

Sustainable & smart tourism in Korea *a SWOT analysis*

Stephane MOT
SeoulVillage.com

2016 SSTF
Sustainable & Smart Tourism Forum

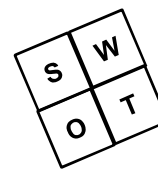
Sustainable & smart tourism in Korea

a SWOT analysis

- **Definitions: sustainable and smart tourism**
- **Focus: the 'Korean Wave' from opportunity to threat?**
- **Korea's SWOT:**



Definitions



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

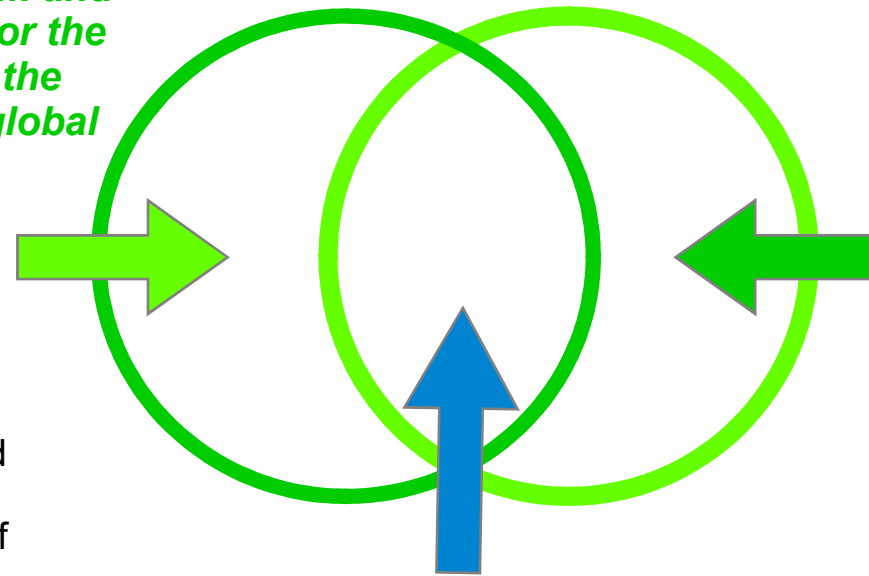
Good for the whole ecosystem and for all stakeholders – Good for the economy, the community, the environment, the local and global heritage...

UNWTO:

- (1) Economic growth
- (2) Job creation, entrepreneurship and inclusiveness
- (3) Environmental preservation and effective resource management
- (4) The promotion and protection of cultural values and heritage
- (5) Cultural diversity, mutual understanding and peace

SMART TOURISM

Technologically innovative, providing a smart experience, through a smart ecosystem



SUSTAINABLE & SMART TOURISM

*Respectful, holistic, future-proof
Plugged to reality, to humans, to the environment
No Artificial Intelligence without Real Experience!*

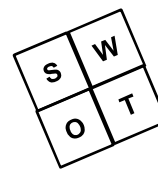
Sustainable & smart tourism in Korea

a SWOT analysis

- **Definitions: sustainable and smart tourism**
- **Focus: the 'Korean Wave' from opportunity to threat?**
- **Korea's SWOT:**

