villagers also expressed concerns about the displacement of indigenous communities
38 that had occurred under state-led gentrification:
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42 “We do not wish the Hani Rice Terrace to developed like Lijiang. They lost the
43 uniqueness of the indigenous community. It is too commercialised.”
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47 “We do not know the future of Hani Rice Terraces, but we do not wish it to be as
48 Lijiang. There are not many indigenous people living in the old town.”
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51 The company also sees the importance of providing employment and training to the
52 local communities. They noted a few cases of local people gaining more experience
53 and increasing responsibility. For instance, two of the newly promoted local
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3 executives were sent to the provincial capital to market the destinations. When asked
4 about local recruitment, a manager said that:
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7 “...Other than a few of us (senior managers) who come from the provincial
8 capital, about 95 per cent of middle managers are locals. We also continuously
9 provide training to the locals, take them to other tourist destinations to observe
10 and learn, as well as share our experience with them...”
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15 This section has shown that though the state and state-owned enterprises have taken
16 an interest in gentrifying parts of the WHS, this has rarely been enacted in any
17 systematic, overall way. It is unsustainable to enforce any large-scale gentrification by
18 relocating villagers away from their traditional villages adjacent to the rice terraces, to
19 a newly built village or town.
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23 *Self-gentrification of indigenous people*

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25 Newcomers, the state and enterprise may seek to drive the gentrification process in
26 certain ways, begging the question of what indigenous people actually want
27 themselves. Our research seemed to point to two general types of indigenous persons
28 – returning migrants and local entrepreneurs – who made particular efforts to improve
29 their socio-economic status in the face of the expanding tourism gentrification in the
30 WHS. In this section, we present the evidence for arguing that such groups may be
31 regarded as self-gentrifiers. Importantly, our notion of self-gentrification does not
32 necessarily entail complete desertion of one’s own culture and farming traditions.
33 Despite transformations of indigenous culture, even young people continue to identify
34 with rice cultivation as an integral part of their culture. A young Hani person
35 commented:
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47 “...although many young people are going away to work in the city, we will
48 still return to farm the rice terraces when our fathers are too old to work. The
49 rice terraces cannot be deserted, they are the bedrock of our society, inherited
50 from our ancestors.”
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Returning indigenous migrants as self-gentrifiers

In China, rural-to-urban migration is often actually circular migration, with migrants eventually returning to their place of origin (Connelly, Roberts, & Zheng, 2010, p. 4; Zhang, 1999). Studies in China and worldwide show diverse economic and social reasons (Piotrowski & Tong, 2010) for migrants returning home, including retirement, success or failure in their venture away from home (Cerese, 1974), and family concerns (Wang & Fan, 2006; Dustman, 2003). Migrants often return equipped with awareness of urban approaches to business and investment, additional language skills, and financial and social capital. Such returnees generally prefer employment in the service sector and starting small-scale businesses (Ahlburg & Brown, 1998; Williams & Hall, 2010). In Honghe rice terraces, for instance, returning migrants played an important role in the diffusion of solar hot water systems and motorbikes in the villages. They returned with a stronger financial capacity, and an improved Mandarin Chinese skill, which is of great use when dealing with domestic visitors.

Despite extended absence, these migrants tend to maintain a very strong feeling of connection for the rice terraces. They often already have experience of, and inclination to maintain, terrace-farming practices. Local villagers in the WHS explained that young people often return to help their families with agricultural labour during busy periods, which often coincided with major cultural-religious festivals, further enabling the transmission of cultural knowledge and continuation of practices. As one villager commented:

“Now you hardly see any young people in the village...although they are going to work in the city, they will be back, during the year, to do farm work. During planting and harvesting seasons for instance, they will be back. Then, they go to the city again.”

Other studies have also pointed to the commonality of return migrants' establishing or becoming involved in tourism enterprises elsewhere due to the low entry barrier to this sector (Mendoza, 1982; Kenna, 1993; Thomas & Hope, 1999). A government officer informed that,

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3 “They are learning about the inscription.... Young people are returning [after
4 working away]. There is more passion in starting one’s own businesses, such as
5 selling local products, ethnic clothing and souvenirs, and [running] guesthouses
6 and restaurants. Many people are coming to ask about how to start a guesthouse
7 and restaurant.”
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12 *Self-gentrification of non-migrating indigenous people*
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15 In addition to indigenous returnees, we finally give the example of a local young Hani
16 male who has never left the WHS for an extended period of time but has instead
17 transformed himself in order to take advantage of tourism development. In a decade
18 he has moved from being a teenager in a struggling subsistence-farming family to
19 identify himself as a successful “middle class” entrepreneur, now operating two
20 guesthouses and a tourist transport service.
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24 This individual explained how his journey to tourism entrepreneurship occurred
25 through many years of on going interaction with tourists, through whom he learnt
26 how to do business. He recalled how during his childhood he would chase tourists
27 begging for money. Some tourists encouraged him to instead sell boiled eggs and rice
28 in exchange. He later began to provide travel and photographic touring services and
29 learned about photography himself, before ultimately investing in guesthouse
30 operation and transport services. He reiterated this transformation:
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38 “At the time I started to guide tourists, the tourists would say ... ‘How about we
39 have lunch at your house?’ I would be very happy... after eating they would ...
40 stay for the night at the house, the business slowly started in this way”
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45 In this example a key diffusing agent of touristic knowledge are the tourists
46 themselves, who bring their own ideas and expectations into the WHS. Often locals
47 develop innovative approaches to tourism services in the WHS as a result of these
48 interactions with tourists, including once starting a cultural-performance training
49 centre. Through ongoing interactions with tourists this individual gradually came to
50 understand what would most interest them - for example, particular types of scenery
51 and photogenic locations. Over the course of time, this helped him gain knowledge of
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3 photography. He soon became one of the most popular tourist guides within the WHS,
4 with many returning customers and friends.
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7 Many local indigenous people view involvement in tourism as having potential to
8 improve their livelihood and reap the benefits of tourism development. There are
9 other cases of indigenous entrepreneurs who run restaurants, guesthouses, and provide
10 transport services, or act as tour guides showing tourists around the WHS. These act
11 as important ways of allowing native people to remain in the WHS. The above
12 individual sees his future in the rice terraces:
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18 “In reality there is no need to leave here, I want to remain in this beautiful place.
19 It doesn’t matter if I earn a lot of money or not; if I were to leave, I would miss
20 home so much. My ideal is to ride on the development of tourism here.”
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24 Nonetheless, the phenomenon of self-gentrification does have some negative effects.
25 Similar to any outsider-gentrifier, the indigenous gentrifier could lead to displacement
26 of other indigenous households. For example, in 2012, this entrepreneur signed a
27 fifteen-year lease on another property in the village to use as a guesthouse, enticing
28 another indigenous family to move out of their own dwelling, and further contributing
29 to the pressure on indigenous dwellings.
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35 **Discussion and conclusions**

36
37 Despite achieving economic transformation and tourism development objectives in
38 many cities and market towns in China, the intertwining connections between the
39 indigenous communities and the main tourist attraction of the rice terraces makes
40 state-led gentrification unsustainable in Honghe WHS. This article provided strong
41 evidence that many stakeholders are aware of the importance of these connections for
42 the purposes of sustainability.
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48 While there is no imminent threat of large-scale and state-led gentrification, outside-
49 gentrifier-led gentrification has been continuing in an unmitigated manner. The
50 pressure is mounting to convert traditional dwellings for tourist use, and the lure of
51 high yield renting potential increasingly leads to indigenous people becoming
52 landlords and moving out of their own dwellings. Coupled with the intensity of out-
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3 migration of working adults, the WHS and its communities are heading towards a
4 precarious future where sustainability could be compromised.
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7 This study of tourism gentrification in an indigenous community setting has
8 demonstrated that when long-term residents are proactive and feel empowered to
9 appropriate tourism development, this can also contribute to social equity,
10 sustainability of the community and its natural and rice-terrace ecosystem. Some
11 long-term indigenous residents have responded to forms and possibilities of outsider-
12 and state-led large-scale gentrification by discerning for themselves ways to improve
13 their own socio-economic standings in accordance with their own aspirations. Often
14 these desires also included wishes to ensure the continuation of one's own culture and
15 the sustainability of the rice terraces.
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18 Retaining indigenous persons in the WHS could be helped through increased support
19 for individuals to innovate and practise entrepreneurship in the community through
20 the process of self-gentrification. As Cheshire (2009) suggests, efforts to improve
21 social equity would be more effective if directed towards long-term residents
22 themselves, rather than displacing them and moving around neighbourhoods. This
23 predominantly collective and community-centred approach to economic development
24 would encourage economic self-sufficiency, control of activities on traditional lands,
25 improvement of socio-economic circumstances, and strengthening of traditional
26 culture, values and languages (Anderson, 1999; Peredo & McLean, 2010).
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29 Nonetheless, the increasing numbers of tourists and outside-gentrifiers will likely
30 create more future learning opportunities for indigenous entrepreneurs similar to those
31 presented in this article. We also notice that Shibo-Yuanyang promotes ideas and
32 understanding of tourism within the indigenous community. However, active transfer
33 of knowledge and entrepreneurial skills are still lacking. This article recommends that
34 the government and big corporations should proactively facilitate this process of
35 learning with more concerted efforts. Such assertions are well recognised in the
36 literature (e.g. Jeremy et al, 2005).
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39 In summary, this article has demonstrated the novel approach of applying the concept
40 of gentrification to analyse the sustainability of indigenous tourism development in a
41 WHS setting. Taking a gentrification perspective, sustainability of an indigenous
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3 tourism area has been viewed in connection with migration, its drivers and impacts.
4 Large-scale state-led and unorganised outside-gentrifier-led gentrifications are
5 deemed to be unsustainable for the development and tourism at this WHS site.
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9 Instead, the term of “self-gentrification” has been proposed to encapsulate the
10 proactive responses of long-term residents to improve their socio-economic standing
11 in a gentrifying neighbourhood through participation in the tourism sector, which
12 would enhance sustainability. Provisions of learning is a key success factor of self-
13 gentrification, where knowledge is to be exchanged between indigenous and outside
14 agents such as corporations, entrepreneurs, governments, and tourists themselves, and
15 needs to be promoted proactively.
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36 **Table 1: Gentrification types and characteristics**

Type of gentrification	Gentrifiers	Nature	Impacts
Gentrifier-led gentrification	Incoming middleclass gentries	Spontaneous and unorganised	- Rising living costs, rental and property prices. - Results in slower displacement of long-term residents. - Newcomers might positively contribute to community and organise resistance to further gentrification.
State-led gentrification	Government / commercial organisations	Large scale, very organised	- Rising living costs, rental and property prices. - Intentional social engineering of a locality. - Results in large-scale displacement of long-term residents.
Self-gentrification	Long-term residents themselves	Slow, requires external support	- Improved socio-economic status of local population. - Reduced out-migration compared to other types of gentrification, thereby keeping community intact and retaining local unique culture. - Enhanced collaboration between locals and newcomers.

Online Supplementary File: Participant demographic and key areas of inquiry

Occupation	Number of participants	Key interview questions / areas of inquiry
Small guesthouse / restaurant owner	13 (of which 5 indigenous persons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner background – education, ethnicity, place of origin, length of living in the site • Business/property: types of ownership, rental contract, landlord, investment • Motivations to come to the site and/or to start their business • Learning and barriers in founding/growing business (regulation, investment and skills) • Relationship with and views on local indigenous, and local cultural changes and preservation
Managers of large tourism corporation / local government officer (rice terrace management connected departments)	16 (of which 5 C-level; 2 mid-level managers; 5 county government directors, 4 high-level officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views and plans on developing tourism industry • Views on local indigenous involvement, and local culture changes and preservation. • Views on key issues and impacts of tourism development
Village officers / other local community-leaders	9 (of which 5 village level officers, 1 headmaster, 2 teachers, 1 local historian)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views and plans on developing tourism industry • Views on key issues and impacts of tourism development • Views on local involvement in tourism development
Entry-level tourism industry workers	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivations to work in tourism industry • Views on key issues and impacts of tourism development • Key learning or life transformation following involvement in tourism industry
Other local residents	16 (of which 2 university graduates, 3 shop owners, 11 farmers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views on tourism development and its impacts, in-migration and out-migration • Views on benefits and impacts of tourism development • Involvement in tourism development