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# Evolutional Process and Characteristics of National Forest Parks in China

: a Perspective of the Logic of State, Market and Society

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What means space?

Space is one of the most fundamental and core concepts of geography .Starting from the 1960s, the trend of a spatial turn began to form in the study of geography. Some famous geographers such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Harvey, and Duan Yifu explored the nature of space, proposing that

*space does not equals to a field or a container but is related to society, while society is in turn connected with space.*

*Space in itself may be an original concept, but space organization and meaning is the product of social change, social transformation and social experience .*

## 1.2 Current research for national forest parks

National forest parks are generally transformed from the production space of state-owned forest farms into a space of tourism. This evolutionary process is also a process of the production and transformation of various social relations.

However, current tourism researchers analyze and summarize tourism mainly from economics or management perspectives, e.x. economic impact, marketing, tourism product, ecological safety.

The vital concern of the future research of forest parks should be based on geography perspective, shift from the use of the parks to historical, social, ecological and political and economic processes operating on and shaping park space and the future of the parks, answering the questions like why, how and for whom forest park are produced.

It aims to profoundly reveal the institutional changes taking place in forest parks with a deeper understanding of the demands of various actors in the development of forest parks and grasp more accurately the development trend of forest parks in China.

# 2. Research Design

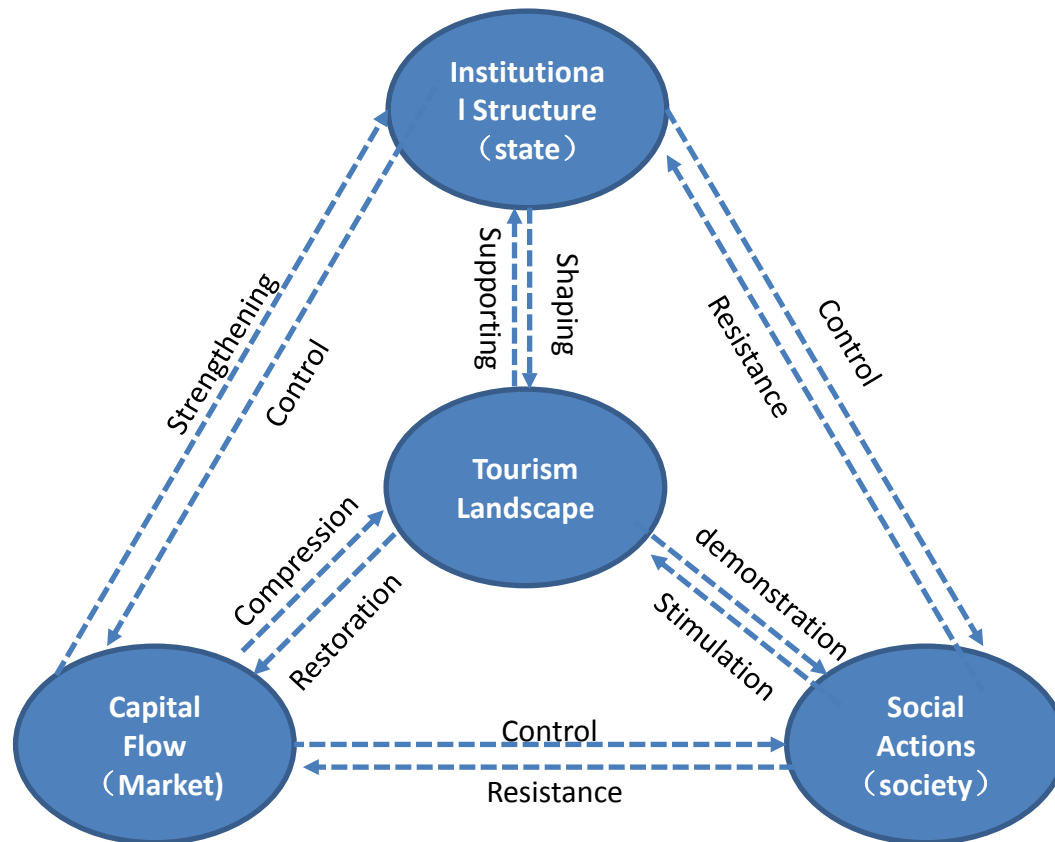
## 2.1 Research Methods

Historical study is one of the important methods of social research, especially suitable for research of grand social phenomena or historical study of social phenomena.