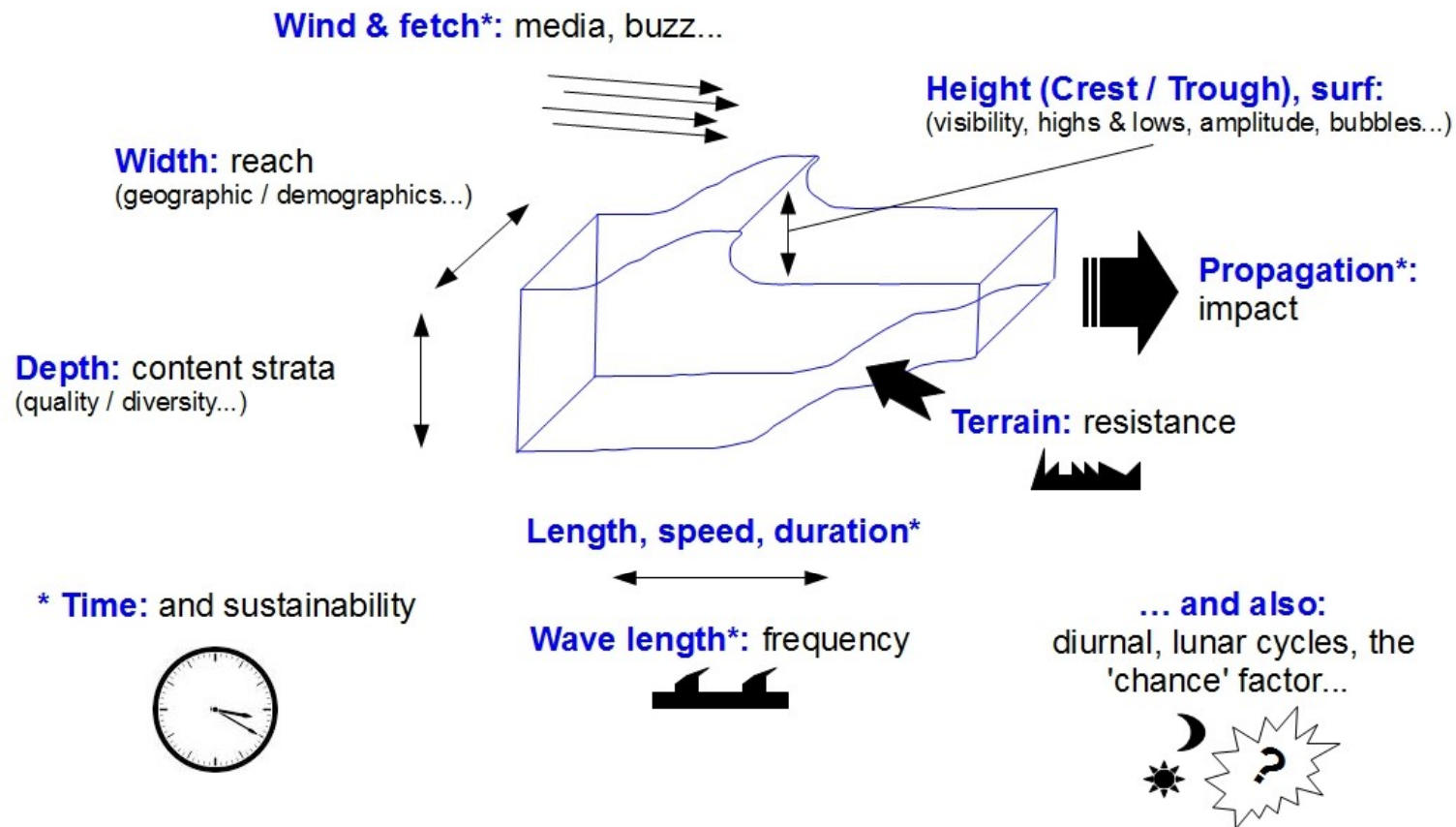


Korean Wave Focus



Sustainable & smart tourism in Korea
a SWOT analysis

For a more sustainable strategy: understand wave dynamics in nature, respect their complexity, the ocean they originate from, the shores they land on



Heralding cultural diversity: a stronger and more sustainable Korean Wave

© Copyright Stephane MOT – August 2013

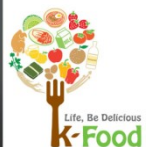
The 'Korean Wave' ('Hallyu') should remain a strength and an opportunity, not become a weakness and a threat

Waves are energy that travels, but also and fundamentally disturbances

- Waves can bring life, but also destruction (e.g. 'Gangnam style' tsunami)
 - Even tiny wavelets can wipe out whole ecosystems, reshape shores over time
- => Always take into account all potential positive & negative, short & long term impacts.

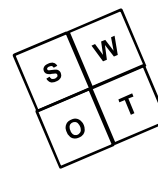
A wave cannot, and should not sum up a vast ocean

- Respecting ecosystems is paramount: other cultures beyond Korea's own diversity
- If Korean culture includes Hallyu, Hallyu can't represent Korean culture as a whole
- Each wave is unique, not evolving in Hallyu promotion will even undermine Hallyu itself



Example: a Korean food campaign promoting 'K-food' with K-pop stars...
... CAN help Hallyu lovers discover other sides of Korean culture (opportunity), BUT
... WILL also give a negative image of Korean food to people who don't like K-pop (threat),
=> ... SHOULD NOT be aired on CNN, but be targeted ONLY to K-pop fans

Korean Wave Focus



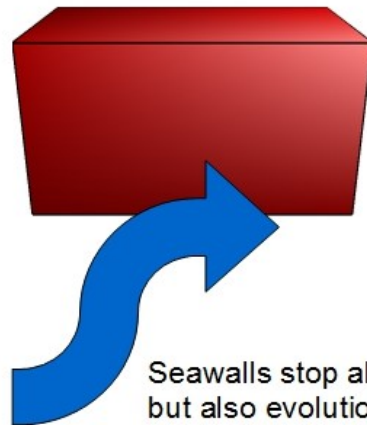
Sustainable & smart tourism in Korea
a SWOT analysis



Respecting cultural diversity – at home and abroad

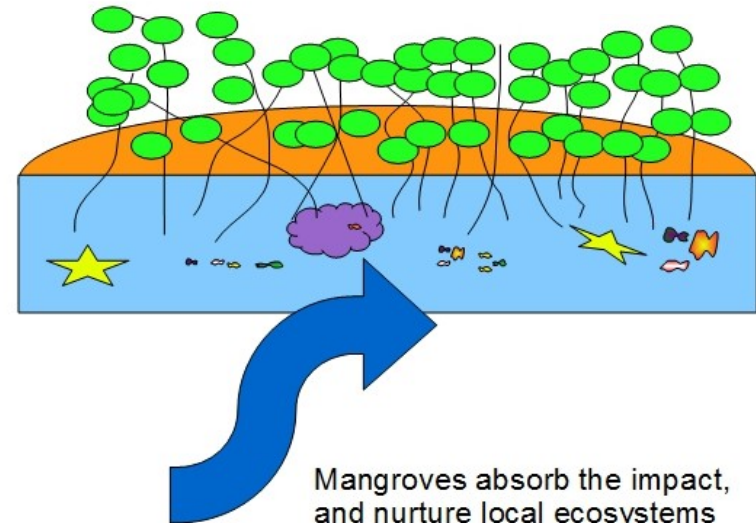
Think nurturing beyond preserving:
don't build seawalls, grow mangroves!

Seek a smart & sustainable preservation of culture, don't fall into the 'Wonjo Syndrom' ('original' destroys 'originality')



Seawalls stop all waves, but also evolution

Example: banning contents from one nation



Mangroves absorb the impact, and nurture local ecosystems

Example: quotas for local or independent contents

Example: with Park Jechun, Jeonju Int'l Sori Festival evolved from a regional pansori festival to one of the 25 best world music festivals, extending pansori to new territories, cross-fertilizing cultures.

Hard to imagine Italian cuisine without tomato pasta and espresso...



... and yet (just a reminder):

- tomato came from America
- pasta from Asia
- coffee from the horn of Africa



Heralding cultural diversity: a stronger and more sustainable Korean Wave
© Copyright Stephane MOT – August 2013

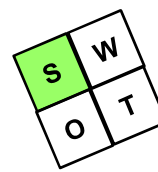
Sustainable & smart tourism in Korea

a SWOT analysis

- **Definitions: sustainable and smart tourism**
- **Focus: the 'Korean Wave' from opportunity to threat?**
- **Korea's SWOT:**



Strengths



A wide diversity for a 100,000 sqkm country

- four seasons, four distinct experiences
- mountain, sea, countryside, islands...
- tradition & modernity in all dimensions of culture
- unique experiences beyond classic hotels v. b&b offers (e.g. hanok / temple stay...)

A tradition of respect, sharing, hospitality

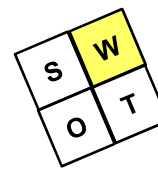
- From buddhism to Confucianism to the Seoul Global Center
- A growing force in Korea's tourism experience (e.g. temple food, revived villages)
- Preservation is improving (e.g. more UNESCO heritage sites, spared neighborhoods)

Powerful backbones for smart tourism:

- ICT (from fixed / mobile broadband networks to devices and services...)
- Transports (extensive subway & bus networks, high speed trains, everywhere < 30 mn away from a highway exit...) + cheap (even free tourist buses)
- Extensive tourist information (online, hotlines, brochures, plans, apps w big data...), including at the do/gun/si levels, involving English speakers, blogging expats...

Intensity:

- Permeating Korean culture, from pansori to mudang gut to Nanta to B-boy,
- On the street as well as in restaurants, food comes alive, intense moments are shared
- You can experience hiking or hanok stay even at the heart of the city
- Korea's greatest asset: its people, capacity to embrace sustainable & smart tourism



Sustainability requires time & reflexion, but hard to kick old 'bballi bballi' habits

- not enough impact surveys => overspending for things that furthermore will require fixing
- Too often rushing for short term solutions or profits that destroy long term value

Too eager to succeed = recipe for failure

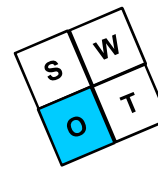
- Thinking hardware before software, buildings before content, speed before relevance
- A tendency to 'overdo', to go for spectacular design instead of true design
 - Confusing relevant infrastructures with exuberant superstructures
 - Confusing investing in the future with spending on already obsolete futuristic designs
- e.g. denaturing / destroying natural or cultural sites with flashy 'tourist' infrastructures

'Tourism as an industry' approach, unfit for these 'sustainable tourism' times

- Replicating tourist packages & formula = overlooking the intrinsic the specific, true value
- Diversity often obliterated by mass marketing for mainstream fads
- Artificially created blockbusters: most will fail, and so will the rest of the ecosystem

If the 'backbone' is great, the 'Last Mile' could still improve

- e.g. English signage and information in remote areas & local transports



Softening the economic slowdown with small scale, local initiatives

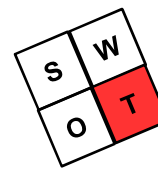
- Sustainable tourism, bridging human resources from the cities with isolated communities
- Voluntourism – helping rural communities, sustainable farmers (smartly? e.g. apps)
- Alternative communities caring for remote, unspoiled places, time capsules, time itself
- Slow tourism, contributing to the restoration of ecosystems & lifespaces for the long term
- Keeping in check rural desertification – from urban to rural regeneration?

Leveraging Korea's growing diversity, sharing the present and the future

- Involving North Koreans, multicultural families, international youth and entrepreneurs
- Elder citizens as cultural assets, generational bridges
- Reaching for millions of different experiences instead of forcing storytelling everywhere
- Pedagogy, involve all citizens in the preservation of hidden gems
- Nationwide: coopetition between regions instead of competition
- Internationally: sister regions leveraging cultural diversity, local 'ambassadors'

The DMZ and beyond

- Moratorium on infrastructures in Korea's biggest natural reserve, richest ecosystem
- A unifying task for North and South Korea: their common cultural heritage



Short term profit & speculation destroying long term value

- Local ecosystems endangered by oversupply of Duty Free Shops
- Build and they will flee - Korea's most embarrassing mountain remains 'budongsan'
- Accelerating rural desertification, multiplying costly empty shells, denaturing countryside

China dependence: 'milking the cow' to the risk of killing it

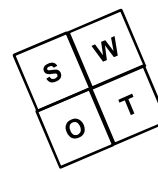
- Adapting to yet unformed tastes instead of offering authenticity, differentiation
- Creating magnets for Chinese that tomorrow will become repellents for them & everyone

Endangered cultural diversity

- K-pop overdose
- “Wonjo Syndrome” - when the original kills originality

Endangered DMZ

- Pristine zones shrinking, real estate already preempted, great land masses under threat
- Risk of Disneylandification



Korea will embrace sustainable & smart tourism

But not as the latest buzzword or marketing gimmick

This will require a profound change in mindsets

And a pedagogy for all stakeholders

Starting with local authorities and communities

Thank you

Stephane MOT

mot.stephane@stephanemot.com

SeoulVillage.com

 facebook.com/SeoulVillage

 @theSeoulVillage

 stephanemot