Its most critical point is that a researcher himself sets his own theoretical analysis framework or concept through literature reading, and on this basis to analyze and summarize the literature and then explains his theory or concepts through demonstration.

## 2.2 Analysis Framework

Gregory(1994),Foucault(1980),Harvey(1973),Castelle(1983), Polanyi(1944),Liu (2011)



## 2.3 Material Collection

(1) Historical documents collected from 1979 to 2011 on important issues such as the thoughts of China's forestry construction, the economic policies in forestry, the reform of State-owned forest farms, and the construction of national forest parks. The primary sources include the Chinese Yearbook of forestry, the Forestry Information Network in China, as well as some related books and personal memoirs.

(2) Field observations and interviews with nearly 80 cadres and workers of the 12 national forest parks in Hunan province: Zhangjiajie, Tianmen Mountain, Dongtai Mountain, Tianji Mountain, Dawei Mountain, Mangshan Mountain, Jiulong River, Yunyang Mountain, Wujian Mountain, Jiuyi Mountain, Yangming Mountain, Jindong Cave during April to November in 2011.

# 3. Research Analysis

## 3.1 General Statement on the Development

Up to the end of 2011, 757 state-level national forest parks have been approved their establishment with an area of approximately 120 million hm<sup>2</sup>.

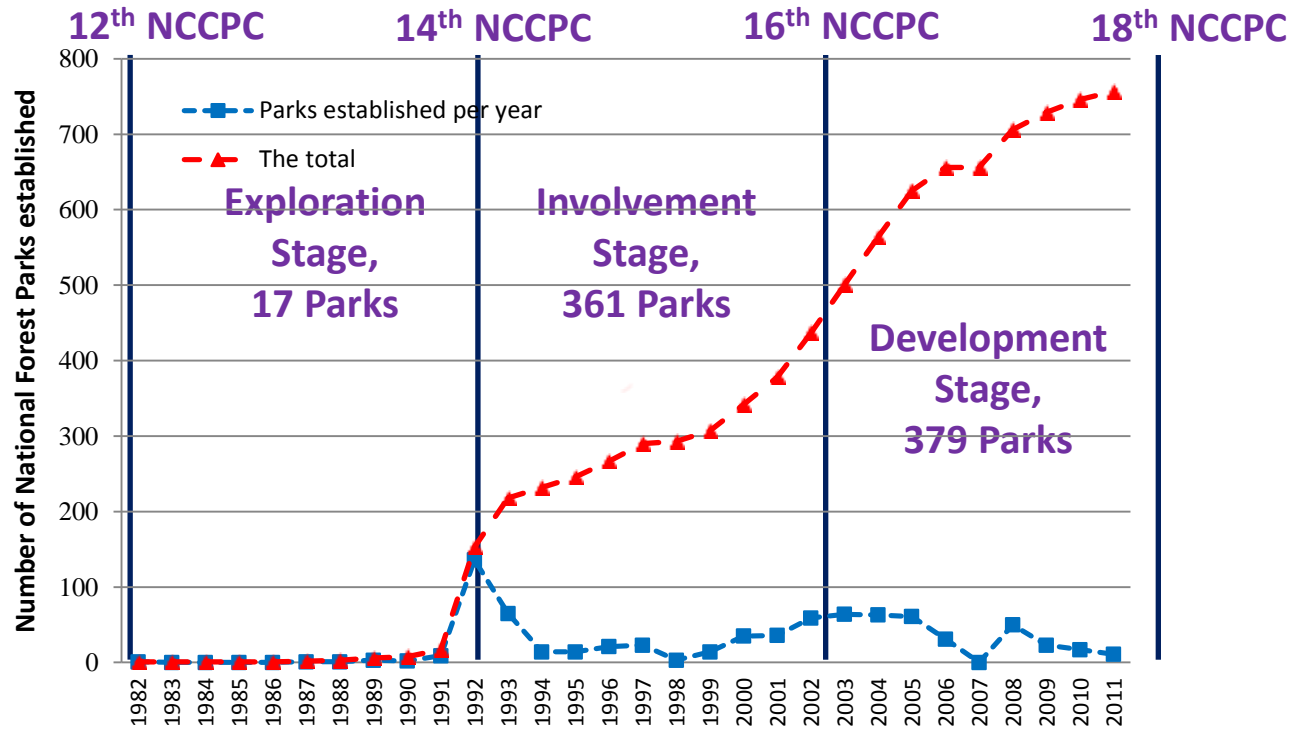


Fig.2 Annual Statistical for National Forest Parks in China from 1982 to 2011



## 3.2 The Exploration Stage (1982-1991)

### (1) Activation of the Space Landscape by the Diversified Economy in Parks

Land clearing and deforestation resulted from the one-sided emphasis on "food is the key link" and some policy mistakes. Thus, state-owned forest farms remained single operation for a long time leading to their failure to make both ends meet.

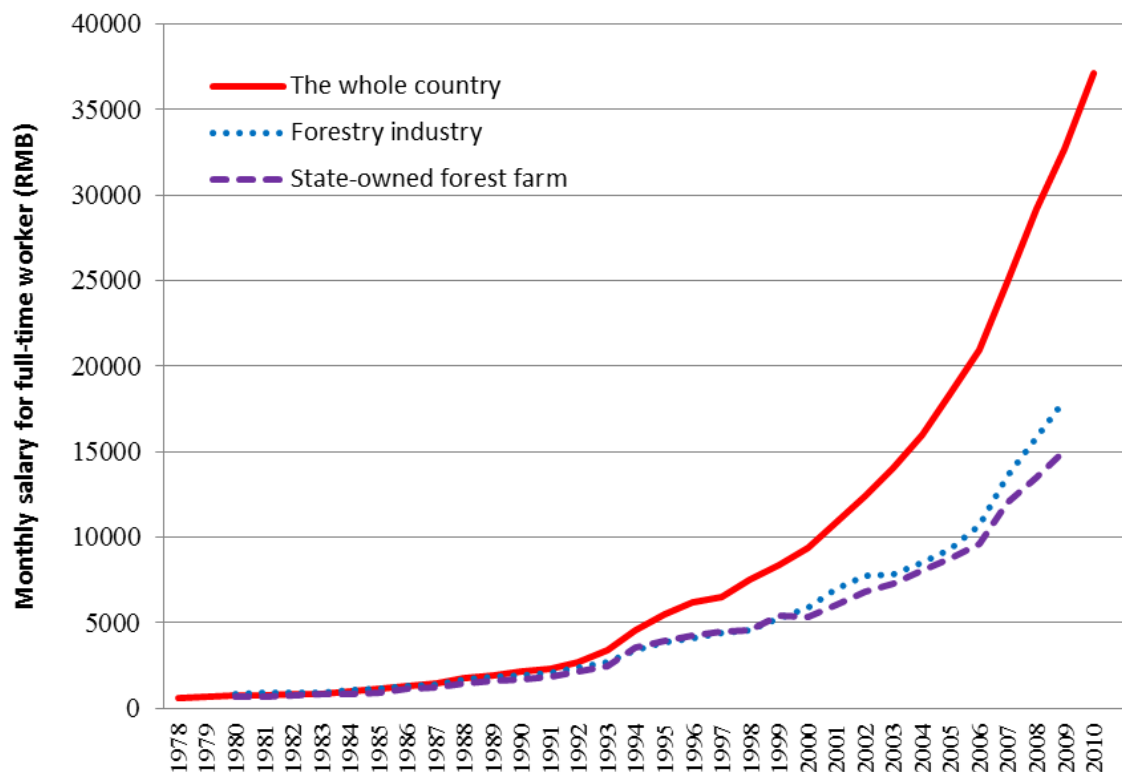


Fig.3 Annual Wage for Workers among the Nation, Forest Industry and Stated-own Forest Farm

## 3.2 The Exploration Stage (1982-1991)

### (2) The Shaping and Support of the Interaction between State and Forest Landscape

In terms of 12th NCCPC in 1982, the forestry structure should be adjusted: the dominate part is forest and diversified economy and comprehensive utilization should be put into full play.

The former Ministry of Forestry(FMF) began to initiate forest parks and forest tourism since 1980, issued a notification on Protecting Mountain Forests and Developing Tourism in State-owned Forest Farms of Scenic Areas.

In 1981, the State Development Planning Commission suggested the construction of forest parks and forest tourism.

In 1982, the Zhangjiajie National Forest Park was established, marking the prelude to the development of forest tourism industry in China.

In the late 1980 's, FMF proposed to strive to achieve four changes in forestry -- shifting the traditional, closed forestry into economic, ecological, and social effective modern forestry.

more than 100 million Yuan to parks, including 24.08 million Yuan from FMF

## 3.3 The Involvement Stage (1992-2001)

### (1) The Impoverishment of Forest Landscape

From the mid 1980's to the early 1990's, most forest farms were caught up in resource crisis and economic crisis.

In the mid and late 1990's, with the recession "two dangerous" State. Poor forest of poverty is the focus of forestry work.

In the late 90 's, the wage difference between workers in state-owned business and urban workers' became greater. The diversification of the forestry industry was badly needed.

Therefore, the brand-new concept--forest park as an effective way to resolve the impoverishment of forest farms urged those state-owned farms to apply for establishing national forest parks.



# 3.3 The Involvement Stage (1992-2001)

## (2) Forest Landscape Compressing and Shaping by Capital

In 1992, Deng Xiaoping's speech in his tour in southern China and the 14th NCCPC both pointed out that development is the absolute principle, the allocation of resource should be optimized through market, and a socialism market economy must be established. Thus, social capital pour into the tourism industry.

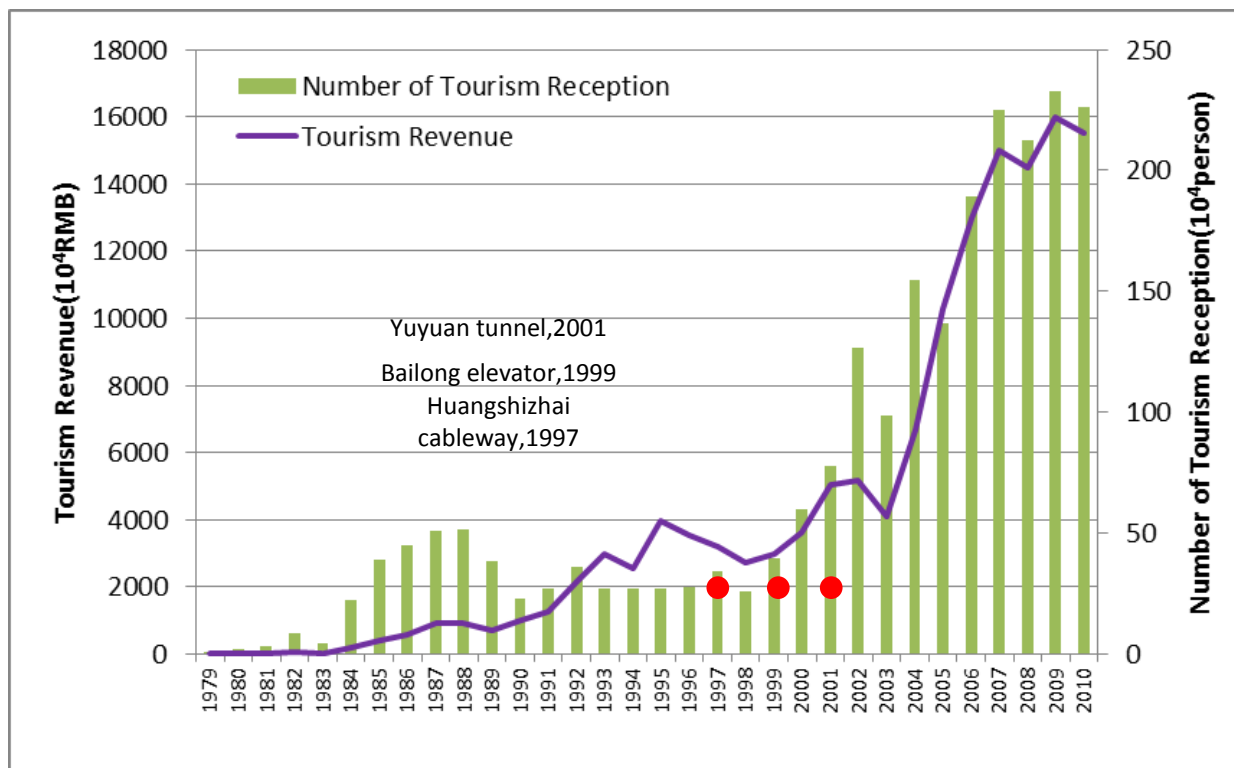


Fig.3 Annual Tourism Revenue and Reception in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park



**Bailong Elevator in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park**

"its natural environment is like a besieged islands with the increasing effects of urbanization on its natural world."UNSCO (2002)

## 3.3 The Involvement Stage (1992-2001)

### (3) The Adjustment and Enhancement of Forest Landscape Management

The huge Yangtze River floods in 1998 caused attention for long-time deforestation in China.

Meanwhile, the "two systems" theory in forestry has been further recognized from too much focus on the economic benefits of the forest the whole benefits combining together the economy, environment and society.

regulations and systems of forest parks and forest tourism were developed:

In 1992, Forest Park Management Office established.

In 1994, the Management Approaches of Forest Parks was issued. In December, the Evaluation Committee on Forest Landscape Resources in China was set up, issuing the National Standards for Evaluating Forest Landscape Resources.

In January 1996, the Regulations on Overall Design of Forest Parks issued.

In 1997, the Construction of National Forest Parks and the Forest Landscape Resources Protection Plan(1998-2050) completed.

## 3.4 The Development Stage (2002-2011)

### (1) More Resistance to the State

With the gradual improvement of the socialist market economy system in China, market has become more and more influential in people's social, economic and cultural lives.

Most forest parks is still in the early stages of development and the infrastructure is to be improved. Many forest workers left their positions without pay, while the employees' wages were very low.

*A retired worker of the Wujian Mountain Forest Farm wrote a couplet, saying "I worked 30 years, searching 27,000 acres forest; I have retired 5 years, getting 157 Yuan pension".*

Thus, the dissatisfaction with plantations, forestry, and the governments increased. In recent years, the matching funds and support to forestry construction, such as ecological public welfare forests plantation, fuel subsidies and forest pest prevention, have been carried out so that a large number of State-owned forest farms continue to work.

## 3.4 The Development Stage (2002-2011)

### (2) Forest Landscape Further Compressing and Shaping by Capital

In 2001, the State Council pointed out in its Notice on Further Accelerating the Development of Tourism that the role of tourism as a new growth point in the national economy should be further played.

In 2009, in the Views on Accelerating the Development of Tourism promulgated by the State Council, tourism was oriented as "a strategic pillar industry of the national economy and the modern service to meet more people's satisfaction." These policies promoted the construction of tourism marketing.

But due to it, tourist poured into the Park and negative impact had been brought to the forest environment, as the gradual disappearance of some kind of ferns.





Tianmenshan National Forest Park, Zhangjiajie, Hunan Province, China

## 3.4 The Development Stage (2002-2011)

### (3) Enhancing the Forest Park Management

After 2002, under the guidance of 16th and 17th NCCPC, the major focus of China's forestry on timber production was moved to a historic shift --ecological construction. It aims at the dual requirements of volume growth and quality improvement to realize the leaping development of forestry in China and to improve the speed, quality and efficiency of the forest tourism.

The construction of forest parks moves from focusing on the diversified economy to promote the ecological environment construction and protection of nature and the rational forestry industrial structure adjustment, bringing the economy growth in forest areas.

In 2011, in term of the State Main Function Regionalization, forest parks were listed in the no development zone on the national level.

Since 2005, the Approval Regulations of Establishing, Canceling, Merging and Changing the Operating Range or Affiliation of State-level Forest Parks, Measures for the Supervision and Inspection of National Forest Parks, and the Management Approaches of the State-level Forest Parks.

# 3.5 Evolution Characteristics Analysis

**Tab.1 Evolutional Characteristics of National Forest Parks in China based on State, Market and Society**

Items	The Exploration Stage (1982-1991)	The Involvement Stage (1992-2001)	The Development Stage (2002-2011)
Nature	State-led marketization	Market-oriented reform and social self-protection	State-led market and social reconstruction
The Logic of the State	Trying to shape the forest space landscape into a business brand Managing and planning forest parks through the space management policies on operation, funds, planning, and worker-sending	Limiting fund adjustment to state-owned forest farms with prominent background resources; Decentralizing management from the province's forestry department to that of city and county; Transferring the focus from economic benefits to the overall benefit of ecological, social and economic fields; Starting to set up a management system for forest space landscape.	The importance of forest parks on space management such as ecological construction and nature protection has been clearly confirmed; More attention was given to the overall benefit of ecology, society and economy; Further improving the regulatory and institutional framework of forest parks in the space management policy system, restricting excessive marketization of forest tourism.
The Logic of the Market	Capital split the original system of the state and the society The initial success of forest park tourism brand shaping by capital	The control over society was strengthened by tourism-related commercial brands; The space landscape was compressed and shaped into scenic roads, hotels, restaurants, attractions and other facilities; The destruction of natural space landscape gradually appeared.	Due to the influx of capital, space landscape was further compressed; With the appearance of the profiteering nature of capital and large-scale projects construction in forest parks caused great damage to the space landscape.
The Logic of the Society	Deconstructing and remodeling of the existing national space policy; Breaking through boundaries and successfully getting funding and policy support from the state.	Further stimulating forest space landscape and developing forest tourism; Further deconstructing and remodeling of the existing national space policy	The impoverishment of forest park landscape increased, causing a more serious resistance of society to the state; Further implementing the space policy of decentralization to the state-owned forest farms.

# 4. Discussion and Conclusion

(1) The development of national forest parks is the coaction of state as the leader, market as the domination and society as the reconstructional force. It can be subdivided into the exploration stage (1982-1991), the involvement stage (1992-2001) and the development stage (2002-2011).

(2) The development of national forest parks in China has gone through a process from a state-led marketization to a market-oriented reform and social self-protection to State-led market and social reconstruction. On the one hand, the market compressed and shaped the space landscape, on the other hand, the society resisted the nature of market of chasing profits. Therefore, the State tried to coordinate the two from an emphasis on economic efficiency to the emphasis on the ecological, social and economic uniformity.

# 4. Discussion and Conclusion

(3) It also embodies the failure under the existing state policy system to achieve the double goals, getting rid of poverty of state-owned forest farms through forest tourism development and protect the nature at the same time. Thus, what the national forest parks need is how to make their space management policies such as development policies, management mechanism, management mode better achieve docking with the market so as to create more value.

(4) However, these gave no deeper explanation or answer to the following questions: why didn't tourism development in state-owned forest farms fulfill their expectations? Why was there an aggravation on the relatively impoverishment of state-owned forest farms? What is the micro-mechanism between the three? These are also the focus to be further discussed.

# Thanks